Dear Cornell Engineering Co-op Student:

Congratulations on obtaining a Co-op position! Your hard work is beginning to pay off, but it doesn’t end here. The **Co-op Companion Guide** is intended to assist with your transition from school to the workplace. This booklet supplements the information on our webpage, engineering.cornell.edu/coop. Our hope is that you will find these tips to be useful as you navigate through your first engineering job and perhaps your first independent living experience. This guide should generate questions as much as it provides answers. We encourage you to discuss these issues with your supervisor, co-workers, fellow Co-op students, professors, and of course, the Engineering Co-op and Career Services Staff.

Please don’t hesitate to contact us at anytime if you wish to discuss Co-op related concerns. We hope you have a fun learning experience!

Sincerely,

Melissa Bazley, Associate Director

Julie Wright, Co-op Assistant

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INTRODUCTION

This is it. You’ve put yourself through a lot of effort just to be where you are now. You toiled endlessly
to get your resume looking just right. Maybe you spent even more time collecting material to fill up space on your sparse resume. You walked around campus in a suit in February. You spent
Wednesday nights in crowded reception rooms, eager to please the recruiters, thinking hard to say something intelligent. And you went through the horror of being at school for 30 weeks straight (that was real fun). Now is the time to reap what you have sowed.

Vipul Bhatnagar
Electrical Engineering
Hewlett Packard

You are about to journey into this "real world" with expectations, fears and hopes about the work experience, job performance, fitting in, meeting expectations, having a social life, and living on your own. This guidebook will explore some of these expectations and lead you through some steps to help you make the entire experience a success. Perhaps you hold some of these hopes and fears:

HOPES:
- To be able to apply what I’ve learned in class to my work
- To be able to see several facets of the organization
- To pick up on the computer systems and office procedures quickly
- To be involved in some interesting project that will teach me a lot
- That the work experience will be worthwhile, not just a “break” from Cornell
- To be treated as a regular employee - working on real projects and being given responsibility equal to a new hire
- To do something incredibly fascinating, learn to spell Cincinnati correctly on the first try, and never spill anything on my tie at lunch
- To be challenged, but not crushed

FEARS:
- Sticking out as a Co-op and always getting treated as one
- Getting thrust into work that is way over my head
- Not wearing the right clothes
- Not being given challenging work
- Going to a small organization where people are so close-knit that they will treat me as an outsider
- Not being able to live up to the employer’s expectations of a Cornell student
- Being unable to finish my projects
THE BEST WAY TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN A NEW ENVIRONMENT IS TO UNDERSTAND THE CULTURE.

What is a culture? Culture includes the values, traditions, and expectations of a given group of people in a given period or place. Both school and the workplace you are entering have distinct cultures with different expectations and ways of communicating. For example, the faculty and staff at Cornell design courses and programs to enhance your learning. You are expected to take advantage of the opportunities available to further your development. In the workplace, your learning is secondary to the bottom line. You are expected to contribute to the organization's goals and your learning and development should advance these goals. Another difference is that most of the people you interact with at Cornell are your age, and you may find it easy to interact with them. Learning to interact with colleagues and managers at work may be slightly different from anything that you are used to.

In order to understand the culture we are examining, it helps to look at the rituals, values, myths and heroes of that culture. Cornell has a culture that you probably haven't examined closely, because you feel comfortable in it. When you were a freshman arriving at Cornell for the first time, you probably didn't know about many of the rituals and traditions of the university. Did you know what Dragon Day was? What the motto or the alma mater were? If you attended one of the commencement ceremonies that happen each May, you would have seen serious rituals and traditions - black caps and gowns, faculty and trustees marching into the stadium ahead of the "Mace Bearer" and the President, lots of pomp and circumstance. The hierarchy of the university can be seen very clearly by looking at the football field on that day - like an organizational chart - with the President standing at the top of the chart.

There are myths at Cornell, like the story of how Ezra Cornell had this idea to "found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study." His friends told him he was crazy; that he would be inundated with applicants and wouldn't be able to accommodate them all. His response was that even though that might be true, they hadn't heard where he was going to build it yet...Ithaca!...far away from the major population centers of that time.

Although the story may be a myth, the motto does explain what Ezra wanted the university to stand for in terms of values - all people should have the same opportunities. Ezra and AndrewD. White, along with the prestigious faculty who win Nobel Prizes and publish books, and alumni who are leaders all over the world, are Cornell's heroes.

All organizations have cultures that tell you about their values and philosophy - Kodak has an employee suggestion plan that encourages new ideas about cost-savings, and shares the resulting savings with the employee who came up with the idea. Saturn Corporation makes everyone's nametags (including the president's) with their first name in LARGE BOLD print, so everyone is using first names and appears equal. Birthday cakes, hiking trails, break rooms, retirement dinners, office picnics, etc. are all part of rituals that mean something to the organization.

We have some images of corporate culture in our minds already - Goldman Sachs has the suit and tie image, Microsoft has the jeans image. They use mottos to promote their images: GE's motto is "Imagination at Work," Schlumberger promotes "Excellence in Execution." You can often tell an organization's priorities or values when you drive up to the entrance: DuPont has a huge sign up proclaiming how many days it has been since an accident occurred, and displays in their lobbies emphasize safety in the workplace. Procter & Gamble will often place a United Way Campaign thermometer at their entrance to show how well their campaign is going - they encourage community involvement and a family image.

They have heroes just like Cornell has Ezra. George Eastman embodied an old-time hard work ethic and a vision of sharing profit with employees. Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard, when they created (as the myth goes) their famous audio oscillator in a family garage, embodied the rebel entrepreneurial spirit.

If you watch these four types of cultural expression, rituals, myths, values, and heroes, in your organization, they will tell you very clearly what priorities and philosophies are being shared there. Throughout this guide we will refer to the above terms to help you understand your Co-op work environment, and to help you see how you may or may not fit in with the culture of your organization. By the time you finish your work assignment, it will all have become second nature to you, as did "Cornell Culture!"

This guidebook will help you conquer your fears, fulfill your hopes, and make the most out of your experience at work. There are several steps to take toward accomplishing this, beginning with figuring out what your job is really all about and deciding what you want to get out of the experience. You need to discover your employer's expectations of you, decide your expectations of the job, and how they fit together. Establishing learning outcomes and discussing them with your supervisor will lay a foundation for measuring your performance along the way. Many sections of this guide will end with valuable methods for evaluating your experience.
ENGINEERING COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

CO-OP MISSION
Cornell University’s Engineering Cooperative Education program is founded in the College of Engineering’s vision to “prepare our undergraduate students for lifelong creation of knowledge and solutions to complex real-world problems.” Cornell University’s Engineering Co-op program provides an educational opportunity that integrates a student’s academic and career interests with paid, productive work experience at cooperating organizations throughout the world. During this experience, students convert theory into practice as they apply classroom knowledge to practical work situations, as well as gain knowledge and skills that will enhance future coursework. In addition, the program offers students the opportunity to clarify their academic focus and test their career interests and goals.

CO-OP GOALS
Co-op participants should:

- gain practical work experience related to one’s chosen major
- further clarify their academic focus and career goals
- integrate practical knowledge into classroom learning
- gain an understanding of professional cultures and expectations

CO-OP LEARNING OUTCOMES
After completing Co-op, participants should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- apply classroom knowledge to actual work situations
- communicate effectively
- design and conduct experiments, as well as analyze and interpret data
- design a system, component, or process to meet desired needs
- function as part of a multi-disciplinary team
- identify, formulate, and solve engineering problems
- understand and apply professional and ethical responsibility
- understand the impact of engineering solutions in a global and societal context
- recognize the need for, and engage in lifelong learning
- understand contemporary issues
- use the techniques, skills, and modern engineering tools necessary for engineering practice
- utilize job search skills: résumé, interview, decision-making skills
- develop professional contacts
- constructively receive and apply professional feedback
- take initiative in a professional setting
ESSENTIALS FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY CO-OP!
BEFORE YOU BEGIN WORK

NOW THAT YOU HAVE ACCEPTED A CO-OP OFFER, YOU WILL NEED TO:

☐ Find Housing: tips are available in the last section of this guide
☐ Obtain an official offer letter from your employer: provide a copy to Engineering Co-op Program office and keep a copy for your records
☐ Attend required Workshops for Success

WITHIN THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF EACH CO-OP WORK TERM YOU ARE REQUIRED TO:

☐ Provide Co-op Program with contact information for you, your supervisor, and an emergency contact person
☐ Discuss the Student/Employer Expectations Agreement with your supervisor and submit the completed form to the Co-op Program
☐ Set Learning Outcomes and submit the completed form to the Co-op Program

YOU ARE ALSO STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO:

☐ Find a mentor within your organization
☐ Consider setting a financial budget for yourself


**EXPECTATIONS**

You must learn that you know absolutely nothing when you first enter a position. Don’t worry, your lack of knowledge is OK and all your coworkers will understand since they have been through the same experience. In fact, the sooner you accept your ignorance, the more productive you will become in building key skills to become an influential engineer.

Brian Julian  
Mechanical Engineering  
General Electric Power Systems

Once you have some sense of the environment you are entering, it is time to find out why you are there. Probably the most important thing you need to know to be successful in your work experience is: what your job is! It is important that you clearly understand your job description and how you will be evaluated.

The most important thing I learned from my Co-op experience is the role and expectations of a professional engineer. I was able to utilize the engineering skills learned in my course work and apply them successfully in a professional business environment.

Lauren Buchalter  
Mechanical Engineering  
United Technologies Corporation

You can’t be expected to perform up to your employer’s expectations if those expectations are not clear. Some students find out at the end of their work term that they were not meeting the organizations’ needs, simply because they had never been given a clear description of those needs. What expectations do you have of the actual job you will be doing, and what are your employer’s expectations of you?

In an effort to maintain open lines of communication and shared expectations among employers, our students, and the University, you are required to meet with your supervisor during the first or second week of work to discuss and sign the **Student-Employer Expectations Agreement**. This conversation will serve as a foundation for a positive relationship throughout the work term. This reinforces the expectation that employers can and will approach students, and vice versa, with concerns at a later time. As a Co-op student, you are encouraged to seek mentorship and feedback from your supervisor or another professional with whom you work closely. If you have any concerns throughout your work term, please contact Engineering Career Center.
Expectations to discuss with your supervisor:

**EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS:**
- Display intellectual curiosity and a desire to contribute
- Arrive on time and put in an honest eight hour day, every day; if you must be late, call!
- Ask questions, but think about how to solve the problem on your own before approaching others
- Do not abuse privileges (i.e. follow work rules regarding email/internet/phone use, dress/behave professionally, do not take advantage of the fact that no one is constantly looking over your shoulder) & maintain professionalism
- Be a team player
- Have a good attitude and work ethic
- Show enthusiasm no matter what the task
- Show initiative to take on projects and contribute ideas
- Familiarize yourself with the employer's background, culture, and organizational structure
- Be open and responsive to suggestions for improvement

**EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYERS:**
- Provide work assignments that are educational, challenging, and related to student's coursework
- Provide a clear definition of job responsibilities and expectations
- Provide appropriate supervision and feedback of job tasks and performance; discuss suggestions for improvement in a timely manner.
- Be accessible for questions or provide the student with a mentor or referral to someone who can assist with questions
- Explain organization policies and benefits
- Treat the Co-op student fairly

Remember that your employer's expectations of you will be based on the values and traditions of their organization's culture. This is an opportunity to examine the culture and decide if the expectations that you have of your Co-op and employer are realistic or not. Co-op assignments are an opportunity to see if you will fit into the organization as a long-term employee, so use the knowledge that you gain about the organization's culture to influence your behavior.
FIRST DAY DO’S & DON’TS

You never get a second chance to make a first impression!

When asked what he expected his first day at work to be like, one Co-op said that he had expected to be given a sheet of problem sets to complete by the end of the day, and be evaluated on them. Not particularly realistic, but with only academic experience to go on, not totally off the wall. Below is an example of what your expectations or fears of the first day at work might be.

They tell you about a million different savings and health plans, none of which you fully understand, and then ask you to make a choice. All the paperwork, badge photos, etc. was done around lunch and I was scheduled to go meet my supervisor around 1:00. They told me I worked in RIO, gave me a map (the Hughes campus is bigger than the Cornell campus) and sent me on my way. When I finally found RIO, I was shocked to see such a nice building. It was all glass and looked really classy. I was pleasantly surprised to find that my supervisor was actually expecting me. They gave me a tour, introduced me to too many people to remember, and gave me an office. I had everything I needed and was ready to get to work.

Phil Levy
Electrical Engineering
Hughes

This is an accurate picture of what your first day may be like. As you can see, some of the fears might be warranted - there are times when no one knows who you are, or that you are starting work that day. Following are some helpful hints to get you through the first day:

PREPARE - Find out in advance where to park, where to report, and what time to arrive. Establish a habit of arriving a few minutes early each morning.

EAT & SLEEP - Be sure to get a good night’s sleep the night before, and eat a healthy breakfast.

HAVE QUESTIONS - Make a list so that you remember to ask your supervisor about policies and procedures that you are unsure of.

DON’T BE LATE! - First impressions can set the tone for your entire work period.
("A man consumes the time you make him wait in thinking of your faults - so don’t be late!"
- Arthur Guiterman)

LISTEN - Take time to listen to people during the first day. There will be plenty of time to voice opinions or to let them get to know you later. However, don’t be too quiet or afraid to ask questions if you don’t understand something.

LOOK AROUND - You will probably have your own "space" whether it’s an office, a cubicle or a desk. Some organizations encourage personalizing your space, others don’t. See how the employees make their space their own - pictures, sayings, coffee mugs, plaques, etc. It can help you fit in.

ASK FOR DIRECTIONS - It’s a great way to meet people!

DRESS APPROPRIATELY - Wear office attire (jacket & tie for men; professional slacks or skirt with a jacket for women) that is ironed.* It’s better to overdress the first day. Even if others dress down, remember that you are trying to make a good impression and your clothes are often seen as a reflection of your professionalism. *If possible, ask about the dress code in advance of your start date.

TAKE NOTES - Write down information and names throughout the day for later reference.
BRING YOUR ID AND FORMS - Remember to bring any forms sent to you ahead of time (already filled out with copies for your records) as well as identification to complete employment verification (I-9) forms. To complete these forms, you will need either a picture ID and an original social security card or birth certificate; or a passport (with visa forms if not U.S. citizen). It is also a good idea to have paper and something to write with.

BE PREPARED FOR THE W-4 TAX FORM - This form lets you decide when you want to pay your taxes. Most likely, you will either have too much taken from your paycheck and be paid back at the end of the year, or will have too little taken out and owe Uncle Sam in April. Either way, the same amount of tax will be taken from you. Claiming one exemption is generally the best way for a single person to assure that you will not have too much or too little taken out of each paycheck. This is an area in which you may wish to consult with whoever files your family’s taxes. It is also a good habit to keep track of your paychecks.

BRING LUNCH - Try to find out ahead of time (from former Co-ops) whether most people eat in the cafeteria, bring their own lunches, or go out to lunch. Your supervisor or Co-op coordinator may have arranged lunch for you on the first day, but just in case, you might want to have a sandwich stashed somewhere!

BE POSITIVE! - “Work is either fun or drudgery. It depends on your attitude. I like fun.”
- Colleen C. Barrett

WRAP-UP - You may have time with someone in Human Resources or with your supervisor at the end of the first day to wrap things up. Take advantage of the opportunity to ask any questions. It’s OK to ask what someone’s name is - they won't expect you to remember everyone! It will also help if, at the end of the day or when you get home, you can jot down your impressions of things that stuck out in your mind:

- people’s names
- policies that were mentioned
- where things are (mailboxes...)
- who you report to for various projects and who to go to with questions
- starting times, break times, lunch hour protocol

Try keeping these notes in a journal that you can refer to later when you are evaluating your whole work experience.
**ORIENTATION**

You may be given a formal orientation that can include a tour, descriptions of the benefits the organization offers, talks about policies of the organization, etc. An orientation should familiarize you with the organization and help you adapt to it.

**CHECKPOINTS:**

If you are not given a formal orientation, you will need to orient yourself. Use the following culture checkpoints to evaluate your experience:

**THE ENVIRONMENT:**

✓ What is morale like? Are the employees glad to be there?
✓ How is the office physically arranged (individual cubicles, areas where you can work as a group, crowded or spacious)?
✓ Does everyone go home at 5:00, or do most of the staff work late?
✓ How do most people dress - casually, formally?
✓ Who makes up the workforce - are they young, older, from different backgrounds, all engineers, etc.?
✓ What sort of conversations do most people have?

**GETTING THINGS DONE:**

✓ Do people work as teams or individually?
✓ Does everyone pitch in to make the copies and coffee, or are roles clearly defined?
✓ How is information communicated - meetings, phone, one-on-one, e-mail, instant messenger?
✓ How are decisions made - from the top, by groups, by individuals?

**LINES OF POWER:**

✓ Where is the power in the organization - the president, division manager, your supervisor, the administrative assistants?
✓ Examine an organizational chart of the organization; there are many styles of organization/management. Where are you, as a Co-op student, on the organizational chart?
✓ Who can help you get your job done?
Those who seek mentoring, will rule the great expanse under heaven. Those who boast that they are greater than others, will fall short. Those who are willing to learn from others, become greater. Those who are ego-involved, will be humbled and made small.

Shu Ching

Having a mentor is quite possibly one of the best ways to guarantee success in your Co-op position. A mentor is someone you can go to when you need help, regardless of how big or small the problem is. A mentor can also provide you with advice and insight about the field and the organization that you are in.

Some organizations will automatically assign a formal mentor to each Co-op student. If you are this fortunate, take advantage of the opportunity. If a mentor has not been assigned to you, this is your opportunity to seek a mentor with whom you can connect.

How do you identify a mentor? Begin by talking with people in your department. Is there someone you relate to and who is easy to talk with? You may feel comfortable with someone who is early in his or her career, but with a few years of experience. You may also want to seek out other Cornellians in your organization. Alumni often have a good understanding how you feel in the organization since you have a significant commonality. Hang a Cornell banner in your office and Cornellians are sure to find you eventually; or be more proactive by checking with the human resources office, searching the Alumni Mentor Network on CUElinks, or searching for keywords “Cornell” and your employer’s name on LinkedIn.

Once you have identified a possible mentor, invite that person to lunch. Ask the person about his/her experiences at the organization and prior. Ask if you can come to them with questions and be sure to develop this relationship, even if you don’t feel that you need help right away. Stop by their office to chat briefly once a week and, if possible, have lunch together a few more times. This way, when you do run into a difficult situation, you feel comfortable talking with your mentor who understands you and your interests, goals, projects, and the work environment.

Your mentor will probably be the person you seek out when have a quick question that you don’t want to pose to your supervisor. Your mentor may also be someone you talk with about your career, your educational goals, and how Co-op fits into your plan. Keep in mind that you can seek advice from more than one mentor - this is called using your network!
LEARNING OUTCOMES

Most engineering programs prepare the student equally; but engineering Co-op gives the student invaluable experience that simply cannot wait ‘til after graduation... It is certainly a misconception that work experience replaces good solid education; on the contrary, the two are mutual. Work experiences in the college years can determine why, when and how one continues his/her education.

Kenton Lee
Civil Engineering
Svertrup Corporation

During your work experience, you are expected to meet the commonly defined learning outcomes (page 8), as well as establish your own individual learning outcomes. At the beginning of your work term, you will need to formulate learning outcomes in cooperation with your supervisor. At the end of the work term, you and your supervisor will evaluate your progress toward these outcomes.

STEPS FOR ESTABLISHING LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Meet with your supervisor during the first two weeks of your work term. Discuss your learning outcomes to see which can be met and how they tie into your job responsibilities.
- Submit your learning outcomes to Engineering Co-op & Career Services.

QUESTIONS TO HELP DEVELOP GOOD LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- What specific knowledge or skills do you hope to gain?
- What responsibilities/experiences will help you to attain this knowledge or skill?
- How will the development of the outcomes relate to your major and career goals?
- What do you hope to learn about workplace culture and organizational structure?

QUALITIES OF GOOD ACADEMIC LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Describe a specific result or outcome you wish to accomplish while on your Co-op work term. (Test outcomes by asking, “What exactly will this look like?”)
- Describe the experiences you hope to have that will lead to your learning.
- Relate these to your academic major, minor, work assignment, industry, personal development, or career development.

Goal setting and self-reflection are key tools in professional development and learning. Discussing these learning outcomes with your supervisor or mentor will enhance your learning experience.
THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Do your job and demand your compensation - but in that order.

Cary Grant

You may have read many job descriptions, especially when you were interviewing for Co-op positions back in February. They were usually very generic, describing typical assignments, listing general skills required for the job, and explaining the organization’s products or mission.

Things were a little shaky for a while, but I finally got the courage up to approach my boss and tell him that I could use some clues - written, if possible - as to what I was really trying to do. He was more than happy to do that...One reason behind Ed's not telling me what to do explicitly is to give me a taste of formulating the job myself rather than having it handed down to me...like at school...I suggested that I be given some written, general guidelines so I could be pointed in the right direction - not completely spelled out, but not completely unsaid, either. This way I can get some direction and formulate from there.

Kevin Newman
Computer Science Bell Communications
Research

FOR YOUR ACTUAL ASSIGNMENT, THE JOB DESCRIPTION SHOULD BE WRITTEN IN DETAIL, AND SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- A description of the tasks you will be expected to perform
- The expected outcome
- The standards of performance that will be used in the final evaluation of your work
- An explanation of who you report to, who reports to you, etc.
- Resources available to you in the office

A job description provides a guide to identify specific goals and responsibilities. Based on a comprehensive job description, you can develop detailed outcomes to evaluate your progress and final performance. This is an important process to map out your work assignment and efficiently make use of what the organization has to offer you. It will not only help make the most out of your assignment, but a job description is also a concise explanation of your function and responsibilities – a vital component for your future résumé!

Talk with your supervisor to outline a job description if these details are not given to you. This is also the perfect time to discuss the Student - Employer Expectations Agreement referred to at the beginning of this document.
**JOB OBJECTIVES**

A job objective is essentially a guideline set up to define the tasks you want to accomplish, how you will get them done, how your performance will be evaluated, and in what time frame the tasks will be completed. Achieving job objectives can be the stepping stone to reach learning outcomes.

**WHAT KINDS OF THINGS SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN JOB OBJECTIVES?**

- Technical or communication skills that you need or want to learn.
- Tasks to practice and refine your performance.
- Knowledge to be acquired

**WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF JOB OBJECTIVES?**
*(Timeline examples based on Fall work term)*

- By October 1st I will have read all of the instructional manuals.
- By October 15th I will have the project proposal ready for management.
- By November 1st I will have completed the first phase of the project.
- By November 5th, I will have checked in with my boss regarding my progress.
- By November 23rd, I will have learned how to use Microsoft Access.
- By December 1st I will have mastered the new programming language.
- I will learn... (specific skills, whether I enjoy the field, etc.).

Job objectives can be very useful during your assignment to assess, step-by-step, how things are progressing for you. The Co-op office tries to help you in this assessment by having someone from the office conduct a telephone interview or a personal visit to your job site. S/he will connect with both you and your supervisor, as well as with the coordinator of the program (if there is one at your organization). Take advantage of this opportunity to get advice if you don’t feel things are going well, or to help you get feedback if you aren’t sure.
Once you know what your job will be, and have established some guidelines for how you will get it accomplished, it is time to actually DO IT!

Deadlines, conflicts, and revision after revision developed into an invaluable learning experience that dealt with the union, management, the business unit, hourly employees, and engineers...Successful engineering requires more than a technical knowledge and problem solving skills. It requires a sense of creativity, ingenuity, and the ability to communicate ideas in a confident and professional manner.

Kristin L. Holcomb  
Operations Research & Information Engineering  
General Motors

The above description covers most of what your job experience should involve, with education as the main focus. Throughout this section, keep in mind the professional culture discussion at the beginning of the guidebook. It will help in understanding the situations and examples that follow.

You probably have most of the technical skills you need to be able to do your job, even though you might not realize it. However, engineering in the workplace is not quite like in the classroom...

I've learned that with any given task, there will always be unexpected problems that take a good amount of time to resolve. As a result, I've learned to always be prepared to take this factor into account when budgeting time for a task.

Sheldon Mar  
Operations Research & Information Engineering  
Volmer Associates

You won't be given a sheet of problem sets to complete by the end of the day! Your supervisor should be familiar with your technical skills. However, if s/he has not supervised a Cornell Co-op before, or is not familiar with the specifics of your curriculum, you may need to guide and show him/her how much you can actually do.

As a Co-op, I've been trying to impress the company with my work ethic and efficient nature. However, I often have found that upon completion of a project, I'm left with downtime.

James L'Heureux  
Chemical Engineering  
Infineum
Don’t be bashful about this. As mentioned above, ‘learning is a two way street’. You will be surprised at how much progress you can make with more communication. One of our students had the following experience several years ago:

Saman first started his assignment of putting together circuit boards. He was very good at it, and was allowed to earn extra money by taking them home to assemble at night. However, the job was not very challenging. After a few weeks, he decided that if he continued putting boards together, he would become so proficient at it that they would want him to do it forever. So he went to see his supervisor, armed with his course catalog and his projects from some summer courses. He showed the supervisor what he had been studying, what he had accomplished in class, and asked for a project that was more challenging.

The supervisor had been used to Co-ops from a local college who came to work as freshmen with limited skills. He was surprised, but gave Saman a project to develop a control system for a materials testing fixture, a printer that had been modified to simulate the process of the printer they were developing. He had to design the control system, which he then built and debugged. He was given several other very challenging projects during his assignment, while new engineers who had been hired earlier that year were putting together the boards he had originally worked on!

The problem wasn’t that the student didn’t have the technical skills; it was that the supervisor wasn’t aware of those skills. On the other hand, not everyone is initially as prepared or unprepared as they may think!

I had no experience with or instruction in testability of DFT prior to the start of the summer. Having taken a class in this subject or having read about it might have helped me understand the nature of the work more quickly. However, without prior experience in this field, I was still able to understand key concepts and complete my tasks.

Barry Rafkind
Electrical and Computer Engineering
Advanced Micro Devices

You should feel comfortable talking with your supervisor about your assigned work. Find out what the goals are when you are given a project. Let your supervisor know if you finished it quickly and with ease. Ask for more challenging projects when you feel comfortable with your current projects. However, don’t assume that your supervisor doesn’t know what he/she is doing in assigning you work. Often a supervisor will assign basic work at first so that you can learn the fundamentals of the project. You may be assigned to answer calls at the service desk before working on the development of new software. You may be assigned to the testing department for a few months before getting to work on the design aspects. Having a thorough understanding of what is involved with testing and the problems that can occur will help you to become a more effective designer. Sometimes, you are assigned work that simply needs to be done, and you are the person chosen to do it. Regardless of the reason, do your work with a positive attitude and to the best of your ability, and you are more likely to be given challenging work in the future.

It is impossible for a man to learn what he thinks he already knows.

Epictetus
CHECKPOINTS:

If you are uncomfortable with your level of technical skill, here are some suggestions:

- Find out what resources are available. Most organizations have technical libraries or resource centers that you can access.
- Take your relevant textbooks with you.
- Don’t be afraid to call faculty at Cornell for advice. Several years ago, a mechanical engineering student called the Co-op office in a panic because her entire job involved polymers and she hadn’t had any coursework in polymers. We put her in touch with a materials science professor who was able to put her on the right track.
- Find out who the experts are in your department. Most of them love to share their expertise, or can at least steer you in the right direction.
- Remember, they don’t expect you to know all the answers when you get there; they just want you to be able to learn and know where to look for the answers.

Some of the stuff I dealt with was on the cutting edge of technology and not typically taught by the Junior year. I was glad I had already taken ECE 315 so I had some transistor knowledge. I wish I had more fabrication background when I got there, but they gave me enough to read that I was quickly up to speed on the processes.

Andrew Hocker
Electrical and Computer Engineering
Advanced Micro Devices

Keep in mind that you may actually know more about some areas of technology than the people you are working for. You have just left an institution that has some of the world’s latest technology and equipment in the world available. Your computer skills may also be stronger than those of other employees who haven’t had as much recent training. The professor who taught your last class may have been a worldwide expert in the field, and some of that may have rubbed off on you!

You may also become an expert at what you learn on the job, and have to train someone to take over before you leave. Several years ago, an operations research Co-op was involved in the start-up of an automated manufacturing line. He actually designed the computer program that controlled the entire system. The Co-op had to train operators and troubleshooters, as well as a new programmer, before he left. He was the expert on the system. The opportunity exists for you to become an expert too!

At first, the engineers didn’t quite know what to do with me, so I was a little bored. So I went after my own projects, identifying serious problems with a particular process that I’d been doing routine tests on. Then I identified problems with the tests themselves. Then I proposed solutions to these problems and worked through some. As I became more involved with this machine and process, I began to be the local expert - decided when it could run and when it would create only scrap. Even the senior engineer had to ask me what was going on - nobody else knew!

Jeffrey Birt
Mechanical Engineering
General Motors
The evaluation process is often not given enough time and attention. Evaluation of your experience should start at the very beginning when you start to form your Learning Outcomes.

You can go back to these outcomes continually throughout the work experience to periodically assess your progress. If you have received feedback from your supervisor along the way, it is much easier to gauge how you are doing. However, gaining feedback on performance (both positive and negative) is not always easy. Time constraints, communication barriers, and a lack of awareness of the need for feedback all contribute to the difficulty. Consider talking with your mentor throughout the Co-op term about what you can be doing to make yourself a competitive candidate for full-time employment. This will allow you time to implement changes in your work style and get feedback from someone who may not be formally evaluating your performance. There is a Six-Week Evaluation Form that provides talking points for discussing your performance with your supervisor or mentor.

Self-evaluation can also be very difficult to do, since we may not be able to be objective. It is, however, a very important part of the Co-op experience. When you return to school, you will be jumping right into classes, will have to make some adjustments to get back into the "study mode," and probably won't have time to spend on evaluation. Therefore, you should spend time reflecting on your Co-op experience shortly before it ends.

There are four assignments to assist in the evaluation process. At the end of your assignment, you will complete and submit them to your Co-op course in Canvas before the end of your work term. The Learning Outcomes Evaluation provides an opportunity for you to reflect on what you learned during your Co-op experience. The Work Experience Evaluation helps us to evaluate the Co-op program for future students. The Job Summary serves as a resource for future Co-op students. The Assessment of Student Performance is a tool to encourage dialogue between you and your supervisor about your Co-op experience.
COMMUNICATION
PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Communication is really the key to success. After much trial and error, I figured out how I should update my supervisor on my project’s progress, make short reports to managers, and coordinate and ask for advice from colleagues. This is very different from the academic atmosphere at school, where you can knock on office doors and speak directly with professors.

Johnny Fong
Computer Science
Goldman Sachs

The above quote mentions several ways in which communication skills will be used in your job. This section will provide you with some details for handling yourself in these areas, as well as some discussion about conflict management, attitudes, and ethics.

In your work assignment, you may need to: compose reports, proposals, emails and letters; carry on discussions within working groups; and deliver formal presentations. This section is an aid toward making aspects of technical communication, both written and verbal, an enriching piece of your Co-op experience.

Pay attention to how information is communicated in your organization. Consider what method is most effective at a given time. For example, if you need something right away, email may not be most effective; you may be more successful by picking up the phone or walking down the hall to talk with someone. On the other hand, it is important to determine the timeliness and priority of the work that you are doing so that you are not constantly interrupting people. Observation and speaking with your mentor are good ways to figure this out.

CHECKPOINTS:

Look at the communication culture in your organization:

✓ Is communication formal and standardized or is it informal and personalized?
✓ Does this reflect the overall working atmosphere of the organization?
✓ What is the primary means of communication in the organization: one-on-one, telephone, email, memos, or meetings? Is it efficient?
✓ Are Co-ops able to make a project presentation or is that a role for more permanent, senior staff?
✓ It is important to be aware of where others are coming from – their ethnic background, their technical background, their gender, their age, etc. All these differences can lead to a lack of communication, which can lead to not getting the job done.
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

In a professional setting, it is essential to learn quickly and to adapt to a company’s set policies for getting things done. I learned how to formalize my work – writing test protocols, engineering summaries, having reports approved, keeping a detailed laboratory notebook, documenting procedures, etc.

Gretchen Piwinski
Chemical Engineering
Abiomed

The most common form of written communication in a professional environment is email. However, just because you are used to using email everyday with friends and family doesn’t mean that you don’t have to put time into the emails that you write for work. Your emails should be professional, grammatically correct, clear, and concise. Emails are matter of fact and un-adorned, not creative pieces like letters or essays. Clarity is the key to a good email.

Emails often become part of the official documentation of a project. They may be kept on file for future reference, so if you are working on a project and wish to use email as documentation for future use, be sure that your messages are comprehensive.

In addition to writing emails, you may be involved in writing letters, proposals, technical reports and documentation, outlines, technical articles, job descriptions, manuals, etc. Check into the particular styles and formats used within your organization.

CHECKPOINTS:

With every type of technical or professional writing, remember:

- Notice the writing style used in your organization. Follow the lead from emails you receive from colleagues.
- Know your audience! - think about their perspective on the subject.
- Be specific, concise, selective – target only a few main points and deal with one subject in any given section.
- Write so that your audience can understand the document without needing additional resources.
- Use the subject line to convey as many details as possible – “test results for paper towels” is fine, but “test results show that towels need more glue” is better.
- Include a purpose, summary, discussion and action components.
- Use the pyramid approach – summarize the most important information in the first line and provide more detail as you go along for those who wish to learn more.
- Don’t generalize – this implies you don’t have supporting data.
- State any recommendations/solutions at the beginning of the document.
- If necessary, state when and what type of response you are expecting from the audience.
- Don’t use slang.
FULFILL YOUR TECHNICAL WRITING REQUIREMENT THROUGH YOUR CO-OP EXPERIENCE!

The Writing-Intensive Co-op (WIC), is an excellent opportunity to improve your writing while gaining work experience, and, when handled successfully, it fulfills Cornell’s technical-writing requirement.

A STUDENT MAY UNDERTAKE A WIC IF:

- his/her supervisor decides that the student’s technical work will offer opportunities to write different types of documents over the course of the Co-op rotation, and
- the supervisor is interested in working with the student’s on-the-job writing.

Together, the student, supervisor, and WIC coordinator decide on the details of the students WIC. A student interested in doing a WIC should first contact the WIC coordinator shortly before starting the Co-op work term or in the first week or so at the work site. The coordinator then contacts the work site supervisor and explains how the WIC operates.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Rick Evans, Senior Lecturer
Engineering Communications
Program Coordinator, Writing-Intensive Co-op 607-255-7199
rae27@cornell.edu
Presentations

Engineers spend about two-thirds of their work time writing and presenting material orally to colleagues and to non-specialists who will base important decisions on their findings. Verbal ability is not only a practical skill, but also a thinking tool that helps professionals formulate, organize and convey ideas.

The engineering coursework prepared me sufficiently for the technical challenges; however, work is much more than that, and classes in public speaking and technical writing might have better prepared me for work.

Judhajit De
Computer Science
Goldman Sachs

Similar to presentations you give in class, steps for a good oral presentation involve:

- Knowing to whom you will be presenting and considering their perspectives
- Gathering the pertinent information you will need
- Developing an appropriate, logical outline
- Preparing visual aids and/or handouts
- Anticipating questions and preparing answers

Knowing who the audience will be allows you to tailor your information from general to technically specific, as needed. A good presentation is "slanted" toward what type of information the audience is hoping to gain. Based on this, resources can be pulled to efficiently find this information.

An outline is not meant to be read, but will guide you through the different parts of your presentation. Some dangers in not using an outline are: tendency to drone or sound "artificial," losing your train of thought when there are interruptions; and just plain forgetting what comes next! Be sure to show your outline to a colleague for feedback prior to presenting to a larger audience.

An outline is very simple:

Introduction:

- identify yourself as appropriate (name, why you are here, where you work, etc.)
- express an interest in making the presentation
- State the goal or purpose of the presentation

Body:

- identify points and discuss clearly
- present ideas in a logical, easy to follow order
- back up complicated points with evidence, handouts or visual aids

Conclusion:

- restate purpose
- summarize the contents in a couple of statements
- make any concluding statements/suggestions as appropriate
- open the floor for questions and/or feedback
Just as important as the presentation itself is the question and answer session that usually follows. A polite invitation, "I would be happy to clarify points or answer any questions," shows a sincere desire to communicate. Ask for clarification if you do not understand the question. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so. It is OK not to know everything; if possible, try to indicate possible sources for an answer or indicate that you would be glad to see what you can find out and get back to them at a later date. This is also an effective way to handle a member of the audience who is not content with your answers or points you raised.

Handouts or visual aids are excellent support material to any presentation. However, these materials should not distract the audience from what you are saying. Handouts should be given to the audience at appropriate points in your presentation to avoid bent heads busily reading as opposed to listening to you. Visual aids should be clear, uncluttered and appealing. Poor visual aids will, again, be a distraction as your audience attempts to decipher them.

Speaking in front of any type of group can be an un-nerving experience. It helps to have your material prepared and to practice the presentation in front of a mirror or a willing listener. Practice will give you a better feel for the time involved, (do I speak too quickly, or is this too long?) and help in the flow of your speech and thoughts (minimizing verbal fillers, the "umms" and "uhs" between words). It will also help you refine the "mechanics" involved in public speaking:

- maintain good eye contact
- plant your feet so that you don't rock back and forth
- use hand-outs or visual aids appropriately
- project your voice as fit to the size of the room and audience
- identify and control nervous habits (twisting your hairs, verbal fillers, etc.)

Remember, oral presentations are as much a learning experience as any other part of your Co-op assignment. You have much to gain from audience feedback as well as from just going through the process.
INTERPERSONAL
COMMUNICATION

Interpersonal skills are intertwined with everything you do in life. In the workplace they primarily involve getting along with people in order to get your job done.

I have learned that apart from basic engineering knowledge, communication skills amongst colleagues and peers at work go a long way in the development of a product. One has to have the ability to work in a team and to clearly put forward his or her ideas.

Chinmay Joshi
Electrical & Computer Engineering
Cascade Microtech

One major change from the university to the workplace is the concept of working as part of a team. At work, you are no longer required to do "independent" homework, reading and research. In fact, sharpening collaborative skills will increase efficiency on the job, strengthen your body of knowledge, and will reveal areas of other individual’s expertise for future reference.

It is also important to understand that everyone has a different work style. Some people prefer to process information and take time to weigh the pros and cons before making a decision while others prefer to make decisions and act quickly. Some people like formal procedures and structure, while others are more casual. Pay attention to the styles of your supervisor and colleagues and think about how they may like to be approached.

A successful team acts together as one combined body. There are many dynamics involved in any type of group interaction: leadership roles, interpersonal conflicts, work styles, professional background and experience of group members.

CHECKPOINTS:
As a Co-op new to the group process, there are some things to look out for to facilitate your role:

- listen to what people have to say
- respect what they say, as everyone is entitled to their opinion
- don’t be afraid to say what you think
- look for feedback
- identify the leader (every group has a leader, formal or informal)
- notice how group members interact (e.g. do they wait their turn or interrupt?)
- pay attention to the unique styles of each individual
CONFLICT

The need for interpersonal skills becomes very evident whenever there is a conflict involving differences of opinion or interpretation. Conflicts will arise between colleagues at various points, and you must learn how to manage this. There are many situations in which you may interact with others and encounter conflicts:

THERE IS PROBLEM SOLVING...

The most important part of solving a problem is knowing who to call if you get bogged down. The most important part of getting help from another person is asking the questions properly.

Steve Caron
Electrical Engineering
National Semiconductor

THERE IS LISTENING...

My project involved two different groups, so I had to work with different requirements and users. And as the project went on, I also had to deal with varying specifications as different groups had their own priorities. Meeting with people and getting lots of feedback as I tried to identify common needs and implement solutions was definitely one of the challenging parts of the job. Developing that interaction was one of the most important things I was able to do while I was there.

Mina Radhakrishnan
Computer Science
Goldman Sachs

THERE IS BUREAUCRACY...

There is always “red tape” in a major corporation. Some you can get around, others you can’t.

Jun Frank Ma
Mechanical Engineering
General Electric

THERE IS MANAGEMENT...

Essentially, what one learns as a supervisor is how to get the job done given all of the “red tape” and uncertainties by understanding the people and culture within the organization. Only with this understanding, along with shrewdness in dealing with people, can one be an effective supervisor in a highly complex environment. Supervising has been a truly rewarding and character-building experience.

Daniel Nguyen
Operations Research & Information Engineering
General Motors

THERE ARE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CONFLICTS...

The most important thing I learned was how to survive on my own working in a completely different culture. Adapting to the lifestyle of London and living there for two months taught me a lot about myself and my abilities. I think that the experience of living in two completely different cities helped me to see the possibilities for after graduation.

Jason Harger
Operations Research & Information Engineering
Willis RE, Inc.
There are ethics...

A Co-op student working for a civil engineering firm discovered that outdated toxic chemicals were disappearing from a cabinet one at a time. He had asked about disposing of them during a recent move, but was told not to worry about it. Upon investigating, he found that the bottles were being put into a dumpster, one at a time, violating environmental protection laws. At another organization, a Co-op student realized that parts being manufactured for his organization’s cars were not being properly tested because the procedures were too expensive; they were cutting corners to cut costs.

You may encounter various types of conflict that require you to utilize your interpersonal skills. These conflicts can range from personal to technical differences, and can involve various situations such as language differences, cultural diversity, gender issues, ethics, and power issues. Some examples of conflicts you may encounter during your work assignment are:

- At a meeting with upper level management, your supervisor takes credit for work you have done.
- You discover your organization is doing something that violates your own ethical values.
- Sexist or racist jokes are being told around the office.
- Layoffs have been announced and you have just been hired as a new Co-op employee.

Checkpoints:

How you handle situations like these can determine how successfully you fit in at your organization. Below are some things to think about when you encounter conflicts.

✔ What is the conflict?
✔ What is causing the conflict? Language differences? Cultural differences? A power struggle? Ethics?
✔ How am I involved? Is the conflict between myself and a manager? Is it between other people? Am I in the middle? Is it an internal conflict of mine? What is my role?
✔ How do I interpret the incident?
✔ What action should I take and what are the possible repercussions?
✔ What have I learned from it?
ETHICS

WEBSTER DEFINES ETHICS AS: THE STUDY OF STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND MORAL JUDGMENT, MORAL PHILOSOPHY; THE SYSTEM OR CODE OF MORALS OF A PARTICULAR PERSON, RELIGION, GROUP, PROFESSION, ETC.

What makes amoral or ethical problem difficult? Professor Stephen Nathanson of Northeastern University suggests the following possibilities.

1. The situation is unclear and we're unsure of the facts.
2. Different rules conflict.
3. We don't know whether an act constitutes a justifiable exception to a general principle.
4. We know what's right, but if we do the right thing, we will suffer in some way; or we will antagonize, hurt or offend others.
5. Sometimes we think it's okay to do something wrong because doing right would require more than we think could be expected of ourselves; we have an excuse but not a justification.

In today's workplace, especially in engineering organizations, the area of ethics is becoming a major issue. There are ethics involved in almost every industry: defense, consumer products, waste management, construction, space, etc. We have all heard about ethics in the defense industry, with waste spending, quality control, and building bombs to destroy people instead of growing food to feed them. The construction industry is often questioned on ethics every time a bridge collapses, or a wall of a school cafeteria collapses on a room full of children. Did they use substandard material to cut costs, etc?

During your career as an engineer, you will have to make decisions about whether you can balance your organization’s ethics with your own personal values. Co-op is a chance to explore your own personal feelings about ethical issues, and adjust your career decisions accordingly. However, the way you handle these issues during your Co-op assignment can determine your success. You may not agree with organization policies, with the practices that are going on around you, or with the values of the other workers. If you are vocal about these differences, there's the chance you won't be accepted, your work will be affected, and you won't be successful at the organization. You may need to take some time to reexamine your values and talk with someone you trust before deciding how to approach the situation.

In deciding how to approach an ethical or moral situation in an engineering work situation, the Code of Ethics of Engineers is a start. This code is agreed upon by the National Society of Professional Engineers. The Code, with its fundamental principles and canons, is listed on the next page.

For more information you can visit the NSPE website at:

http://www.nspe.org/Ethics/CodeofEthics/index.html
Organizations have their own codes of ethics, which should be made available to you during your orientation. Organizational codes of ethics are based not only on legal issues, but also on the values of their particular organizational culture. This is another opportunity to examine that culture and decide how you fit into it.

In summary, when you encounter an ethical or moral problem that you have to make a decision about, first be aware of what makes the problem so difficult. Then analyze the problem and the results of any action you decide to take. Lastly, try to keep your personal and business ethics in line with each other. It is very difficult to live two codes of ethics that conflict. The organization you decide to work in after you graduate should have similar values and ethics to your own personal ethics.

When in doubt about how to handle any situation during your Co-op experience, please contact Engineering Co-op & Career Services. Our staff members are happy to listen to your situation, brainstorm ideas, and work with you to find a solution that is comfortable for you.

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**NSPE CODE OF ETHICS FOR ENGINEERS**

**PREAMBLE**

Engineering is an important and learned profession. As members of this profession, engineers are expected to exhibit the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Engineering has a direct and vital impact on the quality of life for all people. Accordingly, the services provided by engineers require honesty, impartiality, fairness, and equity, and must be dedicated to the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare. Engineers must perform under a standard of professional behavior that requires adherence to the highest principles of ethical conduct.

**I. FUNDAMENTAL CANONS**

Engineers, in the fulfillment of their professional duties, shall:

1. Hold paramount the safety, health and welfare of the public.
2. Perform services only in areas of their competence.
3. Issue public statements only in an objective and truthful manner.
4. Act for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees.
5. Avoid deceptive acts.
6. Conduct themselves honorably, responsibly, ethically, and lawfully so as to enhance the honor, reputation, and usefulness of the profession.

*More information about the National Society of Professional Engineers, including Rules of Practice and Professional Obligations can be found at [www.nspe.org](http://www.nspe.org).*
CHECKPOINTS:

In the 1981 Harvard Business Review, Laura Nash offers the following questions to be used in analyzing the ethics of a business decision:

✓ Have you defined the problem accurately?
✓ How do you define the problem if you stood on the other side of the fence?
✓ How did this situation occur in the first place?
✓ To whom and to what do you give your loyalty as a person and a member of the corporation?
✓ What is your intention in making this decision?
✓ How does this intention compare with the probable results?
✓ Whom could your decision or action injure?
✓ Can you discuss the problem with the affected parties before you make your decision?
✓ Are you confident that your position will be as valid over a long period of time as it seems now?
✓ Could you disclose without qualms your decision or action to your boss, your CEO, the board of directors, your family, society as a whole?
✓ What is the symbolic potential of your action if understood? If misunderstood?
✓ Under what conditions would you allow exceptions to your stand?
STRESS & HUMOR

Stress is a part of everyday life, and exists for everyone. Stress comes from environmental stimuli, having negative effects on our physical health, and emotional well-being. It can take many forms, specifically: depression, consistent tiredness, apathy, illness, ulcers, defensiveness, burnout, low self-esteem, and never seeming to have enough time for everything.

Although your Co-op assignment should be seen as a ‘testing ground’ for you, and may not prove to be a permanent job, you will still encounter stressors. Some job anxiety you may encounter could include: making presentations; being invited to lunch or dinner meetings with the ‘big bosses’ and not being polished on your etiquette; making business trips; meeting the president, CEO, etc; being away from friends, family and/or your support group; getting used to the different work pace being; and of course dealing with bureaucracy.

There are many different ways you can choose to deal with these situations as they arise. Apart from quitting your job, here are some healthy ways to cope with stress:

- **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF** – Eating and sleeping well will give you enough physical energy to face your problems.
- **AVOID OVER-EXTENDING YOURSELF** – Use your Co-op experience to get the most out of your job as you can, but stay away from joining EVERY social group that comes up. You know your limits best, be true to yourself.
- **EXERCISE** – Physical activity can relieve tension, anxiety and stress.
- **MANAGE YOUR TIME WELL** – Managing your time at work is no different than managing your time in school. If you have a presentation due in three weeks, you set a realistic schedule for yourself just as you would for an exam or a large school project.
- **CUT DOWN ON CAFFEINE AND SUGAR** – It will not only help your physical well-being, but you will be able to relax more easily when you have the time.
- **LAUGH!** – Laughter and humor are coping mechanisms. Being able to laugh at life is an attribute that will help you to live longer and healthier, as well as allow the people around you to feel at ease. Through the use of humor in our everyday lives:
  - Blood pressure lowers
  - Both brain hemispheres are activated
  - Endorphins are released
  - Heart rate lowers
  - Immune system is enhanced
  - Learning skills are enhanced
  - Interpersonal communication is increased
  - Productivity increases
  - Self-esteem heightens

It should be noted, however, that there is a big difference between JOKES and actual HUMOR. Jokes rely on someone to be the brunt of the joke, whether it is one person or a sect of society. No one likes to be the target of ridicule, and this only builds up defenses. Humor is something that everyone can relate to. It’s a different perspective on life and the way one sees their environment. If we can laugh about the things in our lives that we all experience, we realize we are all human and not so different from each other - this breaks down defenses and builds social empathy.

What we are encouraging you to do is to realize that stress is a fact of life, but it is generally unhealthy. There are different ways to deal with it; do not let it take control of your life. Humor is a beneficial, positive, coping mechanism that relieves stress. It does not, however, suggest that you poke fun at your boss, or constantly crack bad jokes. Humor is a perspective - a different way of viewing your world. It lightens up the atmosphere and binds people together.

Is there a wrong time to use humor? Probably. You need to feel out your organization’s culture and find out what is accepted and what isn't. Just because you are going to be working nine-to- five does not mean you have to turn into a dry, boring engineer. It also doesn't mean that you should try to become the office comedian in order to fit in.
CHECKPOINTS:

✓ Do you see a high level of stress at your workplace?
✓ Do employees keep humorous things in their office (funny calendars, balloons, miscellaneous humor)?
✓ How does your organization perceive humor?
✓ Who makes you laugh at your organization?
✓ Are you rewarded or disciplined for using humor?
✓ Do people laugh at coffee breaks, or do they just need to get away from their environment?
✓ How do you perceive the stress/humor level at your organization?
You will find that technical jargon varies by organization, industry and engineering specialty. Almost all organizations talk in acronyms that will sound like a foreign language. It may be difficult at first, because your co-workers may be unaware that you don't understand what they are talking about. Not understanding the technical or industry language can be a barrier to getting your job done. Brand Management, Six Sigma, Just in Time, Lean Manufacturing, and Process Excellence are all popular industry phrases.

**CHECKPOINTS:**

Some points to think about in analyzing the language culture of your organization are:

- ✓ Read the literature you are given during orientation - particularly hand-books, policies, newsletters, etc. Is the language technical, formal, written in “legalese,” or humorous? This will give you good insight into the values and attitudes of your organization.
- ✓ Can you find a common thread or metaphor, which runs through informal verbal communication? (i.e. sports, family, business)
- ✓ Do different levels of management use different types of language? Do they all go by their first names, or only within certain levels?.
- ✓ Be careful about using slang or swear words - they may be acceptable in the lab or shop, but not in the boardroom.
Etiquette encompasses appearance, conversation skills, respect, and table manners, as well as the after-hours social activity.

I learned that while technical skills are very important, keeping a good relationship with my coworkers and supervisor was essential in having a good work environment.

Jane Hyun Lee  
Mechanical Engineering  
Boeing

It is easy to make a good first impression. When you are introduced to someone, stand up and smile. Make eye contact as you firmly shake their hand. Repeating the person's name is an acknowledgement, and helps reinforce it in your mind.

Once past introductions, carrying on a conversation is easy for some and intimidating to others. It always helps to ask open-ended, general questions (e.g. "What is your role in the organization?"). This allows you to learn more about the individual's area of work, as well as how they would like to interact with you, formally or informally. Respond by asking follow-up questions. See if you can relate what they just said to your Co-op job or past experiences (i.e. a class project). This not only shows that you were paying attention, but also that you are interested.

It is just as important to know when not to talk. Tempting as it may be, try not to interrupt - at least not until you've listened to people enough to know whether it is acceptable or not. It might be in the "culture" for a supervisor/manager to interrupt an employee, but not the other way around.

Don't feel you have to make a contribution to every conversation, especially if the discussion is on a topic you are unsure about. At times you learn the most by listening. If it appears inappropriate to ask questions at that moment, you can always track down individuals at a later time.

Respect is an integral part to business etiquette. All the people in your organization, management as well as hourly workers, deserve the same type of consideration that you would like to receive.

- avoid casually addressing people by first name (especially women)
- consider a person's schedule when asking for assistance or meetings
- express gratitude for assistance, even if it is in line with someone's job description

One of the hardest, and often amusing, tricks to master is the art of mixing work and food. There are simple, common sense rules such as keep your sleeve out of the gravy and don't slurp the soup. However, it is usually the more delicate issues that impact a professional meal.

If you are being treated to a meal, it's tempting to order the most expensive entrée, but you don't want to appear greedy. A good way to determine the "proper" price range is to ask your host for a recommendation, or wait for them to order first, and then take your cue from there.

During the meal itself, relax and enjoy. You want to be comfortable as well as present a good image. At a local dinner, a guest was struggling with a fork and shish-ka-bob. To her horror, a piece of meat went flying off the skewer and across the table. No, the dinner was not ruined; embarrassing situations can be remedied by laughter and can also act as an icebreaker.
**TEN MOST COMMONLY MADE TABLE-MANNERS FAUX PAS (SOCIAL BLUNDERS):**

- putting your napkin on your lap when you sit down, rather than waiting until everyone at the table has been seated
- beginning to eat when your food has been served to you, rather than waiting to begin until everyone at the table has been served
- blowing on soup or stirring it, rather than allowing it to cool naturally
- acting as though ice cubes are the edible part of a beverage by chewing them
- eating a dinner roll by breaking it in half (rather than tearing a bite-size piece)
- talking with food in your mouth
- chewing with your mouth open
- eating a larger than bite-size piece of food
- blowing your nose at the table
- pushing your plate away from you and stacking dishes when you have completed your meal, rather than leaving them in the same place as they were served to you

*When in doubt about any social or professional situation, see what Cornell Alumna and etiquette expert, Jodi R. R. Smith has to say: [www.mannersmith.com](http://www.mannersmith.com).*
SUMMARY

As we stated in the beginning, the first two sections of this guidebook were designed to help you conquer your fears, fulfill your hopes, and make the most out of your work experience. To wrap up these sections, we offer the following...

The best features of this job are the learning experiences and the people you will meet. I learned a great deal both technically and in terms of managing myself and my time. These general skills will undoubtedly help me in future employment settings and give me the experience necessary to have confidence entering the work force as a graduate.

Joshua Taillon
Material Science and Engineering
Amphenol

HINTS AND ADVICE

- Have a good attitude. Good work with a bad attitude will not help you to succeed. Do your best regardless of the task.
- Do what is asked of you before you ask for more.
- Recognize that you will have a learning curve. Just keep working at it and you'll eventually start contributing.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. Recognize your limitations and learn from more experienced people.
- Take initiative. Look for projects to work on, or present your ideas for projects to your manager.
- Communicate with your supervisor.
- Pay attention to the procedures, communication styles, and values of your organization.
- Respect other people and their opinions. One of the biggest mistakes you can make is acting like you know all the answers by disregarding others' opinions and advice. They will resent you for it.
- Continue to use and build your network (especially alumni) outside and inside your organization. People like talking with interns and aboutthemselves.
- Show interest in what goes on around you - the more interest you show in others, the more interest they will show in you.
- Avoid gossip.
- Spell check your emails
- Stay on positive terms with everyone. Don't burn bridges.
- Periodically check on the progress you are making towards your learning outcomes.
- Keep a portfolio of your successes.
- Try keeping a journal to refer to later on. It will help in evaluating your experience, and will remind you of what you have accomplished.

AT THE END OF THE CO-OP TERM: LEAVING ON A POSITIVE NOTE:

- A week before you leave, discuss pending projects with your supervisor to determine how they will be completed
- Return keys, laptops, cell phones, name badges, corporate credit cards, etc.
- Leave your forwarding contact information
- Thank your supervisor and mentor for their support, both verbally and in writing
- Leave projects in order; provide documentation to assist the next person
- Maintain your contacts
- Talk with your supervisor about your potential future at the organization
LIVING ON YOUR OWN
HOUSING SEARCH

I gained a sense of self-sufficiency and independence from going to a strange city and finding and furnishing an apartment for myself. I learned about what it is like to be a couple of years out of school, to have money, spare time, very little stress – in other words, a life. It was nice to have my evenings free, and I was able to get my brown belt in karate.

Tom McCauley
Engineering Physics
Avco

Although you may have lived off-campus in Ithaca while taking summer courses, there are some things you might not have thought about with regard to living away from your 'home away from home.' Ithaca is a place that you are familiar with: you might live with friends, sublet easily, have a meal plan, etc. Cornell also has many resources to aid you in finding a place to live. Moving to a new state (or country), however, brings with it some concerns you should be aware of. Although rental/lease agreements vary (greatly in some cases) from state to state, we have compiled some general rules of thumb for you to keep in mind.

THE SEARCH

Searching for a place to live can be a time-consuming process. Before you start searching, it is good to have a game plan. First, you want to set price boundaries. How much are you able to pay for an apartment? The recommended rule is to budget 25-33% of your net income (income minus taxes). Use 28% as a guide (about one week's pay).

Look for subletting deals. If a college is nearby, look for college housing because it will be furnished. Get a furnished place if possible! - from the Co-op Student Survey

If you are going to be living in an urban area, make sure that you will be living close to transportation that can get you to and from the office and other activities. It's surprising how much stress a hard commute can add to your life (especially for those early mornings and late nights). - from the Co-op Student Survey

The next step is to determine and rank your priorities. You need to consider what you are willing to pay a little more on, or what extras you are willing to give up in exchange for affordable rent. Here are some things to consider:

- How much of a commute are you willing to make?
- Do you have a car or do you need to rely on public transportation or cyclist friendly roads?
- How do you feel about having a roommate or living with a family that is not your own?
- What else do you need to feel comfortable?

Finding housing in a new city can be a great opportunity for creative problem-solving. For example, you may decide that you want a furnished apartment in a small town where short-term housing is difficult to find. Consider posting flyers on in local churches or synagogues and you may find a family with a room to rent. Or, let's say that you are working in New York City and want to live in Manhattan to be in the heart of the excitement. Consider what your living needs really are. How much time will you really be spending at the apartment? Consider sharing an apartment and even a room and putting up a screen for privacy.

Furnished apartments are generally more expensive than unfurnished apartments. Think of creative ways for furnishing an apartment: thrift stores, E-bay, inflatable furniture. If you have a car, furnishing an apartment can be very cheap and not too difficult. If you are in a city, you may not be home enough to sit on the nice furniture anyway.
RESOURCES

Once you know the target rent you can afford, you can consider the variety of sources to find available housing. There are many resources that you may have never thought of! Be creative in your search, and feel free to think outside of the box.

Start with your employer! A good number of employers offer students assistance in finding adequate housing for their Co-ops or interns. You are encouraged to ask your employer if they can advise you as to the best places to look.

My employer did not previously find housing for fall Co-ops (but they did for summer interns) until the girl I lived with asked them to find something for her. Then, they realized they should find housing for all the Co-ops. - from the Co-op Student Survey

HERE ARE OTHER WAYS PREVIOUS CO-OP STUDENTS FOUND HOUSING:

- Craigslist.org
- Referral from a family member or friend
- Referral from another student
- Local college off-campus housing website
- Real estate agent
- Internet searches for the community
- Post a flyer at a local church, synagogue, or community organization
- Newspaper (on-line or paper copy)
- Air BnB
- Facebook University group
- Family friend
- Contacted an Alum currently residing in the area

Look at the local college newspapers and the housing ads from those. [Typically] posted online. This is a great option for short co-op periods as many times students are trying to sublet their place for the summer or for just one semester since they are going abroad. This is usually the cheapest option. - from the Co-op Student Survey

OTHER HELPFUL WEBSITES:

- www.Sublet.com
- www.Apartments.com
- www.Rent.com
- www.ToSublet.com
- www.studenthousing.org

HERE IS ANOTHER CREATIVE IDEA FROM ONE CO-OP STUDENT:

Consider the population dynamics of the area - is the area a vacation spot? I rented a vacation house in the off season. My rent was over 5000 dollars cheaper than during the summer, but I still enjoyed ocean views and the vacation house amenities. - from the Co-op Student Survey
APARTMENT CHECKLIST

As you are looking at individual apartments, take these items into consideration:

SURROUNDING AREA:
- Safe area
- Parking - off street
- Bus Route
- Grocery store proximity
- Cell phone reception

UTILITIES:
- What utilities are included in the rent (Gas, hot water, electric)?
- Adequate heat and air conditioning

CONDITION OF APARTMENT:
- General cleanliness
- Safety - fire escapes, alarms
- Repair services - how quickly are they made?

AMENITIES:
- Internet/cable service
- Garbage removal
**CONTRACTS**

**WRITTEN LEASE**

When you rent a house or apartment, you will probably be asked to sign a written agreement with the owner or rental agent. This agreement is called a **LEASE**. Anyone 18 years or older who signs a rental agreement is legally bound by that contract.

**LEASE:** rental contract conveying the right to possession of real estate to a tenant for a designated length of time and usually for a specified rent/containing the terms of the rental. (It should also be in common, everyday English that is easy to comprehend.)

Understanding the lessor’s (a landlord/lady) and your responsibilities will make renting less difficult. Before you sign a lease, keep in mind that it is a binding contract. **Be sure to make a copy of the lease for your own records.** Be sure that you DO understand your rights and obligations before you sign.

Each state has their own policies regarding tenant rights and responsibilities. You can find New York State’s Policies on the website below. We encourage you to look into tenant rights for the state in which you will be living. Just do a simple internet search for the state and “Tenant Rights.”


**READ THE FINE PRINT!**

Here are some questions to think about as you read the lease:

- What is the length of lease?
- When can you move in?
- Are utilities included?
- How much is the security deposit?
- Is any rent due in advance?
- Who to contact for pest control or apartment damages/malfunctions?
- When is rent due?
- What form of payment is accepted?
- What are the late payment penalties?
- Are there any restrictions: pets, cars, visitors?
- Are there rules regarding hanging pictures? carpeting? drapes?
- Will there be a reference check?

A GOOD LEASE is designed to protect both you (the lessee) and the lessor, so you should not be afraid to sign. The advantages and inclusions of a written lease are:

- It spells out rights and responsibilities for lessee and lessor clearly
- It lists all rules and restrictions
- It states the rent, when it is due, penalties for not paying, how it is to be paid
- The rent, rules, and regulations are constant for the specified term
- Names and addresses of lessor and lessee
- Address of premises and apartment number
- Security deposit details
- It specifies if first and last month’s rent are required
- It specifies subletting rights
- It specifies who is responsible for utilities or services

The only disadvantage of a written lease is that you are bound by it to stay for the agreed term, and if you decide to leave prior to this, YOU are still responsible for the total rent for the rest of the rental term.
VERBAL LEASE / MONTH - TO - MONTH

When you rent housing WITHOUT a written lease, you have full rights of possession and reasonable use of the property, just as you would with a written lease. If no specific duration of tenancy is stated, you are entitled to 30 days notice from a lessor that you must vacate the property. In turn, you must give the lessor 30 days notice of YOUR intent to leave. If you do not leave as promised, the rent can then be increased substantially, or you can be evicted.

The major disadvantages to verbal leases are HUMAN MEMORIES, because they all fade with time. Disputes arise over oral agreements. If no specific duration is stated, rent can be raised on 30 days notice by any amount: GET IT IN WRITING!

SECURITY DEPOSITS

The purpose of a security deposit is to cover the cost of returning a dwelling to the same condition that existed when a tenant took possession. A lessor may keep only that part of a security deposit needed to cover the cost of repairs or reimbursement for damage a tenant has caused - which can include failure to comply with a lease. This protects the lessor’s investment and motivates the tenant to fulfill obligations. Some points to keep in mind are:

- Security Deposits may be no more than one month's rent.
- Get a receipt if you pay cash (cancelled checks are adequate receipts).
- Check premises before you move in and take pictures for your records so you are not liable for any damages already existing.
- Security Deposits should be kept in separate accounts by the lessor. The tenant has the right to know of the account's location.

TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Along with the freedom of living on your own, and rights to privacy, safe dwellings, etc., you are still living on premises owned by someone else. You need to be a responsible tenant in any form of rental agreement. You are expected to:

- Obey the rules you agreed to.
- You cannot make any major physical changes in your housing without (written) permission from the lessor.
- You (not the lessor) are responsible for accidents caused by your own carelessness.
- You are responsible for any other responsibilities stated in the lease such as lawn mowing or snow shoveling.

RELOCATING

The whole process of moving incurs more expenses than one initially expects. In addition to rent, security deposits, and cable and internet installation fees, you may have to pay to transport your belongings. If you are moving out of state or across the country, consider shipping some of your belongings. Books and documents can be sent cheaply by 4th class mail "book rate."

Some items that are extremely valuable to keep handy in the moving in process are:

- At least one change of clothes
- Toiletries
- Hammer, screwdriver, pliers
- Cleaning products
- Basic foods & utensils, plates, or other items for preparation
- Cell Phone/Alarm clock
- Phone numbers or paperwork that you may need

OTHER MOVING TIPS

- Mark boxes clearly.
- In hot/cold weather, allow electronic equipment to return to room temperature before turning it on.
- Most plants will not survive long trips; give them away as gifts or leave them with a friend.
- Check circuit breakers to make sure everything is on (and to know where to find this in the future).
- Make an extra set of keys to leave with a friend or neighbor.
If it is possible, live with other people from Cornell who will be working in the area, even if it's not at the same company. This will give you an instant social network in the new area while you try to make new friends. – from the Co-op Student Survey

One thing you will want to decide is if you would like to live by yourself or with other people. Living alone provides privacy, but can also be lonely and more expensive. Living with others can be an enjoyable, educational experience, and is considerably cheaper, but should be considered carefully so as to avoid problems later. Whether you live on your own or with housemates, make sure to introduce yourself to neighbors and know who and where to call in an emergency.

Consider getting together with other Co-ops in the area to find housing. ECCS can provide you with a list of other students who will be Co-oping in your area.

In some cases you will not have a choice of roommates you know, as you might be assigned by your Co-op employer or be the only Co-op in the area. In this case, families or colleges and universities are good resources to avoid living alone. These websites can also assist you in finding a roommate:

- roommates.com
- iroommates.com

When you are considering a roommate, be sure to discuss a few things first before you commit to living with each other. Unless you agree on the basics, you should not live together. Know where they stand on the following:

- general values
- smoking, drinking, overnight guests
- preference for, and payment of bills: cable TV, internet, utilities
- study habits/work hours
- agreeable temperatures
- similar ages
- social/recreational values
- division of “house chores”: cleaning, dishes, lawn care, etc.

Here are some suggestions when dividing responsibilities:

- Coordinate and divide all utility bills.
- When buying things for the apartment or house, it is better to each buy something rather than share the cost. This way you can take it with you!
- When deciding whose name goes on the utility bills, remember that that person has the sole responsibility for paying the bill, and credit may be damaged if it isn’t paid. Check to see if you can get everyone’s name on the bills if possible.

In the lease, there are some clauses you should be aware of:

'joint and severally liable' – If one roommate leaves, those remaining are responsible for the lease as well as the entire rent. It is a good idea to draw up an agreement among the people in the house or apartment, denoting they are each liable for their own portion of the lease or rent should they choose to leave prior to the end of the term.

'separately obligated' – This means that each individual is responsible for a portion of the rent and shares responsibility for damages.
ENERGY & MONEY SAVERS

- Keep daytime heat at moderate temp. (65-68 degrees) and turn heat down (60 degrees) when no one is home and at night (you can save 1-2% on your heating bill for every degree you turn it down!)
- Close heat vents in unused areas
- Conserve the use of hot water
- Use small appliances (toaster oven, electric skillet, and microwave) instead of oven or stove
- Use curtains and rugs to insulate window drafts and cold floors
- Roll up a rug in front of a drafty doorway
- Place couches and beds away from windows and/or cold walls; put other furniture (stereos) against cold walls to block drafts
- Use a small fan to circulate warm/cold air
- Run dishwasher only with a full load
- Clean dryer lint filters regularly
- Use the sun to heat your apartment – open curtains in a.m.
- Don’t “entertain” an empty room – turn things off when no one is around (TV, stereo, lights, etc.)
- Keep your freezer full
- Keep the freezer at 38-40 degrees, 0 degrees in the freezer

MOVING OUT/ RETURNING TO CORNELL

Remember to do these few things before you return to Cornell, and the transition back should be as smooth as the first:

- Check the apartment for any left belongings, and for any damages – get lessor’s approval in writing that you have been checked out and will not be billed for any damages. Take photos of the apartment in case a dispute arises later about damages.
- Get a check for your security deposit if you have no fees to pay.
- Leave a forwarding address for mail.
- Sit down with your housemate(s) and make agreements regarding the utility bills that may be left.
- Make final arrangements for your organization to reimburse you for any traveling expenditures – if that was an original agreement.
- Look for housing at Cornell before you get back.
BUDGETING

You will probably earn more money on Co-op than you have ever earned in the past. Have you thought about what you want to do with that money? Perhaps you will save it to pay for tuition or books, or spending money on-campus. If you are working in a big city, you may end up spending most of it to experience living in the city. Regardless of your short or long term financial goals, it helps to have a plan.

Here is a basic outline of items that you may consider as you put together a budget. Budgets help to keep you on track, so that you don’t run out of money before your next pay check. You will quickly notice how easy it is to go out to lunch with colleagues everyday and order take-out for dinner, but you may not like how that affects your bank account. With some careful planning, you can afford to pay your bills, have some spending money, and save a bit for later.

First, consider your necessities. Do you need a car? Do you need to live within walking distance of work or the bus line?

Then, consider your desires. Do you want to dine out regularly to avoid cooking? Is it important that you have cable? How often do you plan to travel and what will that cost?

When setting up a budget, determine which expenses are fixed (will remain constant each month) and which are variable (will fluctuate each month). Once you have determined your necessities, plan the variable expenses, which you typically have more control over, around the fixed expenses.

HERE ARE SOME CATEGORIES TO CONSIDER WHEN CREATING A BUDGET:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross Income (before taxes): Taxes</td>
<td>$3,400 ($21/hr = $3,360/month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NET INCOME (after taxes):</td>
<td>$2,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent*</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>$60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone/Internet/Cable</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groceries</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Payment/Transportation</td>
<td>Varies Widely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>Varies Widely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas &amp; Tolls*</td>
<td>$80 (Carpool with a friend!!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment*</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining Out*</td>
<td>$75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel (home, visiting friends)*</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saving for College</td>
<td>$342 (Save 15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Expenses</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPENSES SUBTOTAL</td>
<td>$2,107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some expenses will vary by city

Use categories that fit your personal situation and your spending habits, not somebody else’s. Conduct a regular review of categories to determine if you need more or fewer, review expenses, and brainstorm ways to trim costs in each category. Cash spending is the biggest leak in most budgets. Cash disappears quickly and if you don’t write down everything you spend it on, you’ll have a distorted look at your spending.
FUN IN YOUR NEW TOWN

The Co-op experience not only teaches you real life application of your major study at Cornell, but also enhances personal development. You are out on your own being a responsible adult. For the first time, there really isn't a support group right next to you – most of you will be far away from family and the Cornell culture you're accustomed to. You have free time after work – no problem sets to work on, no written exams, etc. This is an opportune time to grow as a person; there are MANY things you can do in your free time. You can volunteer, catch up on reading, go sightseeing (most communities have web pages with visitor information), or take a course. Remember – recruiters look for well-rounded people to work for them, not people with tunnel vision. Ask ECCS for a list of Cornell Co-ops in your area. You also want to meet people – new friends, future contacts, etc. So, explore and enjoy the adventure!

Take advantage of this opportunity to network with alumni in the area and explore career options. Contact alumni that you find on CCNet. Get involved with the local Cornell Alumni Club (http://www.alumni.cornell.edu/participate/clubs.cfm).

HERE ARE SOME RESPONSES FROM FORMER CO-OP STUDENTS ABOUT MAKING THE MOST OF THEIR FREE TIME ON CO-OP:

Activities and attractions that students enjoyed

- Skydiving, whitewater rafting, paintball, dinners, and movies with other Co-ops
- Local Festivals
- Air show downtown, museum exhibits, visiting bands, pumpkin patches
- I went to a giant foreign grocery store one weekend and spent several weekends building houses with colleagues as part of the local Habitat for Humanity program.
- I lived on the ocean. I took advantage of this by crewing on local sailing vessels. I also took advantage of the area to pursue my artistic side.
- Museums in Philadelphia (Art Museum, Franklin Institute), Historic sites in Philadelphia, Concerts in Philadelphia (U2), Area theme parks (Six Flags Great Adventure, Hershey), Outdoor activities in the Poconos (hiking, skiing)
- just wandering through interesting neighborhoods, sampling local food
- tango lessons, volunteering to rake, going to St. Louis, shopping, parks, museums, orchestra
- A group of other co-ops and I went to the Cornell v. Yale hockey game at the Yale Whale, visited a student at Yale, and attempted to go to a Cornell v. Yale football game. We also all joined a gym, and went to movies or the mall together some nights. We played basketball at a local school playground. One of the employees in my group has a boat, so I went boating with him and his wife and some other co-workers.