Hannah Kowalczyk

Pittsburgh, PA · hannah.kowalczyk.test@example.com Applying to: Tuck School of Business MBA (Dartmouth), 2026-27

This is a fictional applicant written for this sample. Her employer, community organisation and band are invented.

Program and round

- Full-time MBA, Class of 2029. Round 2.

Education and test

- **The Pennsylvania State University** - BS Industrial Engineering, May 2022. GPA 3.38 (major GPA 3.52). Spring 2020 semester GPA 2.71 (see Optional essay).
- **GMAT Focus Edition** (September 2026): 655 (Quantitative 82, Verbal 84, Data Insights 79). My first attempt in June 2026 was 605.

Resume

HANNAH KOWALCZYK Pittsburgh, PA · hannah.kowalczyk.test@example.com

THREE RIVERS CLIMATE SYSTEMS - Pittsburgh, PA (Jul 2022 - present) *Maker of commercial rooftop heat pumps and air handlers. One plant, 620 employees, about $240M in revenue.*

Operations Supervisor, Line 3 - Heat Pump Assembly (Jan 2025 - present)

- Lead 38 hourly assemblers and 2 lead hands across two shifts; the line builds about 55 rooftop units a day.
- Raised first-pass yield from 86% to 93% in 14 months by moving leak testing ahead of final wiring; rework fell by about 1,100 labor hours a year.
- Led the March 2025 changeover to a new refrigerant (R-454B). Planned for 3 days; it took 9. We missed 410 units of scheduled shipments and about $1.6M of revenue slipped a quarter. Wrote the post-mortem that became the plant's changeover standard; the Line 1 changeover in October 2025 finished in 4 days.
- Made the case to extend the $1.75/hour second-shift premium to 14 temp-agency workers doing the same work as employees; approved August 2025. Six of them have since been hired full time.

Operations Analyst (Jul 2022 - Dec 2024)

- Built the plant's line capacity model (Excel, Power BI); used in the 2024 plan to justify a $4.3M second heat-pump line.

- Redesigned parts kitting with the warehouse team (color-coded bins, two-person check on high-error parts); kitting errors fell 40%.
- Trained 12 new supervisors on standard work and ran the plant's weekly floor-walk schedule.

EDUCATION Penn State - BS Industrial Engineering, 2022. Worked 15 hours a week in a campus dining hall all four years.

ADDITIONAL

- Co-founder and volunteer, Tuesday Night License Club, Lawrenceville Neighbors Hub (2023 - present, 4 hours a week).
- Fiddle player, The Allegheny Swing Contra Band (2021 - present, about 3 dances a month).
- Languages: English (native), Polish (conversational, learned from my grandmother).
- Skills: Lean / standard work, Excel modeling, Power BI, basic SQL. OSHA 30.
- Interests: cross-country skiing, contra dancing, pickling whatever the farmers' market has too much of.

Activities

1. **Tuesday Night License Club** (2023 - present, about 4 hours a week). A coworker on Line 3, originally from Nepal, failed the Pennsylvania permit test twice because she was studying from a manual in a language she reads slowly. I started meeting her and two friends at the Neighbors Hub on Tuesdays. It now has 61 past participants, 6 volunteer tutors and practice tests in Nepali, Spanish and Swahili that participants helped translate; 44 people have passed the permit test.
2. **The Allegheny Swing Contra Band** (2021 - present). Play fiddle at community contra dances in Pittsburgh and twice a year in Vermont. I also book the band's gigs.
3. **Penn State Dance Marathon (THON)**, Rules and Regulations Committee (2019 - 2022). Helped run a 46-hour fundraiser for pediatric cancer.

Honors

- Three Rivers Climate Systems Plant Safety Award, Line 3, 2025 (zero recordable injuries for 12 months).
- Dean's List, Penn State College of Engineering, 4 of 8 semesters.

Essay 1: Why are you pursuing an MBA, and why Tuck? (300 words)

The heat pumps my line builds are the main way commercial buildings will stop burning gas. Demand at our plant has doubled since 2022, and the hard part is no longer the engineering; it's running a factory that grows that fast without breaking. I know how to run one line. I don't yet know how to decide where a second plant goes, how to price a product when a refrigerant rule changes the cost of every unit, or how to lead 600 people instead of 38.

Short term, I want to join the operations leadership program of an industrial manufacturer in the electrification market, rotating through plants and supply chain. Long term, I want to be the general

manager of a plant, and eventually the COO of a mid-size manufacturer that makes clean-building equipment in American towns like the ones I grew up near.

Now is the right time because I have hit the ceiling of what I can learn by doing: my plant manager told me last spring that I make good decisions on Line 3 but can't yet see the business from her chair.

Tuck fits how I learn. I learn best in small groups, around people who notice when I'm wrong. The general-management core, the First-Year Project, and the Revers Center's work on energy would give me the finance and strategy I lack, aimed at the industry I care about. And I grew up skiing and fiddling in small towns; Hanover feels less like a sacrifice than a return.

Essay 2: Tuck students are nice. Tell us about a time you helped others succeed, and how that will make you a good contributor to Tuck. (300 words)

In 2023, Sita, an assembler on my line, told me she had failed her driver's permit test twice. She took two buses to work and had turned down a lead-hand role on a shift the buses didn't serve.

I offered to quiz her on Tuesday evenings. She brought two friends. By the second month there were nine people at the Lawrenceville Neighbors Hub, and I was out of my depth: my practice questions were in English, and the questions they missed were about wording, not road rules. So I stepped back from teaching. Participants who had passed began translating practice tests into Nepali, Spanish and Swahili and leading the review. My job became recruiting tutors, booking the room and driving people to the testing center on Saturdays.

Sixty-one people have come through; 44 have passed. Sita passed on her third try, took the lead-hand role, and now runs the Nepali table.

What I learned is that helping well often means getting out of the way. At Tuck I want to bring that to small things: running study groups for classmates who, like me, are rebuilding quantitative skills, and connecting the Energy Club with Upper Valley community programs.

Essay 3: Tuck students are aware. Tell us about a time you received critical feedback and what you did with it. (300 words)

In March 2025 I led our changeover to a new refrigerant. I planned three days. It took nine. New brazing fixtures didn't fit, and I had written the plan alone, so the maintenance lead, Gary, saw the drawings for the first time the morning we started. He was angry, and loud about it on the floor. I was defensive and went over his head to get a contractor.

Afterward my plant manager, Diane, sat me down. Her feedback was blunt: I over-explain and under-delegate. I treat planning as homework I have to finish myself, then present answers instead of asking questions. Gary was right to be angry.

I apologized to Gary first. Then I rewrote the changeover standard with him: every plan now gets a two-hour review with maintenance, quality and both shift leads a week before cutover, and nobody

signs off alone. The October 2025 Line 1 changeover took four days. Gary ran the fixture trials.

I also gave feedback I had been avoiding. A peer supervisor was signing off on safety checklists he hadn't walked. I told him directly, privately, with the three dates, before I raised it with anyone else. It was uncomfortable; he fixed it.

I still catch myself over-explaining. I now ask one question before I offer one answer.

Optional essay

In spring 2020 my father had spinal surgery, and I moved home to Erie to help my mother run the family's hardware store while classes were remote. My GPA that semester was 2.71. My grades recovered the following year, and I retook the GMAT to give stronger evidence of my quantitative readiness.

Recommenders

1. **Diane Okoro**, Plant Manager, Three Rivers Climate Systems - my current supervisor since January 2025.
2. **Marcus Feld**, Director of Continuous Improvement, Three Rivers Climate Systems - my supervisor as an analyst, 2022-2024.