As an Industrial Engineering co-op at Estée Lauder my primary tasks were to set operating standards, conduct production floor reviews, and route products to lines. Operating standards indicate the optimal way for a certain product to run on a specific line. Writing an operating standard means determining the assembly steps, how many crew members should be working on each step, and how fast the line should be running. These standards are written daily for the products that are running on the production floor that day and that do not have existing standards. Carrying out floor reviews involves going down to the production floor with a copy of the operating standards to observe how the line is crewed—how many crew members are working on each assembly step—and the speed at which the line is running. These observations are compared against the operating standards and any discrepancy is discussed with the supervisors or mechanics. They will then either make the necessary changes (rearrange the crew or speed up the line) or provide a legitimate reason for why the line is not running optimally. All of these observations are documented in a floor review database. Routings essentially assign products to specific lines. The co-op’s duty is to set preliminary routings and then finalize them. Inputting this data requires you to become familiar with one of several computer programs used at Estée Lauder.

Along with these daily assignments, I received short projects from one of the Industrial Engineers in the department as well as from my supervisor. Most of the projects that you work on require knowledge of Microsoft Access, particularly with queries, so I was relieved that I had had some exposure to the program in OR&IE 312. I also felt that departmental staff changes during my work term left me with a great deal of independence. Although initially I was unsure
of what to do with the extra time that I had on my hands, I soon decided that to make the most of my time with the company I should take initiative by seeking potential projects for myself. I developed and maintained a list of ideas that might improve the efficiency of production; although upon further research I ended up rejecting many of these ideas myself, I do not regret the effort I put into them. I was able to grasp the nature of communication in the workplace. Furthermore, I benefited from seeing the different backgrounds from which my co-workers came. It helped me achieve a clearer sense of career direction and where I want to be after I graduate. At the same time, however, as several of the past co-ops have mentioned, I would like to have had more assigned work to do. The company should take greater advantage of the educational background of the co-op students and the time that they have on their hands.

For housing my supervisor gave me the contact information of a former EL employee who rents out the basement of her home to co-op students. The basement is like a small apartment and the rent is not pricey compared to other housing options. As the supervisor mentioned in the interview, you need to have a car to get to work. I enjoyed my time outside of work and was able to pursue some of my hobbies. I took dance classes once or twice a week, took up an unpaid internship for a few hours a week, went shopping frequently, and did some leisure reading. I also drove to visit friends in the area and at Cornell several times.

The most valuable aspect of my co-op experience was gaining an understanding and familiarity with the professional work environment. I am much better prepared for entering the workplace, particularly at an entry-level position. In particular, I feel that the fall co-op work term is beneficial to your professional development since there are fewer interns than in the summer so you feel more part of the organization. Lastly, I want to add that it is helpful to constantly keep in mind the significance of the work you are doing. The daily tasks can get
tedious, but if you realize that they are actually quite vital to the department and company, they will seem less so. For instance, operating standards provide a crucial benchmark for performance evaluation and the data collected from floor reviews can be used to analyze how products and the lines are running. Also, the more time you spend on the production floor the more familiar you will become with operations and current projects. After all, all of the work that is being conducted in the office is based on how the floor is operating. Finally, initiating projects on your own will help you learn a great deal about the company while developing your professional skills, not to mention it will allow you to make the most of your co-op.
I worked for Estee Lauder in Melville, New York, at one of their production sites on Long Island. Specifically I worked in the Industrial Engineering department. Estee Lauder is really composed operationally of each of its individual brands, the various production and distribution sites and finally the main headquarters of the company located in Manhattan. The role of the Industrial Engineering department is to work most closely with the production and distribution facilities, making sure they operate as efficiently as possible. Our goal is to make sure high quality products are created with great service to the brands and end customer, but overseeing that this process is done efficiently. I specifically worked under the production branch of Industrial Engineering, working mainly with the manufacturing facility located within the Melville plant. It was my goal at the end of the day to make sure our production lines operated with the correct number of employees and at speeds which delivered the proper efficiencies and costs to our brands. I also looked for various ways for the production process to occur more efficiently and save money.

My job position consisted of some daily tasks as well as larger projects. Day in day out, I wrote the standards that our production lines attempted to meet as well as reviewing each line to make sure these standards were met. My major project of the work term was to come up with five large ideas that attempted to improve the efficiency of our facility and in the end limit costs. Each idea started as a concept that I believed would make and impact on our floor. Through the use of individual studies and problem solving skills I attempted to provide rational behind how my ideas would make an impact and how large of one they would make. Each idea generally boiled down to how much money an idea could save and how feasible it was to implement the idea. At the end of my work term I presented my ideas and findings to my supervisor, my co-workers and the management of the production floor. For example, two of my ideas sought to take a manual process and make it a digital, semi-automated process with the justification of cost savings. The price of implementing each idea cut into the savings of each. If the savings outweighed the cost and the idea seemed feasible to implement, the idea was considered to be a good one. More specifically, the net present value of each project was evaluated, with the goal of finding positive returns. I also was asked to help complete side projects with my spare time that our department was working on. Almost every one of my projects required interacting with the other engineering and production departments. They were able to provide me with knowledge and other needed information or data my projects depended on.

Training was essentially provided with an orientation tour and someone showing me how to go about my daily tasks. I also was given a reference book which was a great resource for many of my questions. A mentor was also provided to me by my supervisor. This particular reference was irreplaceable. My mentor was capable of answering any
question I had. He was also able to show me the general processes behind writing operating standards and completing floor reviews. My supervisor was very friendly and easy to approach. He is extremely well versed and knowledgeable in what he does and was very willing to pass his helpful thoughts on to me, even if just for a few minutes. My supervisor often had novel ways of looking at ideas or situations. His unique perspective changed the way I approached many of my projects. Throughout my semester he became a great outlet to discuss any topic of the engineering world. Everyone in my department was very friendly and more than willing to answer any questions I had or help me in any way.

While I was not in the Operations Research program at Cornell, I found there to be quite a bit of crossover to my major of Biological Engineering. I have a specific interest in business and would like to apply my engineering degree to this interest. There were considerable applications of my work activity to this particular field. Estee Lauder is a very large, global corporation and while interning in one pocket of the company I got a feel of how any large corporation operates. I saw how production meshed with each individual brand's needs and wants as well as the planning and basic finances of each product. While I principally worked on engineering projects, I got to see how things tied into the bigger, production process of a finished good. I also started to get a taste of how the entire corporation was tied together and the relationships different pieces had to each other. I discovered how any large corporation functions and I now feel confident that I can be successful in any similar environment. The entire experience start to finish really helped me develop me personally. I further expanded my comfort level with speaking and interacting with adults in a professional setting. However, I became friends with many of my co-workers as well, that valuable experience I will be able to apply to any workplace I am a part of.

I honestly had no idea where I would be able to find housing with only a four month lease. After asking my employer, he recommended the name of a former employee who usually rents out her basement apartment to co-op students. While it certainly was not an ideal living arrangement, it worked out well for the four months I needed a place to live. The family I stayed with was very friendly and accommodating. My position required a car to transport myself from my apartment to work everyday. The Long Island Railroad was great as a form of transportation into New York City. On weekends I generally traveled to visit friends at college and I generally drove their as well. When I first arrived for this position in August there were a variety of people my age around the area and beaches were a great place to spend a weekend. Unfortunately, within a few weeks everyone my age returned to college somewhere, which left the area I worked and lived a predominantly adult, residential area where not very much existed in terms of social activities. I tried very hard through a variety of outlets to meet people in my age demographic essentially to no avail. I joined a local gym and spent most weeknights working out for a few hours and then going to bed. In an attempt to join a continuing education art class I attended the informational meeting. Sadly, I found the other participants at to be mostly over the age of 50, with myself being the only person under the age of 30. While I am generally a very social person, I found it very difficult to adapt to this type of lifestyle. I guarantee my summer session would have been much more
enjoyable socially as people my age are in the area living at home or working. My employer did provide athletic intramurals; unfortunately softball and volleyball take place in the spring/summer semesters and none are offered during the fall.

The best features of this job were the wide range of experience I gained from the position. I will be able to apply what I have learned to a variety of career paths. I feel like many employers will find the skills I acquired here to be very valuable. The job itself was very satisfying and was the perfect mix of challenging projects with an enjoyable, professional work setting. Unfortunately, the only negative feature of my job came with my living arrangement. For me the social interaction opportunities on Long Island during the work week were lacking. Living in a more urban location would have provided more personal interaction close to my doorstep. However, a trip to New York City proved to be impossible as a social outlet form during weeknights. I found the overall lack of social stimulation during the work week to be difficult. The work environment provided a pleasurable amount of professional interaction and my gym offered a small level of interaction with adults much older than me. However, my living arrangement only provided human interaction through the use of a cell phone, and with characters located in a television set. I wish I had sacrificed more money, time and energy to find a living arrangement where at the very least I had a roommate to come home to and share some sort of social outlet during weeknights. Unfortunately I really had no idea what the social situation would be on Long Island prior to me moving into my apartment. This should not at all take away from the overall fantastic experience I had working for Estee Lauder, just something to think about when making plans for living arrangements. Estee Lauder was a great company to work for and it provided me with an overwhelming amount of positive experiences that I will be able to apply to my future endeavors.