

Program promotes hands-on industry experience

> MECOP offers engineering students two six-month, paid internship opportunities

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Engineering students have an opportunity to gain valuable experience in industry and take part in paid internships.

The Multiple Engineering Cooperative Program is a five-year undergraduate program financed by industry. The program is a training and development experience featuring internships with two different companies.

"MECOP helped me see how my classes applied (to industry)," said Michael Pfohman, a senior in industrial and manufacturing engineering. "MECOP definitely augmented the

education here more than I ever could have imagined."

The fifth year of the program consists of two six-month internships in the engineering industry in place of two terms of classes. Last year, the range of pay for MECOP internships suggested by OSU was \$15.50 to \$17.50 an hour, and the average pay was \$17 an hour.

MECOP is currently accepting applications for the next academic year. Admission to the program requires attendance at OSU, Portland State University or the Oregon Institute of Technology as an engineering or MIS student, acceptance into the professional program at one of these universities, and time left within the curriculum to take part in the two internships.

After filling out an application, the student is required to take part in an interview process. These interviews

are given by the participating companies and are similar to any other job interview.

MECOP was created in 1978 as a lab-like experience in industry with three member companies: Freightliner, Boeing and Tektronix. In 1980, seven manufacturing engineers participated.

The program has grown to include 10 disciplines, including Management Information Systems in the College of Business. About 60 companies in Oregon participate. On average, MECOP places around 150 students a year in the industry.

Gary Peterson, the program director of MECOP, wants the program to be educationally focused.

"What we're really trying to do is provide curriculum that's relevant and as closely tied to what is needed (in industry) as possible," Peterson said. "By the time (the students) fin-

ish two internships, they can compare and contrast their experiences and make a more informed career choice."

"If it wasn't for MECOP, I wouldn't be here at Oregon State University. I would be at a different college right now," Pfohman said.

Efforts to improve the program are always being made.

"It's a continuous improvement process," Peterson said. "The board is made up of one representative from each company, so I've got 60 engineers helping me improve this process."

Other similar programs at OSU include the Civil Engineering Cooperative Program and the Graduate Engineering Cooperative Program. More information can be found at mecop.orstc.edu.

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