This past semester I worked as a Co-op at BorgWarner Morse TEC in Ithaca, New York. I worked in the manufacturing engineering department at the Engine timing components plant. The primary function of my working group was to provide engineering support to help reach production and quality objectives.

The day I arrived, an orientation was provided for all new Co-ops. It consisted of a series of presentations that helped us to learn about the policies and practices of the company. Additional informal orientation was provided over my first few weeks as I learned my way around the plant and began to familiarize myself with BorgWarner’s products and technology.

Most of my work was in support of the VCT (variable cam timing) department. This is new and exciting technology that has allowed for cars to increase fuel efficiency without sacrificing performance. Many of the larger projects I worked on were capability studies in which I measured critical dimensions of large quantities of parts. After completing the measurements I analyzed the data and put together graphs and charts that were presented to our customers.

Before I arrived at BorgWarner, I was assigned a Co-op supervisor. Later in my term all of the Co-ops were re-assigned to a new supervisor. Everyone was very friendly and I felt comfortable approaching anyone with questions. I was assigned projects by almost all of the engineers in my department.

I am studying mechanical engineering and I am interested in vehicle engineering as potential career path. At BorgWarner I worked with automotive technology designed by mechanical engineers. This enabled me to learn a great deal
about how the different departments of an engineering company operate. It was fascinating to see how the departments work both independently and collaboratively to produce quality products. My position also helped me to gain a tremendous amount of real world experience that will help prepare me for future employments. Additionally, my communication skills have improved considerably since I began working there. Also, I feel that working on many projects at a time, as I did during my Co-op, forced me to improve my organizational skills.

Having a Co-op in Ithaca was very convenient. I lived in college town for the duration of my Co-op, which gave me approximately a 10 minute commute. It is possible to find housing that is closer to BorgWarner and also significantly cheaper than college town, but my proximity to Cornell allowed me to continue my participation in on campus extra-curricular activities. The best way to commute to BorgWarner is to drive. There is a large parking lot next to the plant and it would be very difficult to get to work on time using any other means of transportation (walking, biking, etc).

BorgWarner has an employee association that you can join for $2 a month. The association sponsors many nice events including a holiday dinner. During the summer there is a softball tournament held on the BorgWarner campus. Each department fields a team. There is also a pool that can be used when the weather is nice.

Overall, through my Co-op I gained first-hand experience in engineering as well as experience in working in the real world. Everyone at BorgWarner was great to work with, and I always had many projects to work on which improved my ability to multi-task and to organize my time more efficiently.