Family Trip to Smithsonian Air and Space Museum Leads to Bright Future

By: Desiré Bennett

Michael Cline is the UC College of Engineering and Applied Science Engineer of the Month for September. Michael maintains a 3.96 GPA in his senior year in the mechanical engineering program while working toward dual Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in mechanical engineering in the college’s ACCEND program.

Michael says he has been fascinated with figuring out how things work since he was a little boy. This fascination led him to study the field of mechanical engineering. “The main influence was when my family and I visited the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum with my dad's best friend, who is an engineer at Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab,” he explains. “He showed me around the museum and showed me how the planes and rockets worked and that was when the light bulb went off – ever since then I’ve wanted to work in the aerospace industry, whether in spacecraft or aircraft design.”

What drew Michael to attend the university also stems from his childhood. He says he has been a UC fan since he was much younger. “My dad attended UC and majored in Civil Engineering,” he said. “So early on I was exposed to an engineering program with an integrated co-op program – and I knew that was a huge advantage when going into the workforce. That was by far the biggest factor in choosing the University of Cincinnati.”

Michael’s co-op rotations took place at the Wallops Flight Facility, a NASA facility in eastern Virginia, and at GE Aviation where he worked in energy management, engine testing, and design engineering.

Michael credits his co-op experience with teaching him several things including how to give a succinct, simple presentation of a complex problem and how to consider different aspects of a problem to develop a good solution. “Co-op helps you learn the intangibles that you can’t learn anywhere other than on the job,” he said.

In addition to his co-op experience Michael is a member of several organizations including Tau Beta Pi and Pi Tau Sigma, the Engineering and Mechanical Engineering Honor Societies and he has conducted undergraduate research on airflow control in low-pressure turbines as part of the AY-REU program, which is a partnership between the National Science Foundation and UC.
Michael also volunteers at the SPCA Cincinnati. “Occasionally I’ll help out by dressing as their mascot, Hero,” he said. “As geeky as it is, that’s one of the most enjoyable things I do for SPCA Cincinnati.”

Michael is also in the ACCEND program. According to Michael being an ACCEND student gives him the opportunity to get the most out of his college experience. “In the ACCEND program I can get the masters I'm aiming for before graduating and going out into the real world,” he said. “And I can also get more in-depth exposure to engineering in graduate courses, where I can learn more specialized applications of the equations and skills we learn in class to take into my job after graduation.”

Michael says that the best advice he can lend to fellow students is to “Enjoy what you do. Find the thing that gets you so excited and so distracted that the time flies – and make that your career,” he said. “It makes the time go faster, and you’re almost guaranteed to learn more and succeed.”