Thank you Everyone, for 25 Years of Success

Last year saw UBC Science Co-op celebrate its 25th anniversary and place over 980 students. The Program would never have achieved these accomplishments without the support of our dedicated co-op employers, sponsoring faculty members, and the hardworking staff of Science Co-op.

“The Program has come a long way since its inception in 1980 as a program introduced to assist women into Science and Engineering related fields,” says Dr. Javed Iqbal, Director of UBC Science Co-op. Dr. Iqbal took a few moments to reflect on the Program’s past, present, and expected future success.

IN THE BEGINNING
When UBC Co-op first launched in 1980, it focused on a small group of students. The original intent was to introduce more women into Science and Engineering related fields. In 1989, Dr. Iqbal a Physics teacher at UBC took up a part-time role as a Co-op Coordinator to manage 7 Physics and 30 Engineering Physics students.

GROWTH
Prior to 1994, UBC Co-op programs were centralized in one office. In 1994, it was decided that it would be better to decentralize Co-op in order to bring the co-op programs closer to their respective faculties.

“I became the Director of the Science Co-op programs which has become one of the most rewarding positions I have ever taken up,” said Dr. Iqbal. Since that day, Science Co-op has expanded significantly to what it is today.

THE HERE AND NOW AND THE FUTURE
The UBC Science Co-op Program reached an impressive number of placements this year by placing over 980 students. By 2011, the Program expects to place over 2000 students yearly. “With an expected yearly growth curve of 15% fueled by an increasing breadth of co-op employers and ever eager co-op students; all signs indicate that within the next 5 years we have a good chance of achieving that goal,” said Dr. Iqbal.

UBC Science Co-op’s success has been due to our employers’ and students’ support. Thank you everyone!

What is Important to Our Employers?
We spoke to Inimex Pharmaceuticals and NGRAIN Corporation, who are two of our valued employers, to learn what problems they face and how Co-op has assisted them in addressing their needs. See Next Page

Do You Know Who Invented the Canada Arm? See P. 4
What is Important to Our Employers?

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Inimex Pharmaceuticals is a Vancouver-based biopharmaceutical company focused on the development of new medicines that utilize the innate immune response to prevent and treat human disease. We spoke with Dr. John North, President & CEO, and Dr. Oreola Donini, Director of Chemistry at Inimex Pharmaceuticals. Since Fall 2003, Inimex has had 22 Life Sciences co-op placements from UBC Science Co-op.

NGRAIN Corporation delivers interactive 3D training solutions to the defense industry. Their solutions accelerate maintenance training on complex equipment and enable first-time-right repairs. At NGRAIN we interviewed Alex Munroe, Director of Administration & HR, Keith Reid, Director of Professional Services Engineering and Yvonne Shen, Human Resources Coordinator. Since Fall 2002, UBC Science Co-op has had a total of 28 co-op placements (mostly in the field of Computer Science) at NGRAIN.

Maximizing Your Investments

Dr. Donini of Inimex views hiring co-op students as an investment you have to maximize. Like any new employee, co-op students will require some training. Dr. North of Inimex says, “it is important to have a good co-op structure in place supported by good staff. Without putting in any work, co-op students will be underutilized.” At NGRAIN, Yvonne Shen says that as part of their overall recruitment strategy, their staff is “fully trained to take on co-op students.”

To train junior students, Dr. Donini suggests, “to start junior students on fairly defined projects and evolve them to take on independent projects.” Alexandra Munroe at NGRAIN says that, “Even if they have no work experience, they come on board and they are eager. It’s definitely a learning curve at the beginning, but they can absolutely contribute.”

With training comes rewards as NGRAIN Engineering Manager Keith Reid found out. One of his past co-op students, Travis Miller, was such an outstanding student that he hired him for three consecutive co-op work terms followed by several months of contract work while Travis continued his studies. Travis is one of seven co-op students working in a permanent position at NGRAIN.

Staying Flexible

The Co-op Program gives employers access to students who are able to work 4, 8, 12 or 16 months terms. If the employer and student want to work together after a work term is complete, the student can:

• use the option of extending their work term;
• be rehired in subsequent co-op terms; or
• be hired full-time once they graduate.

Confidentiality of Research

Protecting intellectual property was a major concern to Inimex. To ensure that their research is protected, UBC Science Co-op allows:

• students, at the request of the company, to sign confidentiality agreements prior to starting the work term and
• student end of work term reports to be confidential.

Finding The Best Employees

Co-op Coordinators assist our employers with finding the best fits by:

• pre-screening candidates who enter the program;
• offering candidate referrals for employers; and
• linking employers with other UBC Co-op offices to ensure that employers find the best selection of candidates.

Getting R&D Done Inexpensively

By using co-op students, “you can get good work done relatively inexpensively,” says Dr. North of Inimex. Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) can provide R&D based companies with funds to help subsidize co-op placements. Eligible companies receive:

• an award of $4,500 for hiring a co-op student; and
• up to a total of 10 awards each year.

For more information please visit www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca.
“As I was biking to work one day, it suddenly dawned on me that I was biking to work in Copenhagen of all places,” says David Dai, UBC Science Co-op Alumnus.

David Dai joined the Computer Science Co-op program in 2001 to further his career opportunities upon graduation–did it ever! After two co-op work terms in Vancouver, David expanded his career-bound horizons and found an opportunity in Denmark. He was placed with Novozymes, a biotech firm specializing in enzymes and microorganisms.

At Novozymes, David devised customized solutions to fit Novozymes’ existing IT infrastructure. His main project was to deploy a new helpdesk system. He learned to overcome obstacles such as finding ways to get users to buy into a new helpdesk system, learn how to use SAP (a business software solutions product) and overcome vendor problems.

“The system I was working on went live the last week I was there, and in fact I had to extend my stay by a few days. It was great! They put me in a hotel and everything,” recalls David.

“It was then that I realized what I really want to do – get into Business IT and work towards a career in IT consulting,” says David.

Since returning from Denmark, David has graduated and is now working at TELUS doing tasks similar to those he did at Novozymes. He says, “I’m particularly interested in SAP work, and right now I’m getting exposed to the system. I did in fact have a little SAP experience from Novozymes which has been of great help on my first project at TELUS, which is to integrate SAP with another document management system. Less traveling than before, but it’s a good first step to a full IT consulting career.”

Many students, like David, first enter Co-op and are unclear about what their specific career goals are. It sometimes takes a few work terms doing different things, but many students like David find the career direction they are looking for while combining it with other interests like traveling abroad. Ultimately, we, at Co-op, want our students to:

- find a career direction or try to assist them in finding placements that will give them exposure to a career path they already have decided upon;
- gain practical experience to give students an edge in getting that post-university dream job; and
- combine their interests (for David, it was traveling) with where they are placed thus making the whole experience more exciting and fulfilling for the student.

Every year, we strive to place a growing number of students both locally and abroad. In 2004/2005, we had over 200 placements outside the Greater Vancouver area and almost half of those placements were in the USA, Germany and Japan. Most students found their placement abroad a rewarding and memorable experience that has enriched their lives and is something they wouldn’t trade for anything.
The UBC Life Sciences and Land & Food Systems Programs are excited to announce their 4th Annual Career Fair. This annual event gives employers access to upcoming graduates and future graduates.

This year’s event has drawn over 100 companies and is expected to draw more than 1100 students. The Agricultural Land Commission, ARC Pharmaceuticals, StemCell Technologies and Evergro Canada are just some examples of the employers students can expect to find at this year's fair.

Our past employers have found the Career Fair:
• a cost-effective recruitment strategy;
• a place to access a large pool of skilled professionals;
• a place to pass on knowledge about what employers seek in an employee.

UBC Science Co-op would like to give our employers an opportunity to give their input on the strongly debated issue of a “BC Skilled Worker Shortage”.

What do we want to know?
1. How satisfied are employers in BC with the current number of graduates?
2. How satisfied are employers in BC with the current quality of graduates?
3. What skills do our employers think are lacking or need to be strengthened within current graduates?

Why?
• To use the collected data in a press release to media groups such as the Vancouver Sun and Province in order to get your voices heard.
• To use the collected information as an information source to draw on new ways to further increase the quality of our scholastic programs.

How to participate?
• Watch for an email containing a survey from the UBC Science Co-op Office.
• Call Allan Dias at 604-822-2276 to participate.

The names of participating employers will be kept confidential.

UBC Life Sciences and Land & Food Systems
Career Fair

Tuesday, Feb 7, 5 - 7:30pm in the Student Union Bldg

For more information please visit the Career Fair website at www.landfood.ubc.ca/careerfair or please contact Cathleen Nichols (crnichol@interchange.ubc.ca) or Cynthia Wickstrom (Cynthia.wickstrom@ubc.ca).