



This month's IT DriveLine focuses on the success of Freightliner's involvement in the MECOP internship program and on the ever-increasing efficiencies of the IT Data Center. It also introduces the Miscellaneous Invoicing program and brings us up to date on how the Help Desk's successes in meeting with its customer service goals.

MECOP: It's a Win-Win-Win

You may have shared an elevator with one of them. Perhaps you worked on a project together. Or, more likely, you have benefited from some of their engineering prowess. Arriving each April for six months, they're a force to be reckoned with. They're the MECOP interns.

Freightliner roots

MECOP (Multiple Engineering Co-Op Program) is a cooperative program that provides engineering students from Oregon State (OSU), Portland State (PSU), and the Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT) with internships at local companies. It was conceived thirty years ago by three businesses: Freightliner, Tektronix, and Sulzer-Bingham (formerly Bingham-Willamette). Partnering with OSU, their aim was to narrow the gap between the skills taught in university classrooms and those needed to succeed in the workplace.

Successful and selective

While originally targeted at OSU manufacturing engineering students, the program has been so successful that it has spread to include other engineering disciplines and universities. Specifically, it has grown from seven interns to 450 and from three participating companies to 90. Freightliner currently has 12 interns working in various departments, including manufacturing engineering, design engineering and information technology.

MECOP interns are the cream of the crop, having been filtered through an arduous selection process. Students may apply for the program at the end of their sophomore year, at which time they are screened by MECOP Advisory Board members. Upon acceptance, they endure a series of behavioral and panel interviews with prospective company representatives. In the end, the selected interns have the opportunity to participate in two paid internships—at two different companies—before they graduate.

During their internships, the students are assigned a mentor who helps acclimate them—to both their project assignments and business practices in general. Along the way, each student has an opportunity to provide and receive feedback during mid-term and final performance reviews. They're also required to conclude their internship with a final presentation on all of their project work. This presentation will be delivered to all of the members of MECOP program, including managers, mentors, interns and Freightliner's MECOP board member Roger Nielsen.

A win-win-win

Freightliner's current MECOP Advisory Board member, Mark Clayton, says it's a win-win-win, "Students gain real-world experience they can apply to their studies; universities benefit by having students bring corporate experience back to the classroom; and participating companies profit from the interns' work and fresh, technology perspectives, while also having access to a pool of potential candidates for permanent hire."

Roughly 70% of the students who participate in MECOP end up working for one of the companies where they interned. That bodes well for the universities, too, as their job placement numbers continue to rise.

Long-term commitment

Freightliner's commitment to MECOP has been unwavering, with Freightliner COO Roger Nielsen acting as the program's executive sponsor. Earlier this year, one of program's charter members, Ken Shaw, accepted an award on behalf of Freightliner's 30-year commitment. Shaw also received an award for his 25 years of service as a MECOP Advisory Board member, representing Freightliner.

Current MECOP Interns at Freightliner

Information Technology:	MyTrang Nguyen, Nathan Ertner
Manufacturing Engineering:	Thomas Reed, Nate Thompson, William Dilg, Jack Link, Damian Wylie, Jason Presley, Ronald Thompson
Design Engineering:	William Hembree, William Zimmerman, Michael Neuwerth

For more information about MECOP at Freightliner, or to become a program mentor, visit the program website at [Inside FTL | Corporate Departments | Manufacturing Engineering | MECOP Intern Program](#) or contact [Mark Clayton](#).

Spotlight: IT Intern Motivated to Make a Difference

Spend some time with IT intern, MyTrang Nguyen, and you'll quickly understand the critical role MECOP plays at Freightliner.



Having first-draft pick of MIS candidates in MECOP's lottery system this year, Viveca Leusch, IT manager, selected MyTrang to join her team. As Viveca explains, "It can be a challenge to bring students in and get them up to speed and working on something rewarding to them—and to us—in only six months. With MyTrang, however, we've had success after success."

An Information Systems major at PSU, MyTrang has wowed everyone who has come across her path. Her mentor, David Hunt, says, "She's been easy to mentor because she's so self directed. She's a quick learner and a good communicator, and she's even taught me a few things." In less than six months, she has amassed an impressive list of accomplishments:

- **PCS (Parts Control System):** Along with developing new parts inventory tracking reports for engineering, MyTrang also pulled together the PCS database diagramming and documentation, providing Pam Mefford, the project BSA, with a roadmap of how the databases relate to each other. Mefford says, "MyTrang has been a joy to work with. She's enthusiastic and has fresh ideas."
- **ECC (Enterprise Change Control) Website:** MyTrang has been updating the ECC website to make it more user friendly. Project BSA, Rich Fuhs, echoes the sentiments of many who have worked with her, "She's positive, smiling, understanding, and she grasps concepts quickly."
- **PPS (Production Parts Schedule):** MyTrang has been executing a host of test cases to root out any problems with how PPS works.
- **SQL Server conversion:** MyTrang will be helping David Hunt project manage the SQL 2003 to SQL 2005 database conversion, while also performing unit testing.

MyTrang has accomplished all of this, while at the same time graduating with honors. Add to that the additional challenge of English not being her first language. She says it has been exciting to work on different projects, in different environments and languages. "It's been my pleasure to work here," she says. "Not only have I learned technical skills, I've learned a lot about business. Viveca gave me invaluable guidance on my projects, on the organization, and on my career goals. I've been motivated every day by team members, my supervisor, and my mentor."