FALL 2012
Pitt Co-op Celebrates 25 Years!

A silver anniversary certainly calls for reflection. The re-established co-op program began with ten pioneering students who took a chance and made a commitment to leave the safety of campus, work at least three alternating terms, take a summer of courses, and convince their parents that extending their graduation date was a good idea. Eight companies made a commitment to offer alternating assignments that would challenge the students; they made a promise to provide mentoring as well as an academic focus along with a fair wage.

Twenty five years later…

This year will boast over 800 active co-op students at over 200 companies, and growing. Our co-op students through the years have earned about $100,000,000. To date, 4,237 students have participated in the program. Our students have worked all over the country as well as some international locations. Countless numbers of former co-ops have established their own programs, and many have gone on to high-level leadership roles within their organizations or even entered such fields as law, medicine, teaching, and even the priesthood and missionary life.

The co-op staff feels blessed to have had the opportunity to work with so many tremendous students and employers. Here’s to the next 25 years! Check out the Web site at www.engineering.pitt.edu/coop to see a map of co-op locations throughout 2012.

“BLAST FROM THE PAST”

Senior Associate Dean Larry Shuman, Director of Freshman Engineering and Co-op Director Kathleen Ganster, Associate Director of Freshman Engineering Sandra Bishop and Assistant Co-op Director Maureen Barcic plan for 1990!

PJ Wright of J & L Specialty Steel accepts the 1993 Co-op Employer of the Year from Associate Dean Larry Shuman

Dr. Clark Mangelsdorf receives the 1998 Employer of the Year Award from Dean Holder and Maureen Barcic.

Third Year for Co-op Employer Panel

Special thanks to ANSYS, BAYER Healthcare, EATON, First Energy, IBACOS, and Mine Safety Appliances for spending an evening with students during our “Advice from the Hiring Experts” Employer Panel hosted on September 19 from 5–7 p.m. in Benedum Hall. Resumes, interviewing, employer expectations and success during a first rotation were topics discussed. Student feedback was so well received that plans are to host again next fall.

Co-op Best Practices

For this fall, a best practices discussion will be incorporated into the breakfast portion of the co-op fair. This provides a chance for employers to discuss how they manage their co-op programs and what ideas or success stories have proven positive results in retention and growth. Lisa K. Wise, EATON’s HR Manager of LDP (Leadership Development Programs), and Tonya L. Horn, Human Resources, College Recruiting Program Lead, from FirstEnergy Corporation will present on their programs while staff from Pitt’s Co-op team will moderate and provide some feedback from students.

“The work that I have been dealing with is relevant to the real world and gives me a true understanding of how engineers live post-graduation.”

Dylan Davis
Industrial Engineering
GE – Energy co-op
Co-op Student of the Year, Co-op Employer of the Year

The Co-op Program is fortunate to have strong employer partners and smart, capable students. Co-op Student of the Year and Co-op Employer of the Year awards recognize the time, effort, and hard work both parties have contributed. This is the time of year to think about those outstanding companies and individuals and submit nominations for the 2012 awards.

The criteria for Co-op Student of the Year are:
1. Excellent academic record
2. Outstanding work contributions with co-op employer (students must have three rotations completed)
3. Volunteerism or contributions to co-op or University community. Ideally, we would like to have one nominee from each department. The University of Pittsburgh can select one candidate to represent us in the National Co-op Student of the Year competition, which is sponsored by the Cooperative Education Division of the American Society for Engineering Education. The winner will be sent to Orlando, Florida in February 2012 to receive recognition at our annual conference along with a plaque and check for $500. We have won this award twice and have had many outstanding finalists.

The criteria for Co-op Employer of the Year are:
1. Sustained commitment to cooperative education at the University of Pittsburgh
2. Quality of projects and assignments

The Co-op Employer of the Year and all Pitt Co-op Student of the Year nominees will be honored at our annual recognition dinner scheduled for Friday, December 7, 2012, at the Pittsburgh Athletic Association.

We look forward to accepting your nominations. Please submit your nomination by Friday, October 12, 2012, to Maureen Barcic at paub2m@pitt.edu. Feel free to contact her with all questions pertaining to the nomination process.

Graduate Co-op Program Review

As most of you know, last year the provost approved a graduate level co-op program. So far we have had 15 participants, and there seems to be much interest among the students. Although some of the graduate candidates are working with our current co-op employers, the program has also enabled us to expand our relationships with some new partners. One of our more adventurous PhD candidates, Bo Zhao, just left to work with Advanced Micro Devices in Ft. Collins, Colorado. We wish him and all of our graduate level students the best and thank them for the contributions they are making to help us build the graduate level co-op program.

Undergraduate Placement Survey now online

Each year the co-op program compiles placement information from recent co-op graduates. For 2011-2012, 81 percent of full-time offers extended to co-op participants were accepted. The average full-time offer totaled $58,665 annually and 95 percent of the graduates are employed in engineering and/or attending graduate school.

Students are now able to submit their placement information online at www.engineering.pitt.edu/ coop/alumni/.

“I truly enjoy working at Ellwood City Forge. It has a good balance of out in the field work (hands on) and other engineering work. I enjoy interacting with the machine operators and receiving their input.”

Robert Hasenbein
Mechanical Engineering
Ellwood City Forge co-op