



Cooperative Education
Cal Poly, Pomona

**Learn By Doing. You Earn A Future When
You Earn A Degree.**

TO: All Co-op Students

FROM: Dr. Francis X. Flores,
Director of Cooperative Education

SUBJECT: ADVICE AND REMINDERS

Based on feedback from students on assignment and their supervisors, I have compiled some general advice for students. It is very important for you and for our Co-op program that you get off to a good start. Ideally, I would like to have the time to go over each of the points given below with you individually as they apply to your particular situation, but time and other constraints may prevent this.

There have been a few (fortunately, very few) Co-op students who have been let go or replaced because they started ignoring or never followed this advice. When you graduate and start looking for a job either at your Co-op company or elsewhere, your Co-op supervisor's recommendation will be extremely important. You want that recommendation to be a very good one!

Enough said! Here is that advice...

1. Remember that you are a Cal Poly ambassador. Cal Poly Co-op students have a very good reputation. To whatever extent that you succeed in your Co-op job this will help future Cal Poly students succeed at the same company.
2. Remember that the Co-op Office is here to help you should any problems or questions arise regarding your Co-op assignment and how it affects your other coursework at Cal Poly. You must not, under any circumstances, decide to quit your Co-op job without first discussing the reasons with the Co-op Office and allowing us to see if something can be worked out.
3. When your supervisor takes valuable time to explain to you a procedure or how a piece of equipment works, be a good listener. Take notes if necessary and ask for clarification of any difficult points. Then study and practice. Be prepared to do it yourself the next time.

(OVER)

Advice and Reminders

Page 2

4. For students working in a laboratory or plant, remember that safety glasses are required to be worn on the job and safety rules are to be followed. Remember that you are expected to follow the same rules in use in, for example, chemistry labs at Cal Poly. Do not eat or drink in the lab! Keep your workstation as neat as possible. Treat equipment properly and return it to where you got it when you are through with it. Label your solutions, etc., completely, and do not leave them where they do not belong.
5. Think about what you are doing! Everybody makes mistakes. Try to minimize yours but be alert for and willing to admit and correct mistakes. Remember that there are a lot more people and money directly dependent on your accuracy, honesty, and responsibility while at your Co-op assignment than when you are at Cal Poly.
6. Try to get as thorough an understanding as possible about the science, math, and technical aspects directly involved in your Co-op job. Find out why your method or procedure works. The better you understand what you are doing the better you will be able to "troubleshoot" and possibly develop better methods or procedures. This might involve some library time, some review of coursework and/or discussion with people at work.
7. Practice and improve upon your communication skills at your Co-op job, particularly writing. Watch your spelling and grammar! It does reflect on you, Cal Poly, and your employer, but especially you! Try writing a justification for a new piece of equipment or a memo or report to your supervisor.
8. Try to show some initiative and creativity. Supervisors really like it when you identify a problem on the job and propose how you think it can be solved. If you would like to gain some "hands on" experience with a new procedure or instrument, do not ask your supervisor to "show me how it works". Instead do some homework yourself first and then show (tell) your supervisor what you already know about the procedure or instrument.
9. Remember that you are being paid for your work. Whether you realize it or not your supervisor and other employees there are observing your work habits. Are you on time? Do you work efficiently? Do you socialize too much on the job? Do you find productive things to do when there is a slow day at work? In short, are you getting the maximum educational value out of your Co-op experience and are you putting forth your maximum effort for the hours that the company is paying you?
10. If you are going to be absent or late on a workday, you must let your supervisor know as soon as possible. Excessive unexcused absences or tardiness are grounds for dismissal.