

U of L Engineering Program Looking to Expand Relationship with Southern Indiana

The University of Louisville's (UofL) J.B. Speed School of Engineering is looking to expand their students' Co-Op opportunities by inviting Southern Indiana Businesses to become involved. This Co-Op program, accredited by ACCI (Accreditation Council for Co-Op and Internship), was founded in 1925 with the goal of developing the next generation of technical leaders. In 2015, the program has assisted in placing students into full time co-op positions in 22 states, as well as internationally with workers in Europe, Panama, and Asia.

The Engineering Career Development & Cooperative Education Director, Jim Gerstle, hopes to grow the program regionally through collaboration with Southern Indiana manufacturing and industry businesses. "We're looking to build sustaining, long-term relationships," Gerstle said, "and these companies will benefit from a pipeline that provides skills, a cost effective workforce, and the opportunity for permanent employee(s)."

The program mandates that Engineering students participate in three alternating semesters of full time industry work assignments with classroom instruction. All three work assignments are planned to be with the same employer. The downtime between rotations is a single weekend, meaning that companies see a continuous flow of workers ranging in co-op experience. This gives those participating businesses the opportunity to see the advancement and growth of these students as they effectively become engineers by their final co-op.

Joshua Hillman, a Project Manager with Jacobi, Toombs & Lanz, Inc. in New Albany is a U of L JB Speed School of Engineering graduate. Through his experience with the co-op program, Hillman was able to better understand what he wanted to do with his degree. "The Co-op experience with Speed School is a great opportunity for both the student and the employer." Hillman said, "It gives the student the opportunity to learn more about their future career and the employer the opportunity to train future engineers at an entry level. This program helps us meet the young engineers that will be the next generation of our company!"

Requirements for businesses to participate in this program are as follows: they must provide a full-time position, provide supervision, a competitive wage, and they must complete a performance appraisal. Businesses are also welcome to provide students with mentors, an exit interview with HR, and request a final co-op presentation.

If a company is interested in engaging with the Speed School but does not have the capacity to host a co-op student, there are also opportunities to be involved in their industry-sponsored Senior Design Program "Capstone". Senior design is the lynchpin of the undergraduate program in that it draws upon all facets of the engineering undergraduate curriculum in an open-ended project format. The program's goal is to provide a practical and challenging industry-driven design experience for our seniors.

If your business is interest in participating either in the Co-Op Program, Capstone, and/or the U of L Engineering Career Fair please contact Jim Gerstle at jim.gerstle@louisville.edu, 502.852.1368 for more information.

