Working for Originate during this summer term was great. I was an iOS developer. I worked on Fanline, an iPad application that allows athletes to promote brands and products. It takes advantage of athletes’ vast social networks and followers to drive commerce around what is trending. I also worked on an iOS application that allows users to request help from professional workers, such as electricians or plumbers.

During my time at Originate, I received no formal training on iOS development. I came into the company with an intermediate understanding of iOS development, and I was able to learn anything I needed on my own. But I was able to talk to other iOS developers at the company, and I constantly bounced ideas off of them if I had any questions or doubts.

My work activity was software engineering, which is exactly what I want to do in the future. I learned about the importance of communication amongst engineers and developers, especially between the engineers and the product manager. Any failure in communication could set development back for several hours. If I were to go through the same experience again, I would probably try to voice my opinion and ideas more to other team members and the project manager. I would be less complacent about keeping code “consistent” and focus more on following best practices for coding.

My family actually lived close to my workplace, and it was “only” an hour and a half commute to work. The upside was that I got to save money and live with my family. The downside was that I have less free time and could not hang out with coworkers after work without getting home very late. My coworkers would sometimes go out after work, to drink or just eat at restaurants, and though I was always invited, I declined because I did not want to get home at 11 PM or later. That being said, Originate would host team breakfasts every Tuesday morning and sometimes a team dinner once a month.
The best feature of my job was that I got to do iOS development and worked on products that were going to be used by the customers. It was also great getting to work with other iOS developers and learn some things from though, since I am the only iOS developer at my research lab in Cornell. The worst feature about my job was that often times, the product manager would be unclear about what features he wanted and often gave unclear answers to my questions. Product development is very difficult when a team is not coordinated with the product manager.

It was great working with Originate, especially because my supervisor, Dan Storms, is so connected with the Cornell community. He often hosted entrepreneur and startup events with other Cornell students and alumni, where students and people with startups would learn about other startups and network with other entrepreneurs. I was able to listen to the experiences of Cornell alumni, which gave me a great insight into the opportunities and careers of life after graduation.