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First Rotation Job Summary

My first co-op rotation was with the Logistics Technology group at LMI. This group is a subset of the Logistics business unit. The majority of projects that my group is involved in deal with transportation logistics and information technology systems. While at LMI, I worked on projects for several of government agencies including the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC), United States Transportation Command (US TRANSCOM) and the NY-NJ-PA-CT Regional Catastrophic Planning Team (RCPT). The topics of these projects ranged from satellite communications to transportation logistics to emergency management preparation. While working on these projects, I utilized Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Access and Visio. LMI also provided multiple training sessions and brown bag luncheons that ranged from presentation skills to an introduction to the Department of Defense. On my first day of work at LMI, I was assigned a mentor who is a member of my group. Whenever I had questions, I felt comfortable approaching either my mentor or the project leader/team members of the task that I was working on.

My first rotation at LMI was very beneficial in that it was a great way to gain experience in consulting as this may be a field to pursue after graduation. This rotation also helped to prepare me for classes in the spring as I can now relate the topics that I learn with real world examples that I have come into contact with while at LMI. This experience also taught me about group dynamics and client interaction. It was great to see how LMI and other government organizations work together to solve problems. I found it also very interesting to learn the ins and outs of consulting firms including the proposal process, project plans and project management.

Finding affordable housing in Northern Virginia for the first co-op rotation was mildly difficult. While the D.C. metro area has a variety of short-term leasing options and sublets, the month to month rate is rather high. I had the fortunate chance of being able to
live with another one of the co-ops from Cornell and we were able to save a good amount of money on housing costs. We leased an apartment for four months in Falls Church, VA (approximately seven miles from LMI) and our commute ranged anywhere from twenty minutes to an hour depending on when we left for work. While there does exist a mass transit system in the greater D.C. metro area, LMI is not currently served by a close metro rail stop (although a new metro rail line is under construction) and therefore is served only by metro bus. I would highly recommend a car as it allows you the freedom to not be limited by metro routes. While on co-op I worked a second job to help fulfill a scholarship requirement. As for social activities, the co-ops did some sight-seeing in D.C., hung out on the weekends and even went to a Red Skins game.

The environment at LMI is collegiate in nature which allows for collaborative learning and working. There are also a variety of projects going on at any given time and there are many people with years of experience in both the public and private sector. By having this wealth of knowledge and collegiate atmosphere, I was able to learn and become exposed to not just LMI, but also the clients we work for and other government/commercial organizations. Other great features of this job were the flexibility in the work schedule and the approachability of management. One of the drawbacks to LMI though was the speed and frequency of the work available. At some points it seemed that there weren’t enough hours in the week to get everything done and at other points it was a struggle to get work to do. This, however, is a function of how government contracts are awarded. Overall LMI is a great place to work as a co-op and I would recommend it to any student looking for an excellent place to start in the professional world.
A. Co-op Work Assignment

LMI is a not-for-profit consultancy headquartered in the Washington D.C. area. The company comprises about 850 employees, with its biggest contingent in McLean, Virginia. LMI is made up of three business units: logistics, infrastructure and resource management. All of the co-ops are typically located within the logistics business unit. The logistics business unit is organized into program groups, and mine was the logistics analysis group.

LMI works with virtually every sector of the government on a huge variety of projects. My group does a lot of work with the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), a logistics unit of the Department of Defense (DoD). One of my main projects was a project for the DLA dealing with identifying and resolving issues with their invoice payment process. The project concluded with me giving a presentation to the client exposing their high-risk areas, bottlenecks in the process, and recommendations on how to improve efficiency and how to reduce the number of errors.

A second project involved a concept called Decision Based Logistics Engineering. The rationale behind the project was the lack of a systematic process for planning logistics and a high barrier of entry into the field of logistics engineering due to confusing jargon and disconnected resources. For the project I helped design the content structure and then coded a Wiki that uses a plain English approach to unify the disparate resources and provide an intuitive way to plan logistics for a system.

The third major project that I worked on dealt directly with uniform manufacturing facilities in Puerto Rico. The manufacturers were implementing a new
Radio Frequency Identification tagging system for apparel. Part of my onsite work dealt
with helping implement the new tagging system into the plant’s processes and the other
part was to document the processes for time efficiency and error rates.

LMI has a training regimen designed for all employees. I took courses in
everything from corporate ethics to proposal development. All co-ops are assigned a
mentor to help out with anything general, and also there is usually a mentor figure on
each project that can help the co-ops with anything they do not understand or have a
question about.

B. Assessment of Learning and Development

LMI is a great opportunity for a co-op looking to get experience in logistics
consulting. It is not a business consultancy like many companies that OR students work
for. It has allowed me to combine OR thought processes and logic to a number of
different types of problems. For example, on the manufacturing project, I learned about
manufacturing processes, database analysis, data transfer and even used some basic
statistics in analysis of errors. But it also had the consulting piece where I was able to
write up reports and presentations to give to the clients and I had a lot of experience
dealing with other contractors.

I think that I learned a lot of soft skills working at LMI. This includes giving
presentations (writing and presenting), dealing with clients in person and through
conference calls and also how to use written communication effectively. There are a lot
of unwritten protocols to communicate in the work place that are difficult to learn with
out actual experience.
C. Life Out-side of Co-op

Deciding on where to live in DC depends a lot on the balance between social life and how much you are willing to spend on rent. LMI is easiest to get to by car, but it is possible to use the Metro system (it requires a bus ride from a Metro rail stop). For less money there are options in the Falls Church area, but it is somewhat of a hassle to go into the city and to the various college campuses around. Rosslyn, VA is a very nice place to live if you are looking for a more active nightlife. It is only one stop on both the orange and blue Metro lines to Foggy Bottom (George Washington University) and a short walk to Georgetown. LMI is about a 15-20 minute commute from the Rosslyn area. Craigslist is a good way to find a place. I would recommend having a car (parking will run at about $100/month for a garage spot in Rosslyn, a lot more if you live in the District) for getting to and from work, but the metro is very useful at night and on the weekends.

DC is obviously packed with social activities. If you are into sports, the Redskins, Wizards, Nationals, Capitals and DC United are all fun to go to. There are also a lot of recreational leagues around the area including ultimate frisbee and flag football. There are many areas full of nightlife geared towards young professionals and college students. LMI has a few activities they put on including a softball league, a number of runs and teams participating in events such as the American Heart Walk.

D. Evaluation

LMI is truly a unique company. A large portion of the staff is retired military personnel with immeasurable amounts of experience. The corporate culture provides for a more relaxed work atmosphere that promotes collaboration and the senior level analysts
are always willing to help out. Everyone’s doors are open and there are no shortages of retired colonels and generals that you will refer to on a first name basis when you ask them for some help. The connections I have made and the knowledge I have learned about the government and military is invaluable. The projects are also interesting and as a co-op I was made an important member of my teams and was given a good balance of guidance and independence to use my analytic skills along with soft skills used in giving presentations. The corporate structure is also very flat which is good because even as an entry level worker I was given the opportunity to work with my program director and had face time with the vice president of my business unit on a fairly regular basis – hearing directly from the upper management about what they are thinking and doing with the company.

I think the worst features of the job are also some of its best. The company is very much geared towards government work and DoD projects, which is great for co-ops that are interested in all of this. I think that some of the co-ops were less aware of this fact and came in expecting a more analytical and less consulting type position. If consulting in the field on logistics is something that a co-op would like to try (and I would highly recommend it), it is a great experience.

**E. Additional Information**

LMI has a broad range of interests and each co-op is assigned one of the specific groups with in the logistics business unit. If you have a particular interest or a field you would like to explore, do not hesitate to say so during the hiring process or once at work. They are happy to accommodate but you must speak up for yourself if you want to try
something different than assigned. As I would presume in most work places (and at Cornell), you must be an advocate for yourself and the employers want you to succeed because they are paying you a lot of money, so let me know what they can do to help you out. For example, LMI pays at the end of each month, but if you need an advance for the first month for rent, they are happy to give it to you, you just need to ask.
Co-op Work Assignment
Within LMI, there are three business units, and all co-ops work in the largest unit—Logistics. This unit is divided into many groups; I worked in the Maintenance & Readiness group, which helps military departments measure the readiness of equipment.

I supported several on-going projects, as well as many smaller undertakings. One of the largest tasks was a congressional study that analyzed the health of military depots (large maintenance warehouses where major equipment repairs and overhaul occur), taking characteristics like finances and workload into account. Because this is a two-year study, the final draft will be completed late 2010, and the recommendations made might affect policy planning in the future. I joined the project late, after we started receiving data that we requested from the services, so I compiled thousands of rows of this data in Microsoft Access in order to generate summarizing graphs for the report. For this project, I visited a major army depot near Scranton, PA to tour the facilities.

I, as well as a couple other co-ops, worked together on an airport analysis project. In the event of a disaster in the New York area, state officials need books detailing the region’s airport information so that cargo/personnel can be transported without delay. This small project was very interesting, as the co-ops were able to input opinions and help research important data.

Two other projects are worthy of mention: The cost of corrosion project estimates the amount of damage that various types of corrosion (such as rust) cost the military; we have learned that it is upwards of billions of dollars. For this, I used a standard naming convention that LMI created to organize the data, so that it could be systematically analyzed. The technical data project looks at the various issues surrounding storage and retrieval of scientific records, as well as the conversion of 2D data into 3D. I was able to contact and help interview many technical data experts in industry and government.

The training at LMI was very thorough. We received an all day orientation on our first day of work, which provided us with background on LMI, helpful resources, and IT information. In addition, throughout the work term, we took many courses—technical writing, presentation skills, consulting, and the basics of government agencies were all very helpful, both for school and in the workplace.

LMI provides all new hires with a mentor to answer any questions (be they work-related or not). Though I feel that I relate more to the younger people on my floor, everyone is very approachable and sociable. With LMI’s open door policy, many people stop by simply to say hello even when we do not necessarily work with them.

Assessment of Learning and Development
As many co-ops have mentioned, ORIE 3120 provided the most relevance to my projects. I worked almost entirely with Microsoft Excel and Access, which solidified my knowledge of spreadsheets. I was surprised to see that so many day-to-day operations and projects in my group rely on these simple but effective tools.

The co-op position gave me a good introduction into the field of consulting. While the scope was limited to aspects of the government, I can take away some fundamental basics to apply to other fields. The position was not as related to my major
as I would have liked, but it has given me a crash course on the public policy and government related issues (which affect us daily) that I would have been unaware of otherwise.

In terms of personal development, I have been able to take away the sense of workplace conduct. The office has a friendly and casual atmosphere, surprising considering that many people come to LMI after they have retired from the military. I was reluctant to ask too many questions initially, but the people here seem genuinely happy to teach, so this has given me a good sense of working relationships with coworkers.

Since I have become more comfortable with the projects and research here, I think that during the next term, I will more actively seek out projects that I take an interest in, and try to be more deeply involved in fewer projects. It is hard to do this for the first term, because all co-ops should become familiar with the organization as a whole before selecting certain areas in which to concentrate.

Life Outside of Co-op

Due to the cost of living in the Washington D.C. area, another co-op and I decided to share an apartment in Falls Church (next to McLean). However, LMI gives a generous housing stipend in addition to our salary that covers most of the cost. Other co-ops had no difficulty finding a sublet at a nearby university, such as Georgetown. Though we were not around a young adult population, our apartment was a well-maintained, safe high rise.

In addition to the cost, a major factor in our decision was the distance from the apartment to LMI. This requires some research, because the direction of traffic and the busyness of the highways have a significant effect on the commuting time. Most people drive to work. Washington D.C. has an extensive, clean metro system, but LMI is not near a metro stop. While it is possible to use public transportation, it is simply more convenient to drive.

Social activities are abundant if one lives close to a university; if not, taking a metro into the city is simple. However, we co-ops partook in plenty of social activities with others from LMI as well. For instance, we spent an afternoon post-work hiking next to the Potomac River. LMI participates in many runs; a few of the co-ops ran in the LMI 3-miler on the historic W&OD Trail that runs throughout the entire area. We also have many potlucks and group lunches at work. The end-of-year highlight was a formal dinner dance affair at the Ritz Carlton—a great opportunity to see coworkers in a social setting.

The community here is fairly active with athletics. During the summer, LMI partakes in a softball league. Many people here have organized tennis matches before and after work. In addition, there is a gym in the building that is small but sufficient.

LMI gives back community often. They hold charity lunches to benefit various foundations, and a toy drive for children during the holiday season. LMI participated in the American Heart Walk on the National Mall this year. Because LMI is a non-profit organization, the mindset here is different from that of private companies, which I think shows in its generation donations to charities.

Evaluation

Though this is rather broad, I think that the best aspect of the term is the amount of experience I have received in the consulting arena. It has been invaluable in terms of
the advice that veteran coworkers have given—something I would not have been able to

gain just from school.

The worst feature was the amount of time when I was not able to contribute to
the projects, simply because I did not have the in-depth knowledge of the services and the
Department of Defense as others do. I hope to be more involved during my next work
term.

Additional Information

Though I have visited D.C. many times in the past, I am pleasantly surprised by
the city. There are many cultural events and historical locations that are easily accessible.
For instance, I have been able to visit the Smithsonian museums, which are a mere metro
ride away. I toured Cornell’s Solar Decathlon house on the National Mall. In addition,
there are many small, historical neighborhoods with locally known restaurants/bars.
Around the city, one can get involved in many outdoor activities year-round; there’s truly
something for everyone.
A. Co-op Work Assignment

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For my summer rotation I worked on one project that was a continuation of a project that I had worked on in the Fall. The project was for the Defense Logistics Agency, a logistics division of the Department of Defense, and for the Defense Supply Center Philadelphia under the Clothing and Textiles directorate. For this project, my team was implementing a new Radio Frequency Identification tagging system for apparel to increase visibility throughout the supply chain. I worked on integrating the new processes in the manufacturing facilities and collecting data on existing technologies. I had a balance of onsite data collection and analysis back at the office.

LMI has a training regimen designed for all employees. I took courses in everything from corporate ethics to proposal development. All co-ops are assigned a mentor to help out with anything general, and also there is usually a mentor figure on each project that can help the co-ops with anything they do not understand or have a question about.

B. Assessment of Learning and Development
LMI is a great opportunity for a co-op looking to get experience in logistics consulting. It is not a business consultancy like many companies that OR students work for. It has allowed me to combine OR thought processes and logic to a number of different types of problems. For example, on the manufacturing project, I learned about manufacturing processes, database analysis, data transfer and statistics in analysis of errors. But it also had the consulting piece where I was able to write up reports and create presentations that I gave to clients and I had a lot of experience dealing with other contractors.

I think that I learned a lot of soft skills working at LMI. This includes giving presentations (writing and presenting), dealing with clients in person and through conference calls and also how to use written communication effectively. There are a lot of unwritten protocols to communicate in the work place that are difficult to learn without actual experience.

C. Life Out-side of Co-op

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is also a nice and lively place to live. But if you live in Georgetown, a car is essential for getting to work (it is not very metro accessible). Craigslist is a good way to find a place. I would recommend having a car (parking will run at about $100/month for a garage spot in Rosslyn, and more if you live in the District) for getting to and from work, but the metro is very useful at night and on the weekends.

DC is obviously packed with social activities. If you are into sports, the Redskins, Wizards, Nationals, Capitals and DC United are all fun to go to. There are also a lot of recreational leagues around the area including ultimate frisbee and flag football. There are many areas full of nightlife geared towards young professionals and college students. LMI has a few activities they put on including a softball league, picnics, holiday parties, and a number of runs and teams participating in events such as the American Heart Walk.

**D. Evaluation**

LMI is truly a unique company. A large portion of the staff is retired military personnel with immense amounts of experience. The corporate culture provides for a more relaxed work atmosphere that promotes collaboration and the senior level analysts are always willing to help out. Everyone’s doors are open and there are no shortages of retired colonels and generals that you will refer to on a first name basis when you ask them for some help. The connections I have made and the knowledge I have learned about the government and military is invaluable. The projects are also interesting and as a co-op I was made an important member of my teams and was given a good balance of guidance and independence to use my analytic skills along with soft skills used in giving
presentations. The corporate structure is also very flat which is good because even as an entry level worker I was given the opportunity to work with my program director and had face time with the vice president of my business unit on a fairly regular basis – hearing directly from the upper management about what they are thinking and doing with the company.

I think the worst features of the job are also some of its best. The company is very much geared towards government work and DoD projects, which is great for co-ops that are interested in all of this. I think that some of the co-ops were less aware of this fact and came in expecting a more analytical and less consulting type position. If consulting in the field on logistics is something that a co-op would like to try (and I would highly recommend it), it is a great experience.

E. Additional Information

LMI has a broad range of interests and each co-op is assigned one of the specific groups with in the logistics business unit. If you have a particular interest or a field you would like to explore, do not hesitate to say so during the hiring process or once at work. They are happy to accommodate but you must speak up for yourself if you want to try something different than originally assigned. As I would presume in most work places (and at Cornell), you must be an advocate for yourself. The employers want you to succeed because they are paying you a lot of money, so let me know what they can do to help you out. For example, LMI pays at the end of each month, but if you need an advance for the first month for rent, they are happy to give it to you, you just need to ask.
Second Rotation Job Summary

My second co-op rotation was again with the Logistics Technology group at LMI. This group is a subset of the Logistics business unit. The majority of projects that my group is involved in deal with transportation logistics and information technology systems. While at LMI, I worked on projects for several of government agencies including the Software Engineering Center-Fort Lee, VA (SEC-LEE), United States Transportation Command (US TRANSCOM) and US Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The topics of these projects ranged from selection of asset management software packages to transportation logistics to obsolescence analysis. While working on these projects, I utilized Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel. Throughout the summer, LMI hosted brown bag luncheons. At these luncheons, a senior level individual in each of the groups at LMI gave a presentation detailing the work that their particular group did and the various agencies they work for. Since my original mentor from my first rotation was on a sabbatical during my co-op rotation, I mainly turned to the project leaders of the tasks that I was working on for guidance and answers to my questions.

My second rotation at LMI was very beneficial as I was able to see how projects evolve throughout their lifecycle. I had a fortunate chance of being able to continue on a project that I was working on my first rotation. This allowed me to see both the start-up of the project and how it evolved into another project for the client. This rotation also allowed me to utilize skills that I learned during my junior spring semester at Cornell. For example, ENGRC 3500 helped to prepare me for writing technical reports in groups. While at LMI I co-authored a report with two other individuals. The group dynamics and collaboration were quite similar to the technical report I co-authored in ENGRC 3500. In addition, I also performed an obsolesce analysis using many of the skills I learned in ORIE 4150.
Finding affordable housing in Northern Virginia/D.C. for the second co-op rotation was much easier than my first rotation since it was the summer and most college students were not on campus. I searched a bit on both Facebook and craigslist and eventually found a decently priced home in the Burleith neighborhood in Washington D.C. I ended up subletting from a Georgetown student and lived with five other girls who were also students at Georgetown and staying for the summer. My commute ranged anywhere from fifteen to thirty minutes depending on what time I left for work. While there does exist a mass transit system in the greater D.C. metro area, Georgetown is not served by a Metrorail stop. There are, however, shuttles to both the DuPont Circle and Rosslyn metro stations as well as numerous Metrobus routes throughout the neighborhood. LMI is also not currently served by a close metro rail stop (although a new metro rail line is under construction) and therefore served only by Metrobus. I would highly recommend a car as it allows you the freedom to not be limited by metro routes.

While on co-op I worked a second job again to help fulfill a scholarship requirement. As for social activities, the co-ops and summer interns did a large variety of activities. These included sailing, kayaking, going to water parks, going to Screen the Green, going out to dinner during the week and much more. Since there were over ten co-ops/summer interns there were always plenty of people willing to do things during the week and on the weekends. I was also a member of the LMI Softball team. We played other teams in the Fairfax Adult Softball League. The team was a great way to get to know other employees at LMI that I would not have come across on a day to day basis.

As I said after my first rotation, the environment at LMI is collegiate in nature which allows for collaborative learning and working. During this rotation I had the opportunity to work on a variety of projects in both the Logistics Technology and the Logistics Analysis groups. This allowed me to come in contact with coworkers with different types of backgrounds such as military, commercial and academia. The flexibility in the work schedule and the approachability of management at LMI were again great features of the company. As I saw in my first rotation, a drawback to LMI was the speed and frequency of the work available. At some points it seemed that there weren’t enough hours in the week to get everything done and at other points it was a struggle to get work to do. This, however, is a function of how government contracts are
awarded. I again reiterate that overall LMI is a great place to work as a co-op and I would recommend it to any student looking for an excellent place to start in the professional world.
A. Co-op Work Assignment

For my second rotation at LMI, I worked in the Logistics Management operating unit (one of three operating units), under the Combatant Logistics group. This group supports warfighting commanders and clients such as U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) and OSD (Office of the Secretary of Defense) Program Support. Almost all co-ops work at the LMI headquarters in McLean, Virginia.

During proposal season, many employees spend weeks researching and writing proposals for government contracts. Much of the work I did for my group this rotation involved background research for potential proposals. In one instance, I researched environmental factors (economic, geographical, political, etc.) of the countries that fall under USCENTCOM in order to identify potential sourcing opportunities. In another, I examined potential improvements for coordination of whole-of-government logistics. Throughout the rotation, I was also tasked with some data collection for a causative analysis project. I used Microsoft Access tools in order to compile data for an analysis of inventory within the Department of Defense (DoD), in order to determine the accuracy of their forecasting.

Because I received my training last semester, I did not repeat the process of orientation or take the training classes. I was able to begin work immediately upon arrival. However, we did have a luncheon every week, during which program managers and directors talked about their groups and projects. These sessions provided a broader view of how the company operated as a whole and not just within the Logistics business unit.

I had the same mentor that I did during my first rotation, but we had less interaction this summer since we worked in different groups. If I had questions or needed work, I approached many of the people that I knew from my first rotation, as well as the project manager for whom I am currently working.

B. Assessment of Learning and Development

For this rotation, my work activity was less technical and mathematical than my operations research background. I was able to continue working on my Excel and Access skills, but that was not the focus of my projects. In terms of bidding for a contract, a crucial initial aspect is drawing upon soft skills to assess the needs of LMI’s potential customers. I participated in a couple proposal planning meetings and found the process very interesting; it
gave me a greater appreciation for the consulting business.

This co-op position emphasized independence—it is up to us to find projects and to maintain the work that we do. This allowed us to take on more responsibility in our tasks and utilize our networks in order to receive projects.

C. Life Outside of Co-op

Since I was more comfortable with the D.C. area during my second rotation, I used Craigslist to find a sublet in Georgetown. The location is excellent for the commute (usually 25 minutes, going against traffic) and the collegiate atmosphere. However, Georgetown can be more expensive than areas in Virginia, and it is not located near a metro station. Contacting other co-ops in advance and sharing an apartment with them might be a good idea to consider.

For transportation, a car is not necessary in the city, but I recommend one for traveling to and from work. Keep in mind that parking can be troublesome in D.C. without a permit, and enforcement is very strict. However, most apartment buildings in Virginia have parking garages.

There are ample opportunities for social activities in D.C. Free activities include museums, monuments, outdoor movies, festivals, hiking, and farmer’s markets. This rotation, we also tried out many bars and restaurants in the diverse neighborhoods of D.C. and Virginia.

During the summer, LMI participates in a softball league, and co-ops have the opportunity to join. We also had a summer picnic during the beginning of June, which was a great way to be introduced to new coworkers and catch up those whom we already knew.

D. Evaluation

The best feature of the job was the daily interaction with other full-time employees and co-ops. Everyone is friendly and open to conversation, which facilitates cooperation and teamwork on projects. The worst aspect of the co-op would be the timing of our work. Everyone wants to be gainfully employed, but sometimes, idleness is inevitable. Other times, it seemed like all the work would come to us simultaneously. When I was not busy, however, I browsed through supply chain metrics (SCOR model), took a defense acquisition course offered by the Defense Acquisition University (DAU), and completed co-op support tasks. Also,
because the summer term was much shorter, it was more difficult to see through longer, more involved projects.

E. Additional Information

Due to the suggestion of many co-ops, LMI recently created a Facebook group. Almost all past and present co-ops are in the group, as well as full-time representatives of the company. It is a comprehensive list of people to contact if a future co-op has any questions regarding working at LMI or living near Washington D.C.