

*The author takes a measurement on a roof.*

**F**or many students who have gone through 4+ years of studies, finding a job within their field is a priority. I was no exception. I studied at Ryerson University, in downtown Toronto, and was enrolled in architectural science, majoring in building science. Looking forward to graduation, I was unsure of the possible job opportunities that embodied the principles of building science. It was around this time that the RCI Foundation reached out to our university, offering scholarships to students for the annual RCI (now IIBEC) International Convention and Trade Show. Being unsure of what the association represented, and after doing some initial research, I quickly decided that this would be beneficial for a career in building science. I proceeded to apply and was granted the scholarship, which included travel to and lodging at the convention, meals, and a one-year membership.

My time at the convention was short but fulfilling. I had the chance to talk to manufacturing representatives during the trade show and used the opportunity to learn about a multitude of construction products. Talking to manufacturers was valuable in opening my

# From RCI Foundation IIBEC Convention Scholarship Winner to Building Enclosure Consultant

By Navindra Budhwa

eyes and learning that my industry is like a three-legged stool. It requires reliable materials, prudent design, and proper installation in order to construct a functioning building. Additionally, meeting the members of IIBEC allowed me to view different opportunities available after graduation. I was able to network with many industry professionals and gain valuable insight on the state and future of the industry. As a sponsored student, many IIBEC members welcomed me, making the entire experience enjoyable for me and the other sponsored students.

During my time at the convention, I learned that I was eligible for a student membership, which allows me to participate in educational programs at the chapter level to broaden my learning experience. Several members also mentor students through their theses and provide presentations on various building-related subjects. I was connected to Jennifer Hogan, a past president of the Ontario Chapter of IIBEC and now Director of Region VII, as my mentor. Jennifer assisted greatly in helping me network and introduced me to many Canadian members of IIBEC.

At the convention's opening ceremony, Jennifer introduced me to Doug Fishburn, president of Fishburn Building Sciences, and a member of the IIBEC Advocacy Committee. In talking to Doug, it became apparent that there was a major push to expose current and future graduates of architecture, engineering, or building trade programs to IIBEC and what the association has to offer.

By the time I returned to Canada, I had a much clearer picture of the type of work I wanted to do in this industry, and where I could have the opportunity to do so. For just over a year, I have been employed by Fishburn Building Sciences, where I have been exposed to a number of different projects, tasks, and experiences.

I have always believed that the best

way to learn is to be hands on. In the first few months at Fishburn, I assisted in completing a project from the initial site visit to the final report. Additionally, I have had an opportunity to work on roof surveys, plans, and details, and I coauthored my first report. By the six-month mark, I had also assisted with writing specifications, performing site inspections, completing observation reports, and researching various materials for several projects.

I have learned that education does not end when you leave your alma mater. Also, I learned that applying building science sometimes means you're in your work boots in a trench resolving a water problem or helping an owner resolve his or her roof leaks. I have continued to develop my skills regarding these tasks, and have increasing responsibility on various projects. While I have a degree in building science, I am beginning to understand how it can be applied to make better buildings.

One such example is my contribution to a detail that was later approved and accepted into the upcoming edition of a standard from the Canadian Standard Association (CSA). Similar to the work of ASTM International in the U.S., CSA standards are often referenced in the National Building Code of Canada. Committee groups influence the direction in which the industry is developing, and learning these processes was a positive experience.

Since joining Fishburn and IIBEC, my perceptions and ideas of what the building sciences encompass and the opportunities the industry has to offer have changed. I have learned that much learning is done on the construction site, and no amount of desk work will prepare oneself for this real-life experience. Personally, IIBEC has been the connection from my academic learning to my career in an independent engineering firm. However, the main alteration in my perception is knowing that there is an organization of professionals who believe they can and do make a difference in the design and construction of buildings. IIBEC includes many members who specialize in all aspects of the building envelope and, most of all, they are willing to help new and upcoming graduates.

Having an opportunity to become exposed to IIBEC is extremely valuable for many students who seek to enter the consulting, engineering, or building science industry. IIBEC offered me and other students the opportunity to rub shoulders with industry leaders and gain a broader understanding of materials and building systems. The work of the RCI Foundation and of IIBEC is to reach out to universities and colleges with the goal of bringing young professionals into this organization. With an aging workforce, advocating for IIBEC is a long-term investment in the betterment of our industry. 



*Navindra Budhwa (second from right) and other sponsored students socialize at the 2018 convention in Houston with IIBEC members Stephanie Robinson (left), and Budhwa's mentor, Jennifer Hogan (center).*