Job Summary

My first co-op term took place at Procter & Gamble’s Hunt Valley Technical Center located in Baltimore, Maryland. This site is the primary R&D hub for P&G’s Color Cosmetics North American business unit. Accordingly, the brands I worked on were Covergirl and MAXFACTOR. I was placed in Research & Development, specifically in the Process (responsible for bringing innovations from the pilot scale to production scale), Face (liquid makeup/foundations) group.

The majority of my work fell into two categories, both hinging on rheology (a sub-study of fluid dynamics defined as the study of flow and deformation of matter). I was tasked with standardizing the rheological characterization of P&G’s cosmetic products during production, as well as improving consumer to technical modeling efforts.

I had no experience with rheology prior to beginning my work term, but my supervisor and co-workers did an excellent job on bringing me up to speed. They ensured that I had access to all the information/resources I required to be successful. My assigned mentor/supervisor was very approachable, and everyone was willing to help me when I required it.

Frankly, I had never considered color cosmetics (mascara, liquid makeup, etc) as a field I could see myself working in. Upon arriving at my work site however, I was taken aback by P&G’s winning approach to product innovation. There is a great deal of very interesting and challenging engineering work that goes on to produce Covergirl’s cosmetic products.
Professionally, P&G does an amazing job of developing their interns/co-ops. P&G is a “hire from within” company, so they work diligently to ensure that all of their employees are successful. Additionally, P&G takes the work co-ops do very seriously. It was a rewarding experience to see my work lead to real world outcomes.

Life outside of the co-op was enjoyable. It was nice taking a break from classes and enjoying the working world. Not having homework/weekend work was amazing! P&G does a good job of ensuring their co-ops have ample opportunities to unwind outside of the office. I played basketball with my co-workers and went to events around Baltimore to relax after work.

My overall experience co-oping at P&G was overwhelmingly positive. My work was satisfying, the people were fantastic, and I developed both personally and professionally.
Job Summary
Joseph Edwards (jbe39)
Biological Engineering, '14
Procter & Gamble
Term 2: Summer 2013

I spent the second term of my co-op working in Beauty Care Technology Development at Procter & Gamble (P&G). I had requested both a location change and a work change from my previous term’s experience. I spent my first co-op term in Baltimore working in P&G color cosmetics (Covergirl/Maxfactor brands) in a downstream process-engineering role. I wanted to move more upstream in the R&D pipeline and to experience the headquarters of P&G, so I spent the summer of 2013 working in Cincinnati, Ohio (where P&G is headquartered).

The technical functions of my working group were to develop technologies to grow the beauty care segment of P&G’s business. These platform technologies have impacts across multiple categories, and are the basis for P&G’s products 10-15 years down the road. In this way, technology development is very far upstream in the research and development structure of the company. My specific project focused on developing a novel imaging prototype to visualize skin at the micron (1 um) level in three dimensions. Gaining a greater understanding of skin topography via real time visualization technologies enables the company to better design products to deliver better consumer beauty benefits. A technical coach and multiple company experts in imaging and skin care technology provided my training. All of these resources were very approachable, and they helped develop my technical skills.

My project was only slightly related to my academic focus. I am a biological engineering major, and my project focused heavily on imaging methods. Although knowledge of biological principles did come in handy when assessing skin care technologies, the primary skills I used were more aligned with the physics discipline of optics. That said, my project consisted of developing a prototype, so general engineering design and problem-solving skills were critical to my success. This project influenced my professional development by exposing me to the upstream technology development world of a large, research-driven company like P&G.

P&G does a great job of ensuring all the co-ops/interns have access to housing. I was given a recommendation to live at Xavier University (downtown Cincinnati), and that worked out really well. I rented a single room from someone on Craigslist during my first co-op experience. Living in a university dorm was a much more social/pleasant experience this second time around. I had a car with me and commuted ~20mins to work. Carpooling options were available too. Socially, downtown Cincinnati has plenty to offer. I went to a water park, a flea market, MLB games, and to multiple restaurants during my time there.

The best features of my job were the freedom I had to develop a prototype at my own pace and with my own style. I was given a general engineering objective and the support to achieve it. It was an amazing experience, and it helped develop me professionally. The worst feature of the job was probably the high degree of time management/logistical awareness I had to maintain in order to accomplish such a
multifaceted objective. The constant race against the 10-week (length of my 2nd term) clock was a struggle.

Procter & Gamble is a fantastic company, and I look forward to working in a full time position with them after graduation. Like many, I did the co-op program because I: A) wanted exposure to working in the "real world" before I graduated, and B) wanted job security coming into senior year. The decision to apply and become an engineering co-op student is undoubtedly the best one I've made at Cornell.