

GOING GREEN: Allan Page, MSIA'83, Launches Hudson Renewable Energy Institute

As an engineer at Central Hudson Gas and Electric in the 1970s, Allan Page came to Union Graduate College for the business expertise he needed to further his career. Eventually, he became president of the Poughkeepsie utility's holding company, the CH Energy Group, growing the asset value of the competitive businesses within the Group from \$22 million to more than \$200 million in a four-year period.

Page left the CH Energy Group in 2002 and now operates an energy consulting business, A. Page & Associates LLC. He has followed a passion for the development and use of renewable energy in founding The Hudson Renewable Energy Institute, a not-for-profit he launched to help consumers directly access alternative energy sources of supply. As UGC's School of Engineering prepares to launch a new Emerging Energy Systems degree, we asked Page to share how UGC propelled his career and about the future of renewable energy.

After a successful career at Central Hudson Gas and Electric and CH Energy, you launched your own consulting business. What have you learned?

As an energy consultant, I have traveled all over the world: Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Uganda, Abu Dhabi, New Delhi and Beijing. I met some very interesting people and learned first-hand about doing business in other cultures. It is not often that you are invited to brief a committee of Parliament where elected members are carrying hand guns in holsters—or where you

witness commuters riding down the main street of a city on an elephant!

Why did you launch The Hudson Renewable Energy Institute?

We created the Institute to provide an unbiased source of information to the public about the value of renewable energy. Also, to encourage the development of competitive energy market mechanisms so consumers can directly decide the type of energy they want to use.

We hope the Institute can capitalize on "smart grid" technology development. The smart grid holds the promise of allowing consumers to purchase directly from a renewable energy project and holds the potential to assist developers with financing. Right now the only restrictions for consumer direct purchase are based on archaic regulation stretching back to the 1930s, when the information and communication technology we know today did not exist. That needs to change.

What is the most important thing you learned at Union Graduate College?

Once you reach a certain level in an organization, you become intimately associated with the balance sheet

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and income statement. Specifically, they become your performance score cards. As an engineer, I had limited experience with expense and capital accounts to say nothing of how profitability was accounted for as net income on an income statement. So, that's what I studied most intensely.

Has engineering changed over the years? What is your advice for current UGC engineering students?

The formulas and the basis for engineering have remained the same over the years, but our smart tools cannot replace the cogent thinking of a good engineer. So we should never assume that the answers are correct unless we have reviewed and agree with the inputs, assumptions and outputs. Also, engineers should take the extra time and effort to assure themselves they can articulate the output to individuals whose technical skills are not equal to their own.

To learn more about Union Graduate College's new Emerging Energy Systems program or other engineering degrees, contact Dean Robert Kozik at: kozikr@uniongraduatecollege.edu or 518.631.9881.