



Student Spotlight

Students in the U.S. Department of Energy's Industrial Assessment Center (IAC) program learn industrial energy efficiency skills in real-world settings by conducting on-site energy assessments for small and medium sized manufacturers. Tennessee Tech is one of only 28 universities to have an IAC and since 2006, TTU's IAC has provided no-cost assessments to over 200 plants and trained nearly 100 undergraduate and graduate level engineering students in the growing field of energy efficiency. Ryan Burns and Jay "Travis" Howard



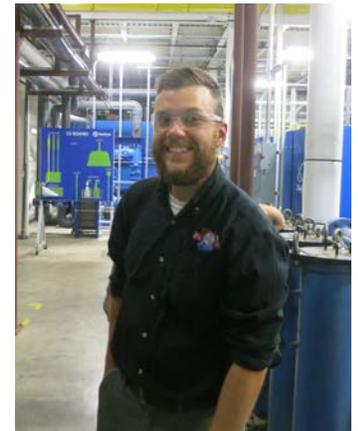
Ryan Burns (left)

are both Mechanical Engineering students receiving their Masters degrees in May 2018 and have held leadership roles in the IAC program for two years. Ryan, originally from

Franklin TN, was initially drawn to the program to bridge the gap between classroom learning and what actually happens in the field, "You can look at schematics all day but seeing them in person brings so much more information and understanding." Travis, a Sparta TN native, says that the most rewarding part of his participation was "without a doubt, the opportunity to travel to various industrial facilities and interact with real-world problems, engineers, and plant personnel." IAC students collect data from the major energy-using equipment in industrial facilities, such as compressed air,

steam, and pumping systems. They then write a report with specific recommendations for projects that will improve the efficiency of the equipment and reduce the plant's energy costs.

Students travel all over Tennessee and surrounding states and assess many types of industries. Both Travis and Ryan cite a metallurgical processing plant in middle Tennessee as one that sticks out in their minds, both for the unique kilns and furnaces



Travis Howard

they encountered and the involvement of the plant personnel. In addition to learning about the systems and components that are common in industry, the students reported developing better communication, time management, and leadership skills through the program. The experiences of the IAC benefited Ryan and Travis during their job search, eventually securing them employment at HVAC design firms in middle Tennessee. When asked if they would recommend the IAC program to other students, the response was overwhelmingly positive. "Absolutely!" emphasized Ryan. "Without the IAC, I would not have had the job lined up that I do now." More information about the Industrial Assessment Center program can be found at <https://www.tntech.edu/iac> or <https://iac.university/center/TT>.