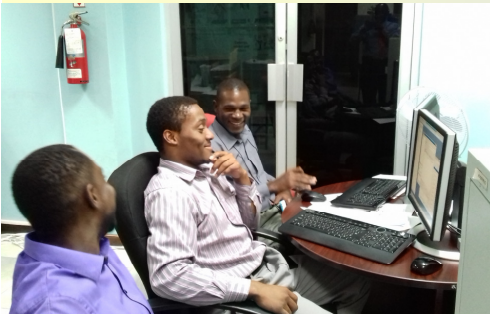


University of Technology, Jamaica

Co-operative Education at UTech, Ja.

"Partnering with Industry to produce work-ready graduates"

Co-op Ed Programmes Contribute to Nation Building, says SMA



Co-op Ed students from the School of Computing & Information Technology, Brian Stewart (right) and Mark Scott (centre) at their work station with Supervisor Carlos Griffiths (left)

Spectrum Management Authority (SMA) is an agency of the Government of Jamaica that was established under the Telecommunication Act, 2000. Its main responsibility is that of managing Jamaica's radio frequency spectrum. SMA has made it its duty to ensure that it contributes to nation-building through partnership with UTech, Ja. in the Co-op Ed programme.

Co-op Ed Programmes, An Integral Component to Nation-Building

The management of Spectrum believes that Co-op Ed programmes contribute to nation-building by assisting students to make the necessary transition from the university environment to the work environment, thus producing work-ready graduates.

"Experienced and confident graduates are integral components in our workforce and are vital to nation-building," stated Mr. Kwan Wilson, Manager, Monitoring and Inspection at SMA

Benefits of Partnering with UTech, Ja.

SMA believes that partnership with UTech, Ja. is mutually beneficial. It provides the company with an excellent pool of students who have the potential to be future employees. "UTech, Ja.'s programme is well structured, well organized and allows organizations to readily interact with young students who bring new ideas, innovation and enthusiasm to the workplace," explained Miss Kerri Dunn, Human Resource Manager at SMA. She further stated that students on the other hand, gain invaluable experiences which give them an advantage over other graduates when applying for a job.

Qualities Expected of Co-op Ed Students

Despite having a strong interest in Co-op Ed programmes and willingness to engage these students, SMA maintains strict guidelines to which students must adhere and expectations that they believe students must fulfill. According to Mr. Clifton Hills, Manager, Operating Systems and Special Projects, students must be self-disciplined, willing to learn, punctual, task driven and must be professional. He went on to further state that "students must come with the expectation that they will be exposed

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to real world problems and be prepared to tackle these issues with an open mind and an attitude that will leave a good impression."

Student Engagement

Students engaged by SMA are placed in departments that match their course of study and given tasks commensurate to their level of training. According to Miss Dunn, the majority of students from UTech, Ja. have been placed in the Engineering Department while others have been placed in the Finance and Administration Division.

At SMA, students are considered as potential employees. Miss Dunn has indicated that, on at least one occasion, students have been employed permanently by the company.

## Lunch Break With Two Co-op Ed Students

Interview by Cait-Amoi Goulbourne



Tamoye Allen, Final year student, pursuing a B.Sc in Surveying and Geographic Information Science

*Tamoye Allen and Tridine Cooper are both final year students who participated in the Co-op Ed programme during the 2015 Christmas session. Miss Allen was engaged at the Urban Development Corporation (UDC) while Miss Cooper was engaged at Brandram Henderson (BH) Paints. I conversed with both students to get some insight on their respective experience, as well as their advice to students who have not yet participated in the Co-op Ed programme. The questions were as follow:*



Tridine Cooper, final year student, pursuing a B.B.A in Business Administration

### What was your experience like?

**TA:** It was an awesome experience. I was treated with respect; the environment was friendly and I felt welcome. Also, the work ethics

was up to standard and my co-workers were always willing to assist.

**TC:** My experience was one which I truly valued - it was an educational one. I was placed as a sales representative across several retail stores; this is similar to my area of study, marketing. I had first-hand encounter and interaction with the customers and those have taught me a lot.

### Do you believe that you have benefited from the Co-op Ed engagement? If yes, please expound.

**TA:** Yes I have. Being at UDC, I gained more experience in my area of study and have broadened my knowledge about the working world and what to expect.

**TC:** I do believe that I have benefited from this engagement. As a marketer in training, contact with BH Paints' customers has taught me a lot in improving my marketing skills. I have learnt that knowing your product and customers' needs are essential to any business as they have the potential to make or break the company's image.

### Did you encounter any challenges during your engagement? If yes, please explain how you overcame them?

**TA:** There were no challenges faced, only a minor setback. The setback was my fault as I was working on a project using ArcMap software. Using the software I had to georeference the location of one map to the next. Upon georeferencing, I used the incorrect map as the reference map, which took me longer than usual to do. However, with the assistance of my supervisor, I was able to make the correction and move on.

**TC:** I encountered a few challenges. These were, convincing customers to purchase paints in the early Christmas season, convincing customers who have not used BH paints before to do so and overall trying to increase sales. I overcame these challenges by ensuring that the customers were informed about the product. They were shown color charts and emphasis was placed on the quality of the paint and the cost.

### What advice would you give to students who have not yet engaged in Co-op Ed ?

**TA:** For students who have not yet engaged in Co-op Ed , I would advise them to do so because the experience gained will assist them in working with different personalities and equip them to deal with work-related challenges. It will also strengthen their professional network.

**TC:** I would advise students who have not yet engaged in Co-op Ed to do so as the programme allows for invaluable exposure to the world of work. It gives value to see young students adding their knowledge to the workplace. It also facilitates networking. Being a part of an organization for a period helps to build a relationship which can be beneficial when seeking employment.

## Hands-on Training, A Major Objective of UTech, Ja.'s Curriculum

UTech, Ja., is purposeful in ensuring that its students' classroom experience is adequately complimented with practical sessions, thus enhancing career preparation. The photographs below show students engaged in various practical sessions.

Students pursuing the B.Eng in Mechanical Engineering in a Mechanical workshop.



Students pursuing the B.Sc in Food Service Management degree during their Culinary Arts and Production 2 lab session.



Students enrolled in the BA. in Communication Arts and Technology programme completing assignments in their radio class practical session.



Student pursuing the B.Ed specializing in Industrial Technology, with a major in Construction, during her practical session.



### Student Testimonials



Shadice Whyte, 3rd year student pursuing the BBA. in Finance & Banking (major); Marketing (minor) at UTech, Ja.'s western campus.

Throughout my Co-op Ed experience at the National Housing Trust, St. James branch, I gained valuable experience in both finance and marketing. Each day saw me being assigned to one of three departments: Compliance, New Loans or Customer Service. I worked with customer service representatives and performed tasks such as compiling and sorting files, data entry, and assisting customers with refund applications. In addition, I was solely assigned to the NHT's "Got Mail" promotional campaign. My major role in this campaign was to interact with customers and inform them on the technicalities of the campaign. The most important thing I gained from this Co-op Ed experience, was the fact that it allowed me to see the application and real life integration of concepts I learned in my Marketing and Finance classes.



Tashalee Chang, 2015 graduate of the BBA. in Business Administration.

In summer 2015, I was fortunate to be placed at two separate companies to complete my Co-op Ed experience. I completed my Co-op Ed experience first at Massy Distributions and subsequently placed at Aeronautical Telecommunications Ltd. I truly enjoyed and learned a lot from both experiences. I gained valuable insight, training and knowledge from working with both companies. The experiences gained aided tremendously in seeking permanent employment and in performing my current job responsibilities. I am truly grateful for these experiences, as they surpassed my expectations. I have done internships prior to my Co-op Ed experiences and as a result of those internships I did not expect to be working on actual real time projects - which I did.

## ACHEA'S 15<sup>TH</sup> Annual Conference

The Association of Higher Education Administrators (ACHEA) will be hosting its 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference at Jewel Runaway Bay Beach & Golf Resort, St. Ann, Jamaica, July 7-9, 2016. The event will be hosted under the theme "Higher Education Vulnerabilities: A Caribbean Response."

This year's Conference has the added component of a sub-theme which seeks to address the issue of *Work-Integrated Education (WIE) for the 21st century workforce*. (WIE comprises internships, Work Experience, Co-op Ed.)

We are extremely elated at this opportunity to use the ACHEA platform to promote WIE partnerships between industry and educational institutions, promote excellence in WIE programmes and to facilitate exchange of information and sharing of knowledge relevant to WIE. We are hereby extending this invitation to you, our valued stakeholder to be a part of this conversation through paper presentation or by participation. For more information, please visit <http://www.acheacaribbean.org/> or <https://www.facebook.com/acheacaribbean/?fref=ts>.

*You may route your queries regarding the conference, including paper presentation to [info@acheacaribbean.org](mailto:info@acheacaribbean.org).*



### Acknowledgment

Special thanks to Cait-Amoi Goulbourne for this issue of the Co-operative Education newsletter. Cait-Amoi is

a third year student at the University of Technology, Jamaica, where she is pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Communication Arts and Technology.

## Co-op Ed Supervisors' Tips

### Four Reasons you Should Engage a Co-op Ed Student

- ◆ Gain Brand Advocates. Hiring a Co-op Ed student helps spread the word about your company. Your Co-op Ed student will probably talk about his/her experience with peers, friends and family members, essentially advertising your company.
- ◆ Increase your productivity. Setting up a Co-op Ed programme allows you to take advantage of short-term support. The extra set of hands help employees to be more productive.
- ◆ Support students. Co-op Ed experiences provide students with numerous benefits. They gain experience, develop skills, makes connections and strengthen their résumés.
- ◆ Test-drive the talent. Hiring a Co-op Ed student is the most effective way for you to evaluate a potential Co-op Ed student as a full time employee versus conducting an interview in which a new employee made a solid impression but just does not work well with your team or company.



## Career Corner



### True or False

1. A portfolio allows you visual representation of your skills, credentials and achievements.
2. A career folder should only possess one of the following: organized evidence of your work background, evidence of readiness for the job or specific job skills that make you qualified for the job for which you are applying.
3. A university student should begin compiling his/her career portfolio in the last year of university.
4. Your career portfolio should contain documents that will match what you are selling to the potential employer.
5. Your résumé, letters of reference, transcript, certificates, writing samples, honors, are among a list of things that should be placed in your career portfolio.

For more information on portfolio building visit: <http://www.quintcareers.com/job-search-portfolio/> & [http://das.ohio.gov/Portals/0/DASDivisions/HumanResources/LPD/pdf/LPD\\_CareerPortfolio.pdf](http://das.ohio.gov/Portals/0/DASDivisions/HumanResources/LPD/pdf/LPD_CareerPortfolio.pdf)

Answers: 1.T 2.F 3.F 4.T 5.T

## Bulletin

- ◆ **UTech, Ja. Career and Job Placement Fair:** March 18, 2016.  
For more information email: [placement@utech.edu.jm](mailto:placement@utech.edu.jm)
- ◆ **Co-op Ed Summer Placement Programme:** May 09 - August 12, 2016.
- ◆ **The Association of Caribbean Higher Education Administrators (ACHEA) 15th Annual Conference:** July 7-9, 2016; Venue: Runaway Bay, St. Ann  
*Refer to left column for further details*



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