Enviro-Control Technologies Job Summary

For my second co-op term, I worked at Enviro-Control Technologies in Ithaca, NY. I was a Project Monitor and Air Sample Technician, who oversaw the asbestos abatement contractors. Before I went into the field to a construction site, I had to a 40-hour course to become certified, which was provided by the company. In the course, I learned how to properly remove asbestos and what was expected as a project monitor. In the following weeks, I had some in-field training setting up and taking air samples, monitoring asbestos remediation, creating various reports, and performing visual inspections. When I had questions or concerns, I would call my supervisor for advice/suggestions. As a project monitor, one of my biggest responsibilities was to approve that the asbestos was completely removed from a work area, and that the surrounding area is safe for the general public. This required a lot of attention to details and knowing exactly what to look for in the work area. In addition to working with asbestos remediation, I also worked in PCB remediation, which I had to perform some screening tests to measure the concentration of PCB of the abated areas.

This job did not relate to my studies as a Chemical Engineer, but did implement some of the techniques and concepts for my courses and had useful experiences. As a project monitor, I was required to keep a detailed log of the events that occurred on-site. Any activity that was performed, orders given to contractors, information about workers had to be accurately documented. Communication was essential as well. I had to meet with abatement contractors and discuss the plans for the day, as well as be on the same ground as to what is expected from the project. I also had to communicate with our analytic lab and contact different vendors for supplies and equipment. I definitely gained more confidence in speaking with other people, especially from what I had learned during my first co-op term. This job also broadened my vision of the types of jobs out there and how much work and management is required in the construction industry.

The work hours were not always the same for me each day. There were some weeks where I am in the office working on miscellaneous things and other weeks in the field. I enjoyed the various changes from one location to another or just working in the office. If you enjoy working where your location was different every few weeks but the job is the same, project monitoring would be an interesting job to have. One of the best features about this work is that out of the eight hours of work, there is probably two to three hours of actual work spread out in
the eight hours, because most of the time, you just watch other people work. In addition, I had the opportunity to explore the city just by traveling to the various sites. The worst feature, on the other hand, would be that being a project monitor is boring because I am just watching others work most of the time, and working with carcinogenic materials. Asbestos is a very hazardous material to inhale, and requires extensive personal protection. Yet, the exposure to the hazardous materials was kept minimal.

Life outside of work was not too bad. Since the office is located in downtown Ithaca, I lived in Collegetown in an apartment that I would be staying in for the school year. I already had a place to live, but there are plenty of subletters to choose from if I needed something for the summer. Since my work required a lot of traveling, I had to get a car. Taking the bus would be an option but it is more convenient to have a car to get to the different sites. Also, there was a company car that I would use occasionally to transport a lot of equipment or when working with other project monitors. This summer I had a lot of free time and had the opportunity to explore Ithaca a bit, discovering some nice restaurants, parks and other activities this city has to offer. We did not have any social events or other activities within the company as it consisted of about twenty employees split between two locations.

Even though this job was not directly related to my studies as a Chemical Engineer, I still learned a great deal and gained some valuable experience that would benefit my career in the future. Taking what I learned from my first and second co-op term, I know that I will be prepared to meet the expectations of future employers. I definitely would recommend having a co-op or internship before graduating from college because it will better prepare you for what to expect and what is expected. Any work is beneficial as it gives you some exposure of corporate culture, different from that of school.

Co-op Student: Benson Wong  
Supervisor: Paul Carubia  
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Date