The Next Generation of Co-ops

It’s been quite a year for co-op at Pitt. Our students are literally from one end of this great nation to the other, and a few have also stepped foot in other continents due to their work assignments. We have had the privilege of seeing quite a few alumni come back to tell us that to this day, co-op is one of the greatest opportunities they had. One of our alumni, Justin Filey, a chemical engineer currently living and working in Chicago, brought his daughter in to meet us. Justin co-oped many years ago with Nova Chemicals and had a great experience. He is strongly encouraging his daughter, who will be attending Pitt, to participate as well in co-op.

Tim Gattie, an alumnus of both civil engineering and co-op, established a co-op program with his company in Seattle, Washington. Chris Hartman, with United Airlines, also instituted a co-op program that will hire our students in Chicago, San Francisco, or Houston. Chris is a former USAirways co-op. Nick Barr, chemical engineer with Glatfelter in Chillicothe, Ohio, is working with our program and is also a co-op from several years ago. Dave Dress and Rachel Clark, both former co-ops with Polynoe and current full-time engineers there, made it possible for us to expand our program with them to Wisconsin. Josh Whitney, former mechanical engineering co-op, brought BlackBox into the program and has already hired several very satisfied co-ops! And Dave Smith, another mechanical engineer with Philips Respironics, has begun a quite successful and popular co-op program! These are but a few examples of our successful engineers who are paying it forward. We appreciate so much the commitment of our employers and welcome all of our new companies.

Students, we hope you have a great fall! If you are already in the program, we hope it is a great experience for you. If you are an applicant, we look forward to seeing you at our co-op fair! As you can see, there is a lot of opportunity and the sky is the limit!

“I cannot imagine graduating college not having this experience, much thanks to Morris Knowles. Coming out of school with solid experience, co-op students certainly have the edge over other graduates.”

Erin Gray
Civil and Environmental Engineering
Morris Knowles and Associates, Inc.

4moms: Co-op Through a Student’s Eyes

When University of Pittsburgh junior Ali Schroder joined the 4moms Mechanical Engineering team in early January 2013, she made company history as our first cooperative education student.

Ali quickly began contributing to several projects, including the design of accessories and a recline mechanism for a new product currently in development. One of the most important skills Ali learned was the process of building products for manufacture, specifically through the use of 3D printers.

Communication and collaboration are keystones of the 4moms culture, and Ali was able develop these skills not only within her engineering group, but also through cross-functional efforts with industrial design, software, and marketing. In fact, Ali became so involved with and passionate about 4moms’ products and team members that it was hard for her to step away and return to classroom life.

Ali offers the following advice to anyone interested in 4moms, and for all students in the co-op program in general: “Do not be afraid to ask questions—and don’t assume you’re the only one who has that question! Also, take the time to use the resources presented to you: whether they be the people you work with, the tools and lab that are available to you, or the creative space needed to get around a roadblock.”

Ali also added, “Finally, remember to embrace the change that comes with engineering. Requirements shift often, and it can be challenging for those working on the project to quickly pivot when they are so engrossed in the work. But, change comes with the industry and while it’s frustrating at times, being able to adapt with the changes will better prepare students for their future careers.”

The opportunity to contribute to the 4moms team has given Ali a different view of what life post-Pitt could be. 4moms provided her the experience of a company that believes in not only building awesome products, but also in building a great company. Ali eagerly anticipates resuming her co-op with 4moms this fall; and we eagerly anticipate her return.

Submitted by Cat Tinsley, 4moms Talent Acquisition
Co-op Students Receive Awards, Honors, and Positions of Leadership

CHANG SCHOLARSHIP (chemical engineering)
Matthew Abramson
Nathan Blundino
Benjamin Carlson
Lauren Sakerra

II-V FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS
II-V Scholarships are awarded to students in the fields of engineering, math, and science. One unique aspect of the scholarship is the requirement of nine weeks of manufacturing, engineering, or science-related experience in an industrial setting.
Kevin Hilgus (mechanical engineering), co-op with Westinghouse
Matthew Higler (mechanical engineering), co-op with DuPont
Kevin Hough (mechanical engineering), co-op with Eaton
Ziquan Zhou (electrical engineering), co-op with Bombardier

As my youngest sibling started her first classes at the Swanson School of Engineering this semester, I find myself often reminiscing on my personal journey and reflecting on how the University of Pittsburgh has greatly impacted my family. My engineering education built a strong foundation for me to apply at work as that I may succeed, and my co-op experience provided me with the opportunity to apply some of that classroom knowledge to real-world applications. By the time that I had graduated, I had become a well-rounded individual with practical experience who employers were seeking to have as part of their team.

In my sophomore year of chemical engineering, I attended a presentation by Johnson & Johnson on their co-op program and I was hooked. The presentation was being led by a Pitt alumna who had worked for J&J for several years. She recognized the talent that Pitt had nurtured and brought the J&J co-op program to campus. I was fortunate enough to be selected as a co-op, and I could not have been more excited. By the time that I had graduated, I had spent a total of 13 months supporting some of the most well-known brands in the world.

The Co-op Employer of the Year and all Pitt Co-op of the Year nominees will be honored at our annual recognition dinner scheduled for Friday, December 6, 2013, at the Pittsburgh Athletic Association.

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

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We look forward to accepting your nominations. Please submit your nomination by Friday, October 11, 2013, to Maureen Barcic at paub2m@pitt.edu. Feel free to contact her with any questions pertaining to the nomination process.

As a senior in chemical engineering, I have always felt indebted to the Pitt co-op program because I believe that it has improved my career. For this reason, I wanted to give back to the school and provide other students with the same opportunity.

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Co-op Partner Mascaro Construction Company awarded prestigious American Business Ethics Award 2012

In 1988, Jack Mascaro had a vision to build a successful construction company based on trust and the highest ethical standards of personal and business behavior.

Jack worked diligently to instill a thoroughly ethical approach to interpersonal relationships and business practices. With each project, with each client, and with each employee who joined the company as it grew over the years, Jack never lost that singular focus on trust and ethics. As chairman of the board, he takes the responsibility for ethical behavior more seriously than ever—even to the point of personally instructing ethics courses for all new Mascaro employees.

Now peers and observers have taken note of the Mascaro business model. Recently, Mascaro Construction Company received a national honor, earning the 2012 American Business Ethics Award (ABEA) from the Foundation for Financial Service Professionals, joining past recipients such as Lockheed Martin, General Mills, MEDRAD, Whirlpool, and Hewlett-Packard.

Receiving the ABEA recognition serves as affirmation that Jack Mascaro’s early vision for his company has become reality. Under his direction, Mascaro Construction Company has emerged as a leading contractor for multiple high-profile buildings and infrastructure projects across the region and around the nation.

The Mascaro principle of trust has been instilled across the company’s roughly 800-person staff and field-based workforce, as well as among Jack’s three sons, John, Jeffrey, and Michael Mascaro, who now operate the company. “It is especially rewarding to see my sons using trust and ethical decision-making as the foundation for advancing our company to new heights,” said Jack.

Reprinted, courtesy of Mascaro Construction. Source: www.mascaroconstruction.com/2012-american-business-ethics-award