Co-op Work Assignment

For my co-op I worked on the Generation Workday Beta (GWB) Team within the Test Engineering group. Beta’s function was to create internal tools for use by other Workday software developers. At the end of our co-op term the team was actually collapsed as part of a restructuring, and its projects were distributed amongst other Test Engineering teams.

We (three other co-ops and I) worked on two different Ruby on Rails applications over the term. They had both been created by past co-ops, and we were doing bug fixes and developing some new features. We learned Ruby and Rails on the job, focusing on learning the basics in the first two weeks and then picking up more and more as we went. On each of our projects there was a specific full-time employee we were working with, and we were able to ask them for advice and guidance.

Assessment of Learning and Development

The main learning during my co-op was in regards to working as a software engineer in a real company. We got to learn about agile methodologies, test-driven development, and writing code with long-term maintainability. I was also able to learn Ruby on Rails, a very relevant web development framework.

If I were able to go through the same experience again, I would have tried to learn more about what other teams at Workday did. My experience on the Beta team was very isolated, and in my time I could have learned a lot more about working at Workday. The web development I learned on the Beta team honestly isn’t very common for people working full-time at Workday, and I would have liked to get my feet wet in some other areas as well.

Life Outside of Co-op

Our housing was provided right across the parking lot from Workday, making those parts of the job very easy. However, in the Pleasanton area there honestly wasn’t too much to do. Our apartment complex had a pool and a gym, which were both nice, and we hung out a lot as the co-op group. Transportation into San Francisco was very easy on the BART, but honestly if you’re able to bring a car I would definitely recommend it.

Workday also has a number of clubs you can take part in. Several co-ops played on a soccer team, and there’s a board game club that’s popular. We went to a number of Generation Workday (a group for young employees at Workday)
events, and there were also a few team socials. The overall environment at Workday is very friendly, and socially I thought I had a good time.

Overall

Doing my co-op for the semester was a great opportunity to get some work experience, have a break from classes, and experience a fall with good weather. It's honestly not for everyone because it's a big time commitment, but I enjoyed myself.
A. Co-op Work Assignment

Workday is a software-as-a-service company that provides HCM and Financial software to enterprises on the cloud. During the time I was here, I worked on the UI team which was actually having a massive redesign of Workday’s entire application. The UI team develops how the application will look to all users, so it’s incredibly important. I worked on several aspects of the application with all of my work now currently in the app. For the first couple of months, I worked on refactoring the pathing architecture of the backend to use Spring Annotations and testing using Mockito. This provided better abstraction and more robust unit tests. The remaining months were spent on over 100+ number of tasks dealing with the redesign. For example, I worked on dialogs, popups, search, page layouts, printing, etc. It’s great having a large impact on the company. Due to the high-demand of this redesign, I was basically just thrown into the job and had to learn on the go. I received my help/training through asking questions to the rest of the team. Near the end of my term, the number of questions was drastically less than before.

B. Assessment of Learning and Development

As a computer science major, the experience that I gained at Workday greatly applies to my educational background and career interests. The environment and knowledge I gained here taught me that experience on the job is much more important than in class. There are a lot of different skills that school just never teaches. This position has helped determine choose between working at a software company versus working at a financial company. I think I greatly enjoy the culture and people at a software company a lot more. This position has helped me balance the need to seek help and attempting on my own. It might be faster if you ask someone for help, but you will have a better understanding attempting in on your own. If I were to go through this experience again, I’d ask more questions about keeping track of logistics and the workday application. It would have made things a lot smoother and get a better understanding of the architecture.

C. Life Outside of Co-op

Luckily, Workday provides free housing directly across the parking lot. They really do provide most of the things necessary for a comfortable living. I would highly suggest bring a car for traveling, which is probably the biggest hassle. You need it to do social activities, hobbies, and shopping. Otherwise, I would take the BART subway system when it is available like when traveling to San Francisco. Workday is located in Pleasanton and there isn’t too much to do here. But Workday provides several club activities such as soccer. I did rock climbing with some coworkers. Since you can get to SF easily, there
are a lot of concerts and festivals going on that allow you to meet other people. You can also travel to Berkeley or Stanford. Again I highly suggest bring a car.

D. Evaluation

The best features of this job were the culture and the learning experience. The culture at Workday is fantastic. There is a great mix of young and old. There are also a lot of social events for interaction with other people. Everyone seems to like work here and Workday is consistently voted one of the top places to work in the bay area. You also learn the forefront of web development by working here and all the necessary software to function as a developer such as jira, crucible, bamboo, git, tortoiseSVN, and agile development.

The worst feature of this job is that it really depends on what team you work on to have a better experience. I worked in the UI team which consisted of a whole team of people for me to interact with and had work directly on the application, but my fellow co-ops were on a team with only themselves and didn’t really have an impactful project.
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Term 1 - Fall 2013

During my first co-op term at Workday, a company that develops and sells Human Resource Management services to other corporations, I worked in the Test Engineering team. The purpose of this team is to build, improve, and maintain various features that handle testing the software before it is released to customers. I worked on 2 large projects throughout the past semester, both of which were software tools widely used by the developers on other teams to improve efficiency and convenience. I had a separate mentor for each of these projects, and they were the people I generally approached when I had questions. Training took place throughout the entire co-op term. During the first two weeks, I worked through online tutorials and created simple blog applications to learn how to program using Ruby on Rails. For the rest of the semester, I continuously learned by reading various programming books on topics such as anti-patterns, best practices, domain driven design, and refactoring. In addition, I, along with the other 3 co-ops on my team, met with one of the mentors twice a week to discuss these readings.

As an Operations Research Engineer, I had only taken CS 1110 and CS 2110 and was unsure whether or not I wanted to pursue a minor in computer science. My job at Workday involved solely programming and gave me some insight on what a career in software engineering would be like. For the majority of the co-op term, I pair programmed with another co-op. These experiences helped improve my teamwork and communication skills. In addition, since all the people I worked directly with were males, I learned firsthand the challenges of being a female in tech. If I were to go through this experience again, I would try to program independently after the first couple of weeks rather than pair program because I tend to learn faster that way. I would also speak up more and voice my opinions more frequently.

Workday provides housing to its interns and co-ops. The apartments I lived at were adjacent to the office building, and it took only about 6 minutes to walk to work. The only form of transportation in the area was the BART train, which could take you to San Francisco. I definitely recommend having a car here. Since only 2 out
of the 6 co-ops had cars, we constantly had to rely on those 2 co-ops to get groceries, eat out at restaurants, or go anywhere in the Pleasanton area. There were not many social activities besides the company thrown social events. I did have the opportunity once to volunteer at the Alameda County Community Food Bank and spent half a day there working alongside other Workday employees.

Overall, the best part of working at Workday is the fun and relaxed culture. I was rarely stressed out on the job, and enjoyed working at a company with so many recent college graduates. Everyone was very welcoming, approachable, and willing to answer any questions I had. The only negative part of my co-op experience was spending so much time pair programming with the same 3 people. Although it was very beneficial at first, I definitely would have felt happier and more accomplished if I could have worked on assignments independently.