Editor’s Note

Studying outside, the Bomber patio, and Scoops ice-cream are all things that remind me of summers in Waterloo. With the warm days among us, and schoolwork impending, take advantage of the treasured “quiet times” often found at the beginning of terms. Things are sure to be bustling before you know it, just don’t forget to take the time to smell the roses – literally!

The Inside sCo-op is meant to help you get back into the groove of academia. Gone are the 9-5 workdays, and we welcome the liberty and labour of school...at least for the next four months. In this edition you’ll find out what some of your peer co-op students have been up to, get up to speed with what’s happening on campus, as well as be reminded of some important news and updates.

If you have any questions, comments, or ideas for future issues of the sCo-op, please contact Olaf Naese, Communications & Public Relations Administrator.

Best wishes,

Jill Campbell
Planning Campaigns for Microsoft: Just Another Day for Fourth Year Co-op Student

By Jill Campbell

You have to admit that when someone tells you they work for Microsoft, you’re immediately impressed. But what exactly do Microsoft employees do, besides computer programming, computer software, and computer this-and-that? Just ask Vik Kambli, a 4A Science-Biotechnology/Economics student. Vik spent an eight-month co-op term with Microsoft Canada, first as the Marketing Communications Associate, and then as the Marketing Co-ordinator.

During his first couple of months with Microsoft, Vik noticed that his team had no tool to view overall metrics generated from marketing campaigns previously executed. After coming up with a plan and receiving the green light to move forward, he developed a tool that allows Microsoft to better target specific customers for various campaigns. “The team now uses this tool as a planning parameter for the majority of upcoming direct marketing campaigns.”

Vik also got to exercise some of his soft skills, particularly those for project management. “The company was entering the fourth quarter of its fiscal year, and there were more advertising campaigns going than execution then our advertising manager had the bandwidth to manage on her own. Seeing this opportunity to further develop my skills set in project management, I asked the advertising manager and our director if I could take on the management of a few of the campaigns.” As a result of his initiative, Vik managed the planning and execution of campaigns for Microsoft Windows, Corporate Brand, Server, and Office.

While working for Microsoft is great, it also has its challenges. Like most large companies, it’s difficult to actually get things done and to make changes. Or as Vik says, “It’s hard to move an elephant.” The positives outweigh the negatives though, especially with the calibre of people Microsoft employs. “This was easily the most talented and driven group of professionals that I have ever worked with, and being in their presence served as a catalyst to inspire me to make the most out of my time with the company.”

One of the reasons Vik feels he’s accomplished so much at Microsoft is his ability to adapt to different circumstances. “Give me 2 weeks and I can adapt to any situation.” Good communication helps too, especially with multiple projects and campaigns simultaneously going on. One of Vik’s supervisors, Carly Watkins, says that “he did a great job of clarifying deadline conflicts upfront and ensuring from the start that each project owner had clear expectations for timelines and deliverables”.

Originally from Whitby, one of Vik’s motives for choosing UW was for its co-op program. “I like co-op for the obvious reasons, one of them to find out what you want to do. You get to experiment.” And experiment he has – Vik’s also had co-op terms with BMW Canada, Campbell Company of Canada, and Grand River Hospital.

for his plans after graduation, Vik hopes to attend grad school and earn a business or law degree. Traveling is very important, “to the Mediterranean!”, and after that, who knows? “Overall, my time with Microsoft was a period of extreme growth, both personally and professionally. I hope to find myself back to them soon.”
Sky-Lyn Priddle was always interested in her major, Health Studies, and she thought she would eventually attend medical school to work as a family physician. That was until she completed her last two co-op terms with the Toronto District School Board. Sky-Lyn worked as an Outdoor Education Intern first for the Scarborough Outdoor Education School (SOES), and then for the Toronto Outdoor Education School (TOES). After her experiences working with children in an educational setting, Sky-Lyn is now planning on becoming a teacher. “Most of my work involved the kids, and for the rest of the time I was assisting the permanent teachers. There are very few places where you get paid to play!” As an Outdoor Education Intern at both SOES and TOES, Sky-Lyn hosted students and provided them with an opportunity to discover the natural environment and develop a respect for it.

Aside from the relationships she developed with the students, Sky-Lyn enjoyed the overall atmosphere and environment she was working in, “It’s like a second family!”

When asked why she chose to attend UW, Sky-Lyn reiterates what most co-op students say, “For co-op. The opportunity to be in Health Studies along with the co-op option was very enticing.” And co-op is working just as she had planned: to figure out exactly what she wants to do after graduation. “I’m glad I changed the direction of my career plan now, instead of years after graduation.” Sky-Lyn intends on attending teacher’s college and to someday teach at the elementary level.

Sky-Lyn’s advice for new co-op students is to explore the job listings for other programs and faculties. “Don’t be afraid to apply to, or accept, a job that’s not in your field, or of interest to you. You may be surprised.” She believes that her responsible and cooperative nature have helped her have successful work terms. “People always say, ‘If you give Sky a task, it will for sure get done’.”

It’s that work ethic that helped Sky-Lyn land her next co-op job for the spring 2006 term. She will be working for the Schizophrenia Program at the Royal Ottawa Hospital. The Program provides specialized mental health services to adults suffering from the disease, and Sky-Lyn will be working with patients at all levels of treatment. Sounds like a perfect fit for Sky-Lyn, and her quest to teach and help others.
If you didn’t understand the title there’s no need to worry, very few people do. Fourth year student Tyler Harvey does, however, because he was coordinating trials like that one during his eight-month co-op term with the Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation at the Hamilton General Hospital.

One might think Tyler’s enrolled in the faculty of Science or AHS, but he’s actually an Environmental Studies student. Always interested in the field of medicine, Tyler took anatomy and physiology courses as electives, and applied to co-op jobs in the same category. “I like my program, but always had an interest in medicine. I never pursued a major in it because I didn’t think I could get in to med school.”

Tyler got the best of both worlds, sticking to his original Environmental and Business program, yet completing work terms relating to medicine. Aside from the multinational randomized double-blind placebo controlled trial Tyler worked on at the Hospital, he had the opportunity to work on another venture called the Coronary Inflammatory Marker Project. It was Tyler’s responsibility to screen, recruit, and enrol patients into the study before they had an angiogram performed. “This study may play an important role in the identification and treatment of people who are at risk for myocardial infarctions in the future.”

A benefit of Tyler having an eight-month term with the Hamilton General Hospital was that he could see the trials he conducted from start to finish. “One of the things I enjoyed most about working at the Hospital was the patient interaction and seeing people go through the entire study.” As for Tyler’s challenges in the role of Research Assistant, “the most difficult was being a ‘salesman’.” With plenty of experience though, Tyler made the most of his time with the Hospital and thus earned his fifth “Outstanding” employer evaluation.

Not only does he excel academically and in a work environment, Tyler is heavily involved in the community and with volunteer activities. In September 2005, he founded the University of Waterloo Triathlon Club because “I am a triathlete and feel that triathlon is a great sport for people of all fitness levels to be involved with.” Tyler was also a volunteer with Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Hamilton during his eight-month stint there, showing that there are opportunities to be involved in any community, whether you’re there temporarily for co-op, or not.

One of Tyler’s strengths is his ability to communicate and interact with others. Dr. Eva Lonn, his supervisor at the Hospital says, “Tyler was extremely efficient, very motivated, and hard working. He is bright, resourceful, and also very tactful and professional in his interactions.”

Co-op has given Tyler the opportunity to have jobs he normally wouldn’t have been able to get. He experienced an array of positions and found out, most importantly, what he likes to do. So what’s next for Tyler? “Teacher’s college – I’m thinking about teaching elementary school!”

By Jill Campbell
UW Students Receive National, Provincial, and Local Co-op Student of the Year Awards

By Jill Campbell

In March 20th, in celebration of National Co-operative Education Week, UW’s Co-operative Education & Career Services announced that two of UW’s co-op students were awarded two separate, prestigious awards. Jit Seng Chen, a Mathematics student, won the national 2005 Canadian Association for Co-operative Education (CAFCE) Co-op Student of the Year Award, and Kayan (Kayley) Ma, an Engineering student, won the provincial 2005 Education at Work in Ontario (EWO) Co-op Student of the Year Award. Both awards are based on the students’ contributions to one or more of their 2005 work term employers, academic achievements, contributions to co-operative education, and commitment to the community as demonstrated through volunteer and extracurricular activities.

Jit Seng Chen, 3A Actuarial Science

Through his own initiative, Jit Seng developed a system for analyzing insurance loss development data that his co-op employer used on a regular basis. The automation of this process saves the employer approximately two hundred hours per period of data, and subsequently a substantial amount of money. Jit Seng was also part of a crucial project involving an important international client, and with his help it resulted in success.

Kayan (Kayley) Ma, 4B Systems Design Engineering

During her last work term, Kayley elaborated on previous work researching manufacturing technologies animation and movie industries, then applied them to the manufacturing industry. Kayley achieved a major breakthrough, enabling the system to perform high quality real-time motion capture, and thus earning her sixth and final “Outstanding” work term performance evaluation.

2005 University of Waterloo Co-op Students of the Year

One student from each of UW’s six faculties was selected to receive the UW Co-op Student of the Year Award. Apart from winning the national and provincial level Awards, Jit Seng Chen and Kayley Ma also won the UW Award for Mathematics and Engineering respectively. The other faculty recipients for the year 2005 are:

Arts: Shaneika Bailey, 3B Social Development Studies

Shaneika spent her last work term with a charitable agency in Guyana where she was instrumental in acquiring funding for building renovations, as well as toy and clothing donations for children. The quest to aid orphans gave her the opportunity to form important relationships with government officials within the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Services, and within the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation. Shaneika also assisted in a peer education program about HIV/AIDS awareness.
Applied Health Sciences: Nicole Bradley, 4B Health Studies

For the year 2005, Nicole spent her two work terms continuing previous research for clinical trials on the effectiveness of palliative radiotherapy and quality of life for patients in the advanced stages of cancer. All aspects of research were experienced by Nicole including study design and proposal, ethics approval applications, and publications of results. She has co-authored three published papers, and has many in the works.

Environmental Studies: Heather O'Hagan, 4B Environment and Business

Heather’s initial responsibility during her previous work term involved applying and obtaining approval for a constructed wetland. However, she was also entrusted with managing shoreline surveillance crews after a malfunction with her employer’s equipment caused 17,000 gallons of oil to escape into Lake Huron. Once the clean-up commenced, Heather reported her findings to regulators, stakeholders, and investigators.

Science: Tasneem Nakhooda, 3B Science and Business

Tasneem’s last work term involved interfacing directly with leading clients from financial, wealth management, and telecommunications companies in order to build customized financial statement solutions. Her technical expertise, as well as her ability to multitask and to meet tight deadlines allowed Tasneem to secure a major contract with a key client. She is also active on-campus as an executive member of the UW SCRUBS committee.

National Co-operative Education Week is coordinated by CAFCE, a national non-profit organization comprising over 400 educators, employers and government officials. The organization is dedicated to ensuring the growth and quality of co-operative education programs across the country.

UW Co-op Student Receives Symposium Young Investigator Award

by Jill Campbell

UW co-op student Sukirtha Tharmalingam has won the Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer (MASCC) Symposium Young Investigator Award. Sukirtha, a Science and Business student, is currently on an eight-month work term with the Toronto Sunnybrook Regional Cancer Centre. In addition to the Award, Sukirtha will be attending the MASCC/ISOO 18th International Symposium in Toronto this June.

The criteria for the Symposium Young Investigator Award are you must be 40 years or younger, in training or in practice two years or less, with an abstract ranked in the top 20%.

An abstract is cutting-edge research or innovations, administration/leadership development, clinical practice, or education, in MASCC’s case pertaining to cancer. Sukirtha submitted an abstract entitled “Patients’ and Health Care Professionals’ Perspectives on the Most Important Quality of Life Issues in Bone Metastases”. MASCC is dedicated to research and education in all aspects of supportive care for patients with cancer, regardless of the stage of their disease.

CECS Reminder:

Keep Your Information Current

Be sure to update your current telephone number and address in Quest. Also, be sure to include your local phone number and email address on your résumé. CECS may need to contact you to pass on important messages. If the department doesn’t have the right contact information, you could miss an important notice or even an interview.
The Benefits of Volunteering

By Jennifer Lam, Student Career Assistant

Are you looking for ways to make a difference while gaining relevant work experience to add to your resume? Do you want to learn new skills and grow as a person? Do you want to explore potential career areas? You can accomplish all of this, and more, by becoming a volunteer!

Volunteering can be one of the most rewarding and best investments you can make with your time. A volunteer is someone who performs a service for free. Although the type of service can vary widely, many volunteer opportunities provide a vital benefit to the community and to the individual organizations assisted, since without the support of volunteers, a lot of programs or services could not take place.

Helping Others

People have many reasons for volunteering. Many want to help others and some are looking for ways to be involved or to make the world a better place. Desires for activism, community building, and self-exploration can also be fulfilled through volunteering. Connect with your community and be a part of the various cultures, activities, issues, etc. that you may never experience otherwise. Perhaps you have a cause you feel strongly about: put your beliefs into action by volunteering your time and efforts toward that cause. Some people volunteer formally through a profit, non-profit, or charity organization, while others volunteer informally by helping a sick neighbour or tutoring a friend.

Personal Growth and Satisfaction

Besides helping others, as a volunteer you will contribute considerably to your own career development. Volunteering can help you more clearly define your career path, while enhancing existing skills or developing a variety of new skills. In today’s world of rapid change, there are always new and necessary skills to learn and build. You will also gain hands-on experience and expand your horizons as you become more knowledgeable in the field in which you volunteer. In addition, you will make numerous interesting and valuable contacts that may be instrumental in your job search later on. Last – but not least! – personal satisfaction, a strengthened sense of personal achievement and value, and increased confidence often result from making a positive impact on an organization or directly on a person’s life.

Where to Volunteer

Choosing an organization you want to volunteer for can be a difficult task since it can be a challenge to find a volunteer position that is a perfect fit for you. You can begin by identifying prospective organizations for which you wish to volunteer. Career Services and volunteer fairs (such as UW’s Volunteer Fair, held at the beginning of each of the Fall and Winter terms) are great places to start when seeking information on organizations recruiting volunteers. Schools and various local community groups can also be helpful. In Kitchener-Waterloo, the Volunteer Action Centre is a terrific source of a wide range of volunteer postings. There is also a plethora of web sites available that can help point you to some amazing opportunities.
The Benefits of Volunteering cont’d...

Farther Afield

Volunteering does not have to be local. If you enjoy travelling around the world, trying new things, and exploring various cultures, you might consider volunteering abroad. Similar to working abroad, you will have the opportunity to see the world with a purpose while changing it for the better. Unlike paid employment, volunteering provides a more flexible schedule and varying time commitments. International volunteer projects generally fall under four main categories: community development, education, eco-environmental work and social welfare. By volunteering abroad, you may learn a new language or experience a new culture and way of life. For more information on international opportunities, visit Career Services in the Tatham Centre. There are also a number of valuable links to volunteer opportunities available through careerservices.uwaterloo.ca (Career-related Websites, then Volunteering or Short-term Programs Overseas).

Research the Organization

Once you locate a potential opportunity, ensure that you are knowledgeable about the organization’s mission statement, values, beliefs, and background before you decide to offer your services. Consult websites and community directories, make inquiries of your immediate and extended network, or contact the organization directly in order to obtain additional information. A vast number of volunteer opportunities are available; however, the key is to research carefully in order for you to select the one that best meets your interests and needs. Do not be afraid to ask questions before making a commitment: a volunteer should be genuinely interested in the organization he or she volunteers for; otherwise there will be little motivation, satisfaction, or enthusiasm. This may result in a less than pleasant experience for both the volunteer and the organization – and not the rewarding experience it should be!

Networking

Maintaining contacts with the people you meet while volunteering is critical to maintaining a strong and effective network. As you make connections with others, you will uncover opportunities you may never have otherwise discovered, because every person you meet is a potential lead to new career prospects.

Volunteering is a win-win situation: you are not only helping yourself, but you are helping others as well. As a volunteer, you can make a difference!

Spring 2006 Co-op Student Staff

Back L-R: Usman Ahmed Raja, Erika Rodrigues, Darryl Drudge
Front L-R: Valentin Tepliakov, Surabhi Venkatesh, Mirue Choi, Cynthia Low, Dylan Bennett, Kelvin Chan, and Jill Campbell

CECS Reminder:

Thank You Notes

Now that you’re back on campus, it’s a good idea to send your employer a thank-you card. Not only is it the polite thing to do, but it also helps solidify your employer as a reference, strengthens your networking skills, and allows you the opportunity to see if your employer is interested in hiring you back if you have not already discussed it. Thank-you notes are small gestures with a big impact.
Why an increase?

UW’s Board of Governors approved an increase in the co-op fee at their April 4, 2006 meeting. The amount of money currently collected from students to pay for co-op is significantly less than the costs the fee was intended to cover. The co-op fee itself actually only addresses CECS costs for co-op related activities, which represent approximately 20% of the total expense of operating our co-op program (see the co-op manual link below for details). The shortfall in revenue collected to cover CECS co-op related activities in the 2004-05 fiscal year was $839,000. A substantial deficit has occurred each year for four out of the past five years with the University underwriting the funding gap each time.

Basically the increase in the co-op fee will go toward keeping pace with a higher student population and new co-op programs of study, as well as higher costs of supplies and services purchased by CECS.

When will the increase take effect?

The new co-op fee will be in effect beginning with the Spring 2006 registration.

Will this fee increase solve the problem?

The increase in the co-op fee will not fully cover next year’s CECS co-op related costs, but will start to close the gap between costs and revenues. Gradual increases to the co-op fee in upcoming years are possible.

Was CECS not under budget for 2004-05?

Yes. And, CECS expects to stay within budget this fiscal year too. But co-op fee revenue has not kept pace with budget increases, so there is a gap. The largest expense is staff salaries, so when positions become vacant our needs are always thoughtfully examined before replacements are considered. The current review of the employment process being conducted by Management Science professors will make recommendations for improvements in how we work as well as in service. This will enable CECS to move toward a clearer understanding of its co-op costs in the future.

Is CECS budget-conscious?

Yes. In fact, CECS has been managing its costs effectively and expects to stay within budget this fiscal year. But co-op fee revenue has not kept pace with budget increases, so there is a gap. The largest expense is staff salaries, so when positions become vacant our needs are always thoughtfully examined before replacements are considered. The current review of the employment process being conducted by Management Science professors will make recommendations for improvements in how we work as well as in service. This will enable CECS to move toward a clearer understanding of its co-op costs in the future.

How do UW co-op fees compare with other schools?

A sampling of co-op fees at other universities indicates that, after the increase, UW will still be within the range of per work term fees. For example, assuming a student has six work terms and eight academic terms, the UW cost per work term works out to $647 (not including the building fee). The costs per work term at some other universities are:

•Brock University - $600
•University of Guelph - $600
•Wilfrid Laurier - $624
•University of Ottawa - $750
•University of Toronto - $1,000-$1,200

Amounts above are based on a 2005 survey and are costs per work term, i.e. total fee billed divided by number of work terms.
The Co-op Japan Program

The Co-op Japan Program is a Canadian university-based co-op program. It links some of the best engineering, science, business, and arts discipline undergraduate students with highly committed Japanese businesses. The Program formally integrates an undergraduate’s Canadian academic studies with valuable work experience in a Japanese company, while giving the companies the opportunity to hire highly capable Canadian students. Some of the benefits of participating are:

- Gaining relevant, hands-on, technical experience in some of Japan’s most sophisticated industries
- Developing a practical understanding of the Japanese corporate environment and business practises
- Enhancing future career opportunities through international experience
- Improving Japanese language skills
- Learning about Japan’s unique culture
- Developing lasting professional contacts

Neven Klacar was presented with the Co-op Japan Program 2006 Student of the Year Award on March 1, 2006. Neven, a UW Computer Engineering co-op student, received the Award at the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo, Japan. He was selected from a group of forty-one outstanding co-op students from participating Canadian universities across Canada.

For eleven months, Neven was employed by Taiyo Industrial Co., located in Wakayama. Taiyo, founded in 1960, has made valuable contributions to the fashion textile printing industry over the past forty years. More recently, Taiyo has also developed and manufactured microcomputer application technology and designed the manufacturing of Printed Circuit Boards.

Early Match Process Pilot

Questions and Answers with Peggy Jarvie, Executive Director, CECS

What was the reasoning behind the Early Match Pilot?

The reasoning behind the test project was that every term, in spite of consistently high numbers of interviews with high numbers of students; many employers were not coming out of the first round with a match. Additionally, larger numbers of qualified students were not being interviewed. The Early Match pilot was an attempt to increase the likelihood of successful matches during the first round of interviews.

What were the results?

Starting in Fall 2005, we ran the test for two terms. Following the Fall test and hearing employer and student feedback, although some employers and students were very happy with the results, we recognized there were some flaws. We made a few changes for the Winter Term including a move from a daily match to a weekly match because both employers and students were requesting more choice.

After the Winter term Early Match, we found in our final analysis of the numbers, that there was not enough improvement in the employment rates to offset the problems we were experiencing as a result of this match process. The test in fact, demonstrated conclusively that improvement in one area seemed to result in degradation in another area.

The notion of employers posting jobs and students applying for them seems like a simple process. But once you peel back the layers, the variety of differing needs in regards to both the employers and the students, results in something which is far more complex than what appears on the surface.
For the average UW student, the idea of fear tearing you away from your university education is hard to imagine. We are fortunate enough to live in a land where going to class is a nuisance, where midterms conflict with your Reading Week vacation, and where getting an education isn’t risking your life. All the while there are students exactly like you and me who have been forced to flee their countries because of political repression or war. They are now refugees in a foreign and often unwelcoming place, where they are unable to continue their education.

The Student Refugee Program (SRP), part of the World University Service of Canada (WUSC), has been successfully enabling refugee students from all over the world to continue their education in Canada. In the 27 years the SRP has been around, they have aided over 850 students. WUSC currently is supporting individuals who are now in refugee camps in Kenya, Malawi, and Thailand, and UW is looking to help one more student achieve their dream of completing post secondary education.

UW has started a WUSC local committee with the intentions to sponsor a student refugee in the near future. In terms of financial support, the UW WUSC local committee will be looking for support from various university communities for their first student refugee, anticipated to arrive in the fall of 2006. The WUSC local committee eventually plans to hold a student referendum when the UW WUSC profile on campus is greater. Following a model of several other universities like Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU), the UW WUSC local committee would likely be asking each student to contribute $1-2 per term towards the SRP program, and this would allow UW to support 1-2 student refugees for a fixed period of time of 2 or 3 years. Currently WLU has made a commitment to 2 student refugees for 3 years each and does so by collecting (from a smaller student body than UW) $2 per term from each student. That’s not even two cups of Timmie’s coffee!

It’s easy to get involved with WUSC. The local committee has regular meetings to attend, and there’s always room for more student volunteers. WUSC also hires co-op students. Shaneika Bailey, an Arts student, completed a work term with WUSC for the winter 2006 semester as the University and Colleges Programming Assistant. Shaneika is also the UW Arts Co-op Student of the Year Award winner for the year 2005.

For more information, contact Hammad Din or Lisa ter Woort.

>> Early Match Process Pilot cont’d

What is the process for Spring Term?

Until we have determined a better process, we have decided to return to our prior model for the Spring Term. Our experiences over the last two terms clearly demonstrated the employment process is not something that can be incrementally tinkered with. We do however; recognize the process needs to be updated to both today’s employment demands and the sheer size of Waterloo co-op.

What is the long-term goal?

Based on what we learned with this Early Match experience, I have initiated a comprehensive review of the employment process by Management Sciences (a part of the Engineering Faculty.) The goal for this project is to identify both short and long term improvements in the employment process.

We are committed to providing the best process we can to ensure the best possible fit for students and employers. Although the size of our model presents unique challenges, the fact is we have a deep pool of great talent here. We are committed to isolating the balance between the greatest choice for both employers and students along with the optimal matches and ensuring our process provides this a consistent and dependable manner.