

Terry Smith



On choosing a college: "At first, I didn't know where I wanted to go. I was accepted to a four-year university, but I realized there's a lot of money involved in that. I decided to go for a two-year degree. It was like going to school every day to play. I had fun every day."

–Terry Smith, July 15, 2009

Terry Smith doesn't have a photonics job. But that's OK for now. He's glad he got a degree in laser and photonics technology from Central Carolina Community College (CCCC). Terry has only positive things to say about CCCC's laser and photonics technology program. "Being able to learn in the classroom and then go apply it was amazing," he says. "You learn so much and it prepares you well for real-world experience."

Terry looks forward to finding that perfect job, which to him is a blend between using what he learned about photonics and electronics engineering technology at college and using what he's learning now in his job managing quality control in the manufacturing division of Pentair Pool & Spa. "I'm 22 years old and I don't know what I want to do yet," Terry laughs. "I'm still opening doors here and there."

But Terry's education at CCCC prepared him for whatever door he chooses to go through. Terry describes his CCCC experience this way: "College helped me to become goal oriented. I received a lot of discipline within my education. In high school, it was a lot of busy work. It didn't really have a purpose for me. When I got to college, I was working toward a career. It made me want to work harder and do better. I learned I needed to do certain things at certain times."

When Terry graduated he was offered several laser technician positions, but they were all far away from where he lived. "After I graduated, I was getting married, so I couldn't move away," he says. "My wife was still in school at the time." He decided it wouldn't be fair to ask his wife to move away from her education, so he chose to stay where he was. But he's hopeful about photonics job opportunities coming to his area in the near future. "I don't think fiber optics communications has

reached its peak yet," he says. "I think it's going to grow for some years to come. There are lots of job opportunities opening up with start-up companies that have their own niche they're trying to create."

For the time being, Terry is looking forward to getting back into the photonics field but feels confident and prepared in his current job, thanks to his college education.

Terry Smith lives in Sanford, North Carolina, with his wife, Laura. He received an associate in applied sciences degree in laser and photonics technology and an electronics engineering technology certificate from Central Carolina Community College in 2007. Terry plays on three men's softball teams and is very involved in his church. He and Laura enjoy taking their Labrador retrievers Zeke and Denali to the park.