

## Personal Statement

### Global Professional Engineering Profile James R McPherson, Purdue University BSME

#### Commitment



I knew that I wanted to study engineering in high school and I was looking into mechanical engineering when I applied to college. After looking at Purdue's engineering program and the school as a whole I decided that I wanted to attend Purdue. Purdue had the best engineering program out of the schools I was looking at and it also was a really exciting school. In high school I felt that I would be perfectly suited for engineering and specifically mechanical engineering. I loved physics and the robotics class I took in high school; I was also good at math. At home I liked to build things with my hands, fix my car and work on various projects around the house, such as fixing the pool, working on the deck, and helping my dad finish the basement. I was always good at building and fixing things so engineering felt natural.

After taking several mechanical engineering classes I have really confirmed my choice to enter mechanical engineering. I'm very excited to learn new things about engineering that I will be using for my whole career. When the professor talks about how we will apply what we are learning to the real world I get very excited and it motivates me to learn the most and try my hardest during my time at Purdue. After three semesters in engineering I still feel like it was the natural and right choice.

#### Background

*Diversity in High School.* The private high school I went to, which was about one third international students, turned out to be an excellent experience and opportunity. Between my sophomore and junior year of high school I moved to Austin, Texas and started going to St Stephen's as a boarding student. I lived in a dorm with about 25 other guys that were in the same grade as me. Many of these students were from other countries such as Taiwan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Italy. My roommate was from Austria and spoke English as a second language. It was an incredible experience to get to learn about everyone's different cultures and customs and to learn how to interact with people that come from completely different parts of the world. It was also exciting to see how much we had in common and to learn from them. For example, both my roommate Leo and I really enjoyed soccer. We both ended up playing on the school soccer team together and had a lot of fun. As a result of my experience at St Stephen's I have developed friends from all over the globe and also a lot of understanding of different cultures.

*Boy Scout Leadership.* One of the most important activities to me is Boy Scouts of America. Even after earning my Eagle Scout and going to college I try to remain as active as possible in my troop. Our troop puts on our own summer camp each year and I go up to Minnesota to work and help run the camp. I am a lifeguard on the beach and am responsible for

the safety of all the kids and adults while they are at the beach. As an adult I volunteer to go up several days early, before the kids come, to help set up the camp. The camp is run by adults in the troop, and is completely voluntary. We are not paid to work there, and it is some of the most fun I have ever had. As a scout I was the SPL for 6 months; the SPL is the scout that is in charge of the entire troop. The SPL is elected by the rest of the kids in the troop for strong leadership, organization and decision making. I had to organize campouts, weekly meetings, activities, and summer camp. I was also responsible for dealing with discipline and resolving conflicts with the boys and in some rare cases the adults. One situation I had to deal with at summer camp involved two boys who got in a fight. One of the boys said something to the other boy as a joke, but unknowingly hurt the other boy's feelings because it was a sensitive subject. This led to a fight. After getting both sides of the story I felt it would be wrong to punish both of them so I took them aside separately and made sure they understood why it was not acceptable and explained the other boy's perspective. I then talked to the rest of the boy's patrol to explain what had happened and that it was a sensitive subject to the one boy and they should avoid it. It worked out well because they started getting along and working effectively together again and there were no more incidents.

As a member of leadership in the troop I was required to attend special meeting where we discussed different types and styles of leadership and when to use them. We also did exercises to further develop our leadership skills. I learned about shared leadership, delegation, leading by example and many other forms of leadership and when it is appropriate to apply them. It was an excellent experience and I learned a lot from those discussions and my experience in Boy Scouts. I also learned a tremendous amount as SPL and holding other leadership positions within the troop.

*Customer Service.* Over the summer I worked at Wal-Mart in Austin and I learned a lot about customer service and hard work. I worked full time and it was almost always busy. As a cashier it was my responsibility to efficiently check people out to prevent long lines and to keep the customer satisfied. It was also important to engage the customer and be friendly so that they enjoyed their time at the store and would return. I was hired to work at the cash register that sold tobacco products, so I had the extra responsibility to make sure that no one under 18 was purchasing tobacco. I took this responsibility, as well as all my other ones, seriously and learned to work hard and efficiently to fulfill my role. It was also an exciting experience because I got to meet all different types of people and learn a little about them while I was scanning their items. Overall it was a good experience and taught me a lot about responsibility and customer service.

### Professional Goals:

In today's world technology plays a major role in everyone's life on a daily basis. I plan on earning a minor in electrical engineering to supplement my mechanical engineering degree. I would also be interested in pursuing a masters degree or a PhD. I would really enjoy working for a defense company or a design company. I am very patriotic and feel like I could help serve my country by working for a defense company. I am also interested in the design aspect of engineering and enjoy designing new innovative things. Working on the design side of a project for a defense company would be an ideal job. One project I would really like to work on in my

life would be designing and creating a new and vastly improved communication system for the US Military. I think that the current methods of communicating within infantry units could use a lot of improvements and save a lot of lives, and I would want to be a part of that.