Christopher Moulton found the Photonics and Laser Technology program at Baker College in Flint, Michigan, almost by accident. After the propane delivery company where he had worked for ten years let him go during downsizing, he went back to college and began taking classes for an associate degree in computer animation. Toward the end of his degree track, Christopher realized that computer animation wasn’t the right type of career for him. He was looking for a field that wasn’t as popular, whose job market wasn’t already saturated with employees. One day, during his morning cup of coffee, an newspaper advertisement caught his eye: Baker College was starting a new program called Photonics and Laser Technology. Right away, Christopher was interested. “It was new, it was exciting, and it was something I could see myself doing,” he recalls. He took a leap of faith and signed up almost immediately—he signed up so quickly, in fact, that when he called Baker College to enroll, the person he spoke to on the phone hadn’t even heard of the Photonics and Laser Technology program.

Initially, there was a big learning curve for everyone in the program, Christopher recalls. The most difficult part, he says, was the newness of the program and the fact that his was the inaugural class. Being the first wasn’t always and advantage, because professors were still learning to teach the material and didn’t always have answers on hand. Despite the bumps in the road, Christopher found his coursework interesting. His first year of classes emphasized electronics and offered a foundation that laid groundwork for the second year, by which time lasers and optics played a role in nearly every class. In December 2015, Christopher graduated from Baker College with an associate of applied science degree in photonics and laser technology.

Christopher now works for IPG Photonics as an Applications Technician. He currently spends his time learning about laser welding, laser cutting, trifocal brazing, setting up different applications in the labs for the engineers, and learning to work with the automated and robotic parts of the facility. He is slated to work on a specific piece of equipment once it arrives at the facility.

Christopher sees himself moving forward in his career with IPG. The possibilities for job placement and advancement are nearly endless, thanks to his degree in photonics and laser technology. “There are job opportunities anywhere and everywhere,” Christopher says. He believes that Baker’s photonics and laser technology program gave him a strong groundwork for a career because it touched on many different aspects of photonics technology. He recommends a degree in photonics as a great jumping-off point and has seen for himself how marketable and hirable technicians are.

Christopher Moulton graduated from Baker College with an associate of applied science degree in photonics and laser technology in December 2015. He lives in Holly, Michigan, where he enjoys hunting, fishing, bowling, and spending time with his kids and family.