Hi John,

I wanted to reach out and say my initial thank you for the extremely generous scholarship award that I received in the mail last week. I was shocked and humbled to be supported by the NJ/NY Metro in this significant way. I am extremely grateful for this award.

As mentioned in my scholarship application, I am currently in the last year of my Master's at WPI. I also am an engineering consultant at Summit Fire Consulting, previously Performance Based Fire Protection Engineering. I have spent about 8 years in consulting since graduating from the University of Maryland with my undergraduate degree in Fire Protection Engineering. I have been slowly taking classes while working full time, planning a wedding, renovating my home my husband and I bought 3 years ago, raising a puppy, taking my PE, and now starting a family between my daughter who is now 18 months old and another baby girl due in February! Life has been busy - and I am so grateful to be part of an industry like fire protection engineering that can be flexible and supportive of all these personal changes.

This fall I will be transitioning to a part-time hourly position with Summit while taking 2 courses at WPI. I will be taking People in Fires and Fire Dynamics. I will then be taking a spring course to finish my Master's during my maternity leave which starts in January. My work load at Summit includes a variety of fire and egress modeling projects for a variety of different clients. I will be working on multiple smoke control projects for stadiums in the US, atriums, detention centers, and high-rise residential buildings. Along with my technical work, I will be preparing 2 presentations that I will be presenting in Vancouver at the SFPE conference. One of these is based on my independent study on

single exit stairs in residential buildings that I completed in the Spring for WPI and another is a case study on performance based options for smoke and heat vents in cold storage facilities. If you are there, please stop me and say hi!

I am very excited to be finishing my degree and to start thinking about what my career holds next as I balance my family and career goals. I am passionate about building cultures at companies that allow FPEs to continuously adapt and grow as their lives do the same. As an industry we constantly are looking for more great FPEs that can support our client's needs and I believe in creating healthy working environments that foster long term careers so we don't burn ourselves out. I believe in strong mentorship of the future generation of FPEs and continuing to learn from our subject matter experts in the field. I am excited to see how I can continue to contribute to our industry.

Thank you again for this extremely generous scholarship. I plan to attend some NY Metro meetings in the fall as I normally do and will be more than happy to speak. I can reach out to the NJ chapter and make sure I can make one of those as well. I am always a huge fan of the golf tournament and will definitely want to participate again next year!

Thank you again,

Rachel Kirk