STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

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Where was your co-op?
My co-op was with Biogen, a pharmaceutical company located in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

How did you find your co-op?
My advisor in the Political Science department sent out an email with a list of internship opportunities, and this one caught my eye.

Tell us about your co-op?
Biogen was the most amazing experience of my college career. Initially I was pretty nervous about working for such a big company, but I was greeted by an amazing team of people who always found time to answer my questions. This fast paced environment challenged me in so many unexpected ways. Going into the co-op I was unsure of my career path as an auditor; Biogen renewed my confidence in that choice.

What are your main responsibilities?
My responsibilities at Biogen were those of a full-time employee. Upon starting, I was immediately thrown into Sarbanes-Oxley 404 testing for Phase Ib for the first two months of my co-op. Some of my specific responsibilities included SOX testing, executing test plans of remediation, communicating with process owners and affiliates from around the world, and various projects around the office.

What is your major and did it influence your decision to pursue a co-op?
I’m an accounting major with a minor in economics, hence my interest in the Biogen co-op. I knew that being an Internal Auditor with a Fortune 500 pharmaceutical supergiant would not only accelerate my career path and build up my resume, but also give me practical experience in my field.
What is the most exciting part of your co-op?

The most exciting part of the co-op was knowing you’re working for a company that is changing peoples lives. Biogen is a pharmaceutical company that works day in and day out to find a cure for diseases like MS and Alzheimer’s. Working in the accounting profession most of the time you don’t feel like your job is truly making a difference in the world, so it was awesome to be part of a team that works for the purpose of saving lives.

What type of experience have you gained so far that you wouldn’t have learned in a classroom?

There are two things Biogen taught me that a classroom wouldn’t have been able to. The first was working under a budget with a set deadline. Although there are assignment deadlines in school, having to work in a fast paced environment while people monitor you is definitely an eye-opening experience. The second was how to professionally communicate with co-workers. Whether through email or meetings, it was very important to be fully prepared and professional at all times. Communication is key when you’re functioning as part of a larger team.

Do you have any co-op advice you would like to pass on to other students?

Utilize The Compass, professors, and any connections you may have through friends or family. Don’t be afraid to speak up, because it could land you the opportunity of a lifetime. When it comes to the actual co-op, make sure you dress professionally and always show up on time, as it’s the little things that employers notice. But the best advice I can give is to ASK QUESTIONS! You are there to learn and not expected to know what you are doing at all times. This will save time and frustration while helping you learn and grow as an intern.

Do you have any suggestions for students who would like to do something similar?

APPLY APPLY APPLY! I can’t stress this enough, whether an opportunity stimulates your interest or not. Going through rounds of interviews will better prepare you for your dream internship, co-op, or job. Utilize the Center for Experiential Learning and don’t be afraid to ask them for help. I participated in five mock interviews through the Compass and owe them all of the credit for my success.

Do you think your co-op will play an important role in your education and career?

This co-op meant everything to me. Not only did it improve my resume and give me real world experience, but it also showed that I chose the perfect career path. This co-op has already enhanced my career prospects by helping me to land an internship with Pricewaterhouse Coopers for next summer. My time at Biogen benefited me in ways I couldn’t have imagined, and I’m grateful for the opportunity.

Find your next opportunity using the Find an Internship/Co-op link on CEL’s webpage: oswego.edu/experience