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# CO-OP Student Programs

Teachers are one of the best sources of advice for students transitioning from high school to post secondary education. In a world where the future demands of the labour market pose dizzying expectations for new entrants, Co-operative Education offers one of the few ways for students to experience a number of work terms before they graduate.

The advice you give shapes what students do when they enter post secondary education. From UNBC (Prince George, BC) to Memorial University (St. Johns, Newfoundland) students in universities, university colleges and community colleges across Canada are choosing the Co-operative Education option. Here are some of their stories; we hope you will share them.

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## UNIVERSITY OF REGINA – Aboriginal Co-op Student Chris Madden



In his third year at the University of Regina, Chris Madden has completed four co-op work terms in the Aboriginal Co-operative Education Program. Chris, a Computer Science major, gives other post-secondary students this advice: “Join Co-op!”

Of particular note are his first two terms with CVIC Software Engineering in the People’s Republic of China. “The China work term opened a lot of doors. (The experience) made a big difference, not just as a professional, but as a person, as well,” he stated.

In addition to skills and opportunities that may not have been otherwise easily accessible, Chris recognizes the powerful contribution Co-op is making to his future. “The contacts and experience I have gained will definitely assist me in finding future employment. Also, I’ll have a head start when I graduate because I have no student loans.”

With an eye to the future, Chris continues to explore new professional options and realizes he is not confined to traditional roles in Computer Science. He wants to finish his degree and plans to look for entrepreneurial opportunities. No matter what path he chooses, Chris Madden is well on his way to becoming a future industry leader in Saskatchewan.

## MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY – Student Trent Skanes

Trent’s decision to pursue a B.Comm. (Co-op) out of high school was not an easy one. He reports that only as a secondary student in Grade 12 did he realize the vast possibilities of higher education, and the hard decisions that coincide with these possibilities. Coming from a smaller town in Newfoundland, he did not have a great deal of exposure to any particular field or profession, which also complicated things. He decided to do a B.Comm. (Co-op) at Memorial based on references and suggestions from close friends and family.

The business co-operative program provides an intense learning experience for a developing business student. It was the first exposure for many of Trent’s classmates to a real job competition, which takes place during the Fall Academic Term 3. The co-op office facilitates and oversees the job competition, as well as providing space for employer/student interviews.

The practicality of the co-op program is also second to none and cannot be matched by a non-cooperative degree. For example, upon graduation many students go on to full time employment with organizations that they worked with during their work terms. In addition, during a work term, students get a chance to “test the waters” in a particular industry, before “plunging in.”

After Trent’s first year in the program, he decided to pursue a work term at a Chartered Accounting (CA) firm and take the first steps towards a CA designation. Through the job competition, he was offered employment with Ernst & Young LLP. He had the opportunity to expand his knowledge of the chartered accounting profession, witness the lifestyle of employees working at Ernst & Young, and experience the broad sweeping regulatory changes affecting accounting firms and their clients today.

Trent says that Memorial’s business co-operative program is keeping him forward focused and motivated to succeed, no matter where the final destination may be. The practical experiences and opportunities of the cooperative program are providing him with the tools he will need for success in any business environment and honing his professional edge that will keep him one step ahead of the rest.

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## UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA – Student Tai Xie

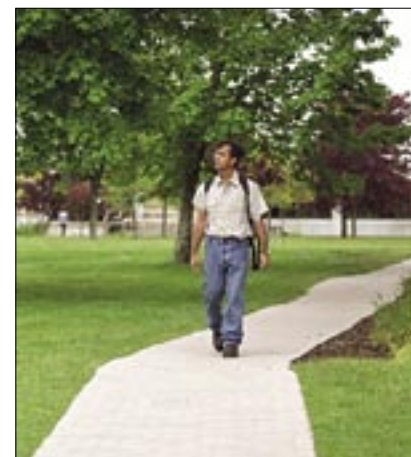
Many university students want to build skills and secure meaningful jobs where they can put their academic knowledge to work. This is certainly true for Tai Xie, a student who is currently enrolled in the biopharmaceuticals program at the University of Ottawa. With a co-op option as part of her degree program, she has been able to secure work terms with Health Canada and PainCeptor Pharma Corp. where she has developed skills in both the organic and inorganic laboratory environments. Tai explains that, “both jobs provided different yet enriching experiences in their own way.”

Tai’s experiences have enhanced her education not only because she was able to learn new skills but also because she was able to learn about herself. She explains that through co-op she has developed greater self-confidence, “I am an average mark student and I’m worried about not being able to find a job after I graduate but after receiving ‘outstanding’ and ‘excellent’ from my previous employers, I realized that I am a good worker, and people recognize it too.”

Through her co-op experience, Tai has also realized that she learns best by doing rather than from reading books. All in all, co-op has been worth the effort but Tai has this advice to offer students considering the co-op option: “Be practical. Keep in mind you’re an undergraduate student and you don’t know half the things the other people know (especially in science).” With this mindset, every task, even the most basic, is best regarded as an opportunity to learn and build skills that lead to jobs.

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## UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK – Student Sheikh Bahauddin



Sheikh Bahauddin looks back fondly on his co-op experience at the University of New Brunswick, Saint John. A graduate of the Faculty of Business, Sheikh credits his work terms with the Faculty’s CAFCE Accredited Cooperative Education Program with helping him to develop his confidence and professional skills.

As a student, it can seem intimidating to walk from the classroom into the boardroom, and co-op provides students like Sheikh the opportunity to see what awaits them after graduation from university. For Sheikh, the experience was invaluable in giving him the chance to sample different work experiences with very little risk. This, in turn, enabled him to clarify his career goals and employment preferences, something many graduates are not able to do prior to accepting full time employment. A natural leader with a winning smile, Sheikh made connections through his co-op program that have helped to round out his university experience.

Skills learned through co-op were clearly evident in his other university activities, including acting as President of the Business Administration Society and President of the Bangladeshi Students Association. Today, as a graduate of

**PAGE 5** ◀ UNB Saint John, Sheikh is employed with the company he spent his co-op work terms with, RST Industries Limited, as a Staff Compliance Accountant and was recently nominated for the Saint John YMCA Young Leader to Watch Award.

• • •

**UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA –  
Student Alice Ko**



Co-op not only changes the kinds of jobs that students do but also how they see the world. Consider University of Victoria management student Alice Ko, recipient of this year's faculty of business Co-op Student of the Year Award. Ko was

nominated by her co-op employer, BC Hydro, for exceeding all expectations in the performance of her job duties as a PowerSmart representative.

Ko says her co-op experience was life changing. "Spending four months talking to other people about ways to conserve energy inspired me to change my own behaviour. I now turn off all appliances when I leave the house, recycle everything I can, and take transit whenever possible," says Ko.

Ko's energy and enthusiasm spill into other areas of her educational experience. Norah McRae, business co-op and career centre program manager, says Ko is an excellent ambassador for the program, "She is a good student and making the most of the opportunities. She volunteers at faculty events such as our case competitions and career fairs and she is also active in the Commerce Student Society."

In advising students who are considering co-op, these factors should be kept in mind: students earn while they learn (on average about \$2,000 per month of work); students who do co-op are hired more quickly upon graduation and tend to be promoted more quickly; co-op work terms may require relocation and the possibility of experiencing new communities and new countries; above all co-op work terms allow students to apply their theory in a real life setting and their learning is immense.

High school students look to their teachers for advice as they move forward with their academic and career goals. Given that Co-operative Education provides students with the opportunity to gain work experience related to their education, develop career focus, self-awareness and confidence, not to mention financial independence, it is worthwhile investigating the university and college programs in your local area. From the west to east there is a Co-operative Education program that seeks to help students overcome the challenges of today's labour market. 🍁

For more information: [www.cafce.ca](http://www.cafce.ca)

Contributors: Stacey Cool – University of New Brunswick  
Eric Exner – University of Regina  
Jeela Jones – University of Ottawa  
Norah McRae – University of Victoria  
Peter Rans – University of Northern BC  
Heather Skanes – Memorial University



## Innovative Video Application "UNITED STREAMING" supports all curriculum areas

Philip Hall

An innovative learning tool known as *United Streaming* is available in all schools in the Strait District. The Strait District School Board is the first board in Nova Scotia to provide this video-on-demand service to all students and teachers to further support the integration of technology into the classroom. Films shown in classes used to be distributed on 16mm tape reels. These were replaced by VHS cassettes connected to televisions, and today, videos are displayed directly on a computer desktop. There is no question that our access to technology has improved.

The application provides direct video to the desktop to enrich teaching and learning. The service is a curriculum-based online digital video application which streams clips directly to computer desktops. Instead of waiting days, or weeks for a film to arrive by mail, or trying to tape a television program for replay, students and teachers have rich video resources available with a few clicks of a mouse. The video clips supplement a teacher's instruction and reinforces student learning.



Carson Dingwell, Grades 5/6 Teacher at Tamarac Education Centre in Port Hawkesbury is a regular user of this service.

"I have used the site on numerous occasions and strongly believe that the videos have always added to the student's knowledge. I have introduced the site to my student teacher who has found it to be an excellent resource for a new teacher who is striving to build up their

wealth of resources. I would highly recommend that all my colleagues familiarize themselves with this important instructional resource."

Copyright is a very serious issue with which teachers contend every day in the selection of various resources for students. As a subscriber, the Board provides every single user with clear access to thousands of high quality videos and associated text resources. As a result, schools do not have to worry about acquiring copyright permission for these resources.

**"I would highly recommend that all my colleagues familiarize themselves with this important instructional resource."**

The service provides access to videos related to every subject taught in the classroom and is very user-friendly. The videos are categorized by topics and grade levels. 🍁

*Philip Hall, is the Coordinator of Information Technology, Strait District School Board, Nova Scotia.*

*UnitedStreaming* is an award-winning resource distributed by a Canadian company, *Waynor Media Solutions, Inc.*, out of Mississauga, Ontario. They have received considerable recognition for their curriculum software product.

[www.marlineducation.com/Waynor/Home.htm](http://www.marlineducation.com/Waynor/Home.htm)

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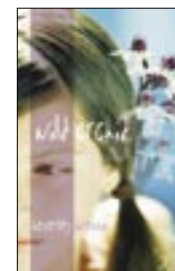
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For the most part we were very happy with the way our holiday turned out. It was a great learning experience for us. We learned that traveling by bus is a very comfortable and relaxing way to see the country. We learned that all we needed was what we could carry on our backs. (Laundries are convenient and economical.) We learned that we enjoy putting down roots for a few days before moving onto a new place, and finally we learned that even though the Mexican people were patient with our attempts to speak Spanish, we will be making an effort to be more proficient with the language when we return next year. 🍁

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