

Meet Jim Azar, BFIT Class of 2001



For James Azar '01, it all started with a high school drafting class. When he started exploring college options, his father, a civil engineer, thought Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology (BFIT) would be a good fit and encouraged James to check out the Architectural Technology program.

At BFIT, he built upon his previous drafting experience and moved on to use Computer-Aided Design (CAD) software that would be vital for a career in engineering and design. Once enrolled, he took advantage of the small classes and close-knit community. "The small class sizes were very helpful," James said. "You had a lot of good relationships with the teachers. It felt like one-on-one instruction, which helps you understand all the aspects of what you're learning."

James connects BFIT's collaborative community with helping him succeed in the workforce. "The ability to develop relationships with teachers and collaborate with classmates not only helps you get good grades, it's vital practice to be successful in the workforce, where you are constantly working alongside all types of people," James said.

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After graduation, James worked in engineering – first at a structural engineering firm and then at a mechanical engineering company. Companies hire people with strong backgrounds, but will teach software and design skills specific to their projects after getting hired. "It helps to have the degree itself," James said. "Most companies require an associate or bachelor's. My degree gave me an overview of different engineering fields." While at BFIT, he also took classes in [HVAC&R](#) and [Construction Management](#), which provided a comprehensive knowledge in design-related field.

Now, James is a Marine Engineer at [Ocean Tug & Barge Engineering](#). In this position, he works with shipyards to complete design work and develop contracts for new marine vessels. Right now, he's working on the [SeaOne Caribbean project](#), which "will offer customers located in the Free Trade

Agreement (FTA) countries of the Caribbean and Central America access to U.S. sourced natural gas and natural gas liquids." He still uses CAD and CADMATIC software on the job. Without prior experience in the marine industry, he was forced to learn about the new components and equipment involved so he could interact with vendors and analyze technical specifications. Thanks to his well-rounded background and experiences, even though he didn't know anything about boats when he started, he was confident he could quickly learn the skills needed to succeed. "Once you start in the industry," James said. You have to constantly develop new techniques and skills."

He sees himself continuing to work at Ocean Tug & Barge Engineering and moving up within the company. "The job is very gratifying and enjoyable," James said. "Plus, I am constantly learning." James knows that career paths take unexpected turns and new opportunities arise. For current students, James recommends, "Enjoy your time and focus on the bigger picture. Stay focused, keep learning and you'll find a career that fits."