

2021 Intern Award

Cormac Foster, EIT



Cormac Foster, EIT, graduated from the University of Manitoba in 2017 with a BSc in Biosystems Engineering and a specialization in Environmental Engineering. He became an intern with Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba in November 2017.

As an undergraduate student, Cormac worked as a research assistant at the John Buhler Research Centre, conducting LDH gene suppression analytical research related to type II diabetes. He presented his findings at the 11th annual Child Health Research Day (CHRD) symposium. After graduating, Cormac began working as an intern with the Biosystems Engineering Research Division at the University of Manitoba. During this time, he worked as the co-lead on a prototype energy production and greenhouse facility for sustainable food production in northern communities. This work led directly into his current role as the project engineer with Vermillion Growers Ltd. In this role, he manages the design and construction of Vermillion Growers' first vegetable production greenhouse that will be in Dauphin, Manitoba. Due to the pioneering nature of the project, Cormac regularly engages with various members of the public, providing him with the opportunity to share his passion for science and engineering regularly.

Cormac graduated on the Dean's Honour List and has won several scholarships, including the Horace Patterson Foundation Scholarship (in both 2012 and 2015), International Baccalaureate Scholarship, and University of Manitoba Entrance Scholarship. For his undergraduate engineering capstone project, Cormac and his team completed a year-long research and design project that resulted in the production of a paper entitled "Evaluation of the Proposed Geothermal-Cold System Design for Prevention of Permafrost Thawing Beneath Structures in Northern Climates". Their report was awarded the second place Canadian Geotechnical Society Undergraduate Student Report Award (Group).

In addition to his work, Cormac is involved in the community to help foster a love of science and engineering in younger generations. He has volunteered as a grade 7 to 10 science fair judge, spent summers as a volunteer camp leader, and organized and led five consecutive annual food drives in support of local food banks in Winnipeg. Most recently, Cormac volunteered as the keynote speaker for an after-school educational seminar workshop for high school students organized by Pembina Trails School Division and the Bioscience Association of Manitoba. He enjoys opportunities to connect with students and promote science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills while sharing some of the exciting things happening in the profession of engineering here in our province.

Cormac had the opportunity to showcase his engineering abilities when he constructed a driftwood chair as a contestant on The Amazing Race Canada. Following this experience, he spent time as a motivational speaker to a range of audiences at schools and conferences. Cormac enjoys camping, hiking, backcountry canoeing, biking, and playing flag football, and hockey. He also enjoys building with

LEGO bricks and has an extensive collection. He uses his own designs that he then develops using LEGO design software, including a scale model of the actual full-size greenhouse that he is currently working on.

Cormac is passionate about the environment and his work that will impact this vital area. Alongside his team at Vermillion Growers and their many industry and professional engineering partners, he is striving to develop the concept of year-round greenhouse production of vegetables in the cold Manitoba climate. He aims to have local, greenhouse-grown produce supplying a significant portion of the vegetable consumption demand in Manitoba. In collaboration with his academic work, Cormac hopes to be instrumental in developing and engaging in ongoing research into greenhouse technology to further benefit the industry.

After attaining his P.Eng. designation, Cormac would like to have a meaningful, positive, and lasting impact on society and the environment in his career. He dreams of solving major food security problems through his work of using greenhouse technology, and would like to help society deal with the effects of climate change and implement strategies to minimize this change and protect the environment.

In recognition of his exceptional achievements while training as an engineer, Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba is pleased to present the 2021 Intern Award to Cormac Foster.