A. Co-op Work Assignment

Workday is a web-based on demand software company that develops and sells financial and human resource management solutions. I began my first term at Workday as a member of the Quality Assurance (QA) Team. The QA team plays a crucial role in the software development process because it is their responsibility to thoroughly test new features and ensure the software is functional and easy to use before it is released to customers.

Due to Workday's relatively short release cycles, I arrived just a few weeks before an upcoming release, which is the busiest time for the QA team. As a result, after spending the first few days going through self-paced online tutorials to familiarize myself with the Workday product, I was asked to immediately start actively testing new features. I was specifically assigned to help one member of the QA team, whose main focus was testing the functional aspects of features surrounding Procurement and Worker Spend Management. During this time, I participated in organized group testing, ran testware for multiple product features, and completed security updates. Working closely with a member of the QA team taught me a lot about the responsibilities of a QA engineer.

Following the release, we attended a formal training course on how to build automation scripts using Workday's internal testing tool. We then spent the second half of our fall work term on the QA Automation team developing automated regression and performance test suites with our focus on adding regression coverage for all of the new features just released. It was pretty exciting to be creating automated regression tests for features I had manually tested so that they would never have to be manually re-tested again.

B. Assessment of Learning and Development

By splitting my work term into working with a functional QA lead and then developing automation with the QA automation team, I was able to get a taste for both the functional and the technical sides to the QA field. This experience taught me a lot about a field that I didn’t know very much about and sparked my interest in the software development process. I learned that to be in the QA field, you need to have good problem solving skills and excellent communication skills because you constantly need to communicate with product managers or developers about problems or necessary enhancements. I was constantly learning on the job, and found that my
computer science and object oriented programming classes that I have taken helped me at times to better understand the software. If I were to go through this experience again, I would have liked to have a little more of a business background. At times I was not given specific testware, so I had to try to anticipate all the different possibilities that a customer might use the software and determine whether or not the software was behaving correctly, which would have been easier if I better understood the business application so I could come up with more realistic use cases. However, the QA lead that I worked with was extremely patient with me and very good at explaining all the features he was responsible for testing. He was especially good at giving me examples that I could personally relate to.

C. Life Outside of Co-op

We decided to take over the apartment the previous co-ops lived in, which made the housing search very easy. The apartment was located in Pleasanton, CA, less than a five minute walk away from the office. It was great having such a short commute, however, there is not much else in the area around the apartment and because we didn’t have a car, that made getting to other places somewhat difficult. However, we managed by ordering groceries online and getting the occasional ride from someone at work.

Living in California was a very welcome change from living in Ithaca. I loved the weather and all the free time after work. I joined a gym nearby where I played tennis and attended different classes throughout the week and then on the weekends I tried to explore different parts of the Bay Area as best I could without a car. Pleasanton, CA is located approximately an hour BART ride outside of San Francisco, which is a great city with tons of things to do. I also flew down to LA a couple of weekends, which was very easy to do. Looking back, I really wish we had a car. A car isn’t necessary but it would have made getting around so much easier.

D. Evaluation

By far the best parts about this experience were the people I worked with and the environment at the office. I was so surprised by how friendly, approachable and helpful everyone was. If I asked someone a question and they did not know the answer, they would always point me in the right direction or introduce me to someone else who did. It was also exciting to be a part of such a rapidly growing start-up and to work with people who are so passionate about what they do. I looked forward to coming into work every day because I was working with extremely talented people who always treated me as more than just an "intern." Between going out to lunch every Friday and
other events like the Halloween Release party, my Workday experience was fun and rewarding. I am really going to miss everyone in the spring, and I can't wait to come back next summer!
John Wright

Fall 2009

This fall, I completed my Co-op experience for Workday in Pleasanton California. The company develops ‘SaaS’ (Software-as-a-Service) software used to replace traditional ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software. I worked in the Quality Assurance Tech department and was involved in both functional testing and automation testing of the software.

My first day at Workday involved multiple meetings that helped get me oriented with the company and what I would be doing. I was then introduced to self help tutorials to start learning Workday’s software. After spending a day or so on the self help tutorials I jumped into doing functional testing on Business Processes. I spent multiple weeks on Business Process, learning how the software worked while finding and reporting bugs. I was then entered into a weeklong company training session for developers. Following this, I spent the remainder of my term here building automated regression tests suites which are used to find bugs in future releases of the software.

The work I did for Workday didn’t specifically relate to my engineering classes other than the general problem solving that I’ve developed from them. I did, however, find the work both challenging and fulfilling. The best part of my experience with Workday was the people I got to work with. They treated me as though I was a permanent member of their team. I was able to work on the same caliber projects the other employees worked on. If there was ever a situation where I didn’t have the tools necessary to be able to carry out the work I was doing, they always did their best to assist me in that so I could learn the whole process. I think the responsibility I was given was appropriate and really motivated me to work hard and care about what I was doing.

The area I lived in is mostly residential, with a mall and several department stores nearby. I did not have a car, which made things such as getting groceries much more difficult. The other co-ops and I
found ways around this by ordering our groceries online and having them delivered, as well as generous offers for rides from our co-workers. We were able to easily visit San Francisco by taking the BART train system, which was accessible by bus. Our apartment was literally 5 minutes walking distance from Workday’s office.

If I were to go through this same experience again, I would change nothing other than to try and work on having a car. Workday has been a fun company to work with and I look forward to returning in the summer.
It was a great feeling returning to Workday and having everyone say how excited they were to have me back. Workday is a web-based on demand software company that develops and sells financial and human resource management solutions. For my summer work term, I rejoined the QA Automation team. I arrived just a few weeks before Workday’s next release team so I was asked to jump right back in and help the QA Automation team clean up their test suites for the upcoming release. I was asked to help figure out what was breaking our test cases. Maintaining and debugging our testing platform presented a whole new set of challenges and I also got to experience the release deadline pressures of only having a day to find and fix a problem. Participating in the co-op program has been a great learning experience. I now have a better understanding of the software development process and roles a QA Engineer and QA Automation Engineer have in this process.

By far the best parts about this experience were the people I worked with and the environment at the office. It was extremely exciting to be a part of such a rapidly growing start-up. I was amazed to see how much had changed and how much Workday had grown in the short time that I had been gone. Since the fall, Workday had gone from 380 employees to over 550 of which 30 were recent college grads, which made the work environment all the more fun. They had also established a special program for the new college hires, which included a speaker series that we could attend to learn more about Workday. This speaker series helped me to better understand Workday, and how the company fits in to the Enterprise Software Industry.

This summer my living situation was infinitely better than in the fall. This time around I had a car and instead of living in Pleasanton I decided to live in Berkeley. Even though, Berkeley is a 35 minute commute to Pleasanton I would highly recommend living there. The commute is a reverse commute so there isn’t any traffic. Also, it was easy to find summer housing because Berkeley is a college town so I was able to find a very affordable studio just a block off campus. Berkeley is much closer to San Francisco, and there is a lot more to do there then in Pleasanton. By having a car I also had the opportunity to explore the Bay Area and travel to Napa Valley, Muir Woods, Stinson Beach, Monterey, and Santa Cruz. I also spent one weekend in Southern
California and went to Disneyland. California is an amazing place to live and I would highly suggest getting a car out there if you can!
I spent this summer working at Workday in Pleasanton, California. My primary role was as a Quality Assurance Automation Engineer. Workday is a SaaS (Software-as-a-Service) provider of enterprise business services. The main modules provided are Human Resource Management, Financial Management, and Payroll software. The company was founded by Cornell alum Dave Duffield in 2005 and has been growing rapidly over the past few years.

My role in the company involved building and maintaining a large collection of regression test scripts. These scripts are run in every release cycle in order to test the software that would have otherwise been manually tested. When I started this summer, the development cycle was in the maintaining phase so I was able to jump in and start working on correcting scripts that have been broken by changes in the software. Later on in the summer I transitioned into creating new test scripts that tested various functional areas in the software. The training I had received in my first term at the company was sufficient for the work I did this summer. However, I still had questions every day, and was able to get help from my coworkers.

The work I did here involved an in-house scripting language that I learned the first term out here. My major is ECE which didn’t directly apply to the work I did here. However, the general problem solving skills I developed over my time at Cornell played a significant role here. Creating good test scripts that can be run for years forward is definitely an ability learned by practice. Some of the biggest challenges that I encountered involved planning for future software changes and creating test scripts that would work and be effective at the specific functional area being tested.
This position influenced my professional development in a positive way. I now know that the software industry is something I want to be involved in. I learned that being able to effectively test software involves collaborating with a network of people every day. This includes the product managers, developers, functional quality assurance leads, and even the security team. This experience has given me insight into how a company works from the inside development to the outside sales team. One of the most important things that I understand going forward from this term is that I want to be surrounded by people that are passionate about what they do. Everyone I encountered at Workday was interested in helping me and happy about what they were doing. It was a great culture to work in and it is something I will be looking forward to in the future.

My life outside work was also very enjoyable. Being in California near San Francisco gives plenty of opportunities to explore the city and everything this part of the country has to offer. I stayed in a housing complex directly next to work so getting to work was very easy. I would definitely recommend a car if at all possible. Being able to drive around this area makes life much better and gives you even more opportunities to explore. However, the BART train system makes getting into and out of the city very easy without a car. Workday’s intern and recent college graduate program is building up and is very active which gives everyone something to do after work and on weekends.

In conclusion, my experience at Workday was very positive and I highly recommend the experience to anyone at Cornell. The culture and work environment was something that allows everyone to have fun and take pride in what they’re doing at the company.