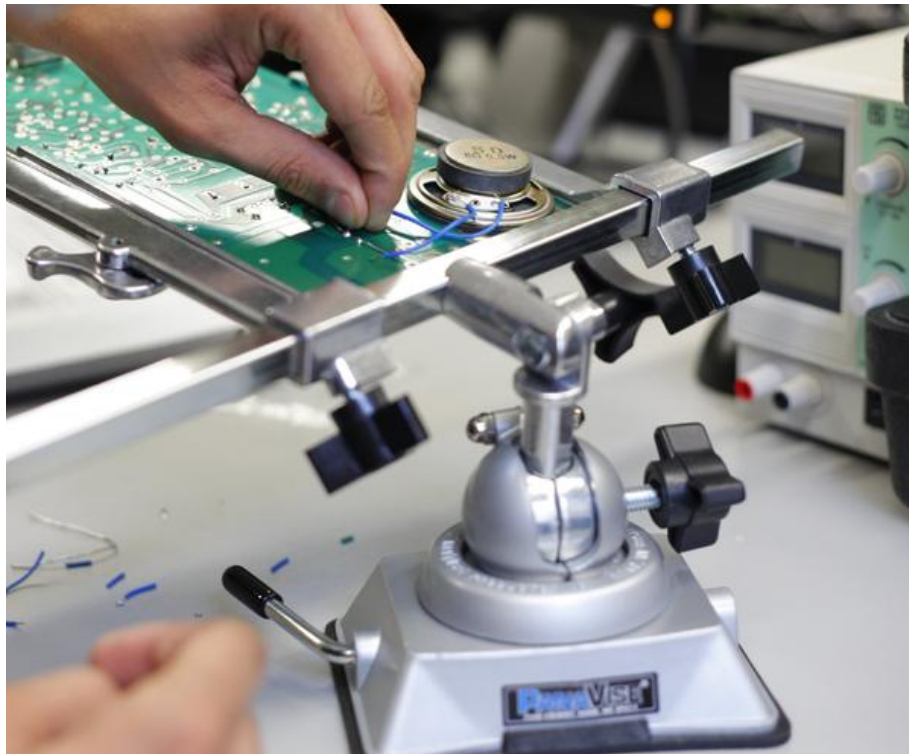


Chris's Story: Charged Up for an Exciting Career



Christopher Alvarado-Cole spent his youth in sunny Florida, and moved to the Boston area in high school. While at Cathedral High School in the city's South End, he was not sure which direction he wanted to take in his education or career. That all changed senior year when he took physics and first realized the impact a role model can have. "My physics teacher was an electrical engineer at Raytheon for 30 years," Chris said. "We would talk about his work experience. It really sparked my interest in the field."



This is when Chris decided a career as an electronics engineer would satisfy his innate curiosity and provide a hands-on and challenging career. "I remember playing with electronics as a kid and wanting to

know how the lights worked,” Chris said. “I definitely love working with my hands.” Having attended high school a few blocks away, Chris knew about Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology. He didn’t know the extent that the school could jump-start his career.

“I was happy from the moment I walked in the doors,” Chris said. “The environment was great.” Chris was first introduced to the college by an admissions representative, who remained available throughout his two years in the Electronic Engineering Technology program. “She encouraged me and pushed me. If I ever needed to talk to someone, her door was always open.”

In fact, Chris lists numerous BFIT faculty and staff members that helped him succeed and become the first person in his family to earn a college degree. He could often be found working with professors and tutors in the Academic Success Center, spending time in the electronics labs, or even interacting with the college president at the time. With their help and insight, Chris thrived, earning an academic scholarship through the National Science Foundation.

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His success in BFIT’s associate degree program allowed him to transfer credits to Wentworth Institute of Technology and complete his bachelor’s degree. The summer before classes started, BFIT’s career services department helped secure him an internship at FastCap Systems, which he continued during school breaks while enrolled at Wentworth. His experience in BFIT lab courses made him immediately feel comfortable in the hands-on engineering environment. “At BFIT, we hand soldered and built products, which I still do in my position now. This experience really gave me an advantage compared to some of my new classmates.”

He was eventually hired on full-time at FastCap and is now a Production Engineer at the company. In this role, Chris is involved in all steps of product development. He assesses prototypes and recommends design changes. He assists in the production of ultracapacitors and performs laser and resistance welding, as well as wiring. He also is responsible for writing quality control procedures. There’s not much he doesn’t do and nothing he doesn’t enjoy. When asked what he likes most, he says, “everything.”

Chris’s success keeps him motivated and working hard. “I really want to push myself and challenge myself to take on more responsibility,” Chris said. It’s only been four years since Chris first started at BFIT, but in many ways, his whole world has changed and new opportunities arose that he never knew existed. He hopes to become a manager and expand his engineering and product knowledge.

“I’m proud to have come from BFIT,” Chris said. “Take advantage of the support system. Don’t be afraid to ask for help.”