

January 7, 2018

Dear Whitney Benefits,

The Whitney Loan provided me with unique flexibility to pursue an advanced degree that I was really excited about and has greatly helped with my career. Knowing that I would be able to qualify and access the loan allowed me to make a big decision to turn down the US Coast Guard's sponsored graduate school program, which would have involved a combined Civil Engineering Master's degree and an MBA, and ultimately leave the Coast Guard to pursue an advanced degree in clean energy and transition my career in a new direction. Furthermore, I had my sights set on the program at the University of Edinburgh because I also strongly desired to experience living abroad for a period of my life. Edinburgh's MSc in Sustainable Energy Systems featured a pretty comprehensive engineering curriculum in various renewable energy, energy efficiency, and carbon sequestration technologies interwoven with courses covering the economic and policy practicalities for implementing them. Edinburgh also featured world leading research on wave, tidal, and offshore wind energy technologies, which I thought would be a good focus area to apply my Coast Guard experience and undergrad in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering. Prior to graduation, I applied to one of GE's leadership programs focused on transitioning military officers and landed a position with their wind energy division. I'm still with GE Power today and still utilizing many of the principals I learned at Edinburgh to deploy GE's distributed energy technology for micro-grids and commercial and industrial facilities. As a side note, I also recently celebrated my third anniversary with my wife Marzia, who I met at Edinburgh and who was a classmate in the same MSc program. The loan certainly facilitated a journey that became quite life changing.

Sincere regards,

Jared Cherni