Cooperative Education: Developing Your Engineering Talent Pool

Mary Andrade, *University of Louisville, Associate Director, Engineering Career Development & Cooperative Education*

Abstract

Cooperative Education Program: The JB Speed School of Engineering is accredited by ABET at both the Bachelor's and Master of Engineering degree levels and has had a mandatory co-op program since its establishment in 1925. Typically starting in their fifth semester, students are selected by a company and then complete three rotations (alternative semesters) of full time work, combining concepts that they learned in the classroom with techniques and methods applied in industry. There is neither a contract for the employer nor a fee to participate. The result is a work-ready engineer that can have immediate impact on engineering needs. Participating companies have access to motivated, productive engineers who can perform entry-level engineering tasks and free your experienced personnel to work on higher priorities, and trained co-ops create a recruiting pipeline of new employees that have lower turnover rates.

This presentation will provide basic information that employers need to get started with the co-op program. It will also include an overview of the successes that we have seen and considerations of starting a co-op program in your company.

Biography of Presenter

Mary Andrade is the Associate Director of the Career Development and Cooperative Education office at the University of Louisville JB Speed School of Engineering. She holds a Master of Science degree in Counseling Psychology with an emphasis in Vocational Psychology. Ms. Andrade oversees the 93-year-old mandatory co-op program placing students in more than 1,000 rotations each year in over 400 companies. She has more 20 years of experience in experiential education, internships, and cooperative education at a tier one research institution. She is an active member in the Cooperative Education and Internship Association, The American Society for Engineering Education and the National Association of Colleges and Employers.