3-13-1972

The School of Engineering's Cooperative Education Program Completes First Term

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Recommended Citation
"The School of Engineering's Cooperative Education Program Completes First Term" (1972). News Releases. 4000.
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DAYTON, Ohio, March 13, 1972 --- The School of Engineering's Cooperative Education Program has completed its first term at the University of Dayton with the pilot project considered a worthwhile educational effort.

During the first semester of the 1971-72 school year, three engineering students were employed at Wright Patterson Air Force Base and coordinators of the program there and at UD feel that excellent results were achieved. The students are now in the classroom at UD while another three students have taken up the on-the-job phase of the project. Program coordinator, Robert I. Mithcell, of UD's Department of Industrial & Systems Engineering, notes that the program has two principle attributes. It enables the student to get important practical engineering experience and, at the same time, his earnings help him to meet the cost of education today.

The system operates on the basis of a term of work, a term of school, and allows a student to complete a four-year degree program in four or five years, depending on the academic load per term. Employers, students, and Engineering administrators are pleased with the program and hope for its expansion.

When the program was first announced, twenty-seven applications for six position openings were received. The University sent records of the qualified students to the employer, who then notified the accepted students.

The three students who worked last semester are David Filkins, Michael Zito, and Terence Martin. The jobs included working with computers, reading contracts and learning about the sophisticated instruments and equipment in an engineering environment.

Filkins is a sophomore in Electrical Engineering, and says the experience was "very valuable, and helped me decide my true feelings for what engineering is all about. The job gave me a better concept of engineering." Mr. Filkins, who is originally from Elbridge, New York, also helped develop interest among school officials for the cooperative program.

Zito, originally from Parma, Ohio, is a junior in Electrical Engineering. He is pleased with the program and says that it is "more than I expected....I had a chance to learn more than I applied to schoolwork."

The third student, Martin, is a senior in Mechanical Engineering from Centerville, Ohio. Of the program he says, "It is not exactly in my area, but I felt I was an important part of some of the jobs being done. It gives you a sense of accomplishment."

The students all agreed that it was very helpful to talk to professional engineers, and as Martin says, "learn what an actual engineering environment is like." They all found their co-workers very helpful, and found instances of practical application to the academic work they are doing in school.

The three students, working at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, were treated as both students and workers with definite job responsibilities, but with chances to learn about other areas, thereby broadening their concepts and knowledge of the field of endeavor.

The three students who are working this semester are Donald Walters, Electrical Engineering; Steven Schmitmeyer, Mechanical Engineering; and Charles Mikolajewski, Electrical Engineering.

Students during the term of work are registered in a zero credit hour course, so that they may participate in regular University functions, but they receive no academic credit for the work. They do, however, receive a salary from the employer. Students arrange for their own transportation and meals, but they are permitted to live on University property while they are working.