

REPORT OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Report #F2013–1; October 1, 2013

In this report the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) brings to Senate its evaluation and recommendation on two items:

- An Optional Internship in the Bachelor of Arts (Professional Communication) Degree Program
- An Optional Co-Operative Education Internship in the Bachelor of Architectural Science Degree Program

A. OPTIONAL INTERNSHIP IN THE BA (PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION)

Introduction: The BA (Professional Communication) is characterized by a progressive curriculum, flexibility in program design, and experiential learning. When the ProCom BA was designed, it did not include a designated internship component so as not to compete with the ProCom graduate program Master of Professional Communication (MPC) for placements. It has become clear to the School that it is essential to provide an internship experience to undergraduate students. Now entering the fourth year of the MPC degree, the School has learned that there are numerous internship opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students, thus obviating any potential conflict between the ProCom BA and the MPC. Consequently, this proposal seeks approval for the inclusion of an internship in the ProCom BA for academic credit.

Rationale: A ProCom BA internship is an ideal experience for students wishing an intensive exposure to the workplace communication function. It supports the Ryerson mission to (1) provide students with the knowledge and skills they need for the changing professions of the 21st century and (2) offer experiential learning opportunities to enhance personal development, academic and professional knowledge, and career readiness.

The internship component of the MPC is a major draw for the graduate program, and the School has received inquiries about internships from potential BA students.

ProCom would join numerous academic units at Ryerson in offering an undergraduate internship. These programs contain a wealth of documentation that guide both students and workplace sponsors in internship administration, and would add to ProCom's own knowledge base for internship management.

The market need for internship students can be projected through with the experience of the Master of Professional Communication. While internships for the MPC are student initiated, the MPC has, since inception, regularly received a growing number of requests from the corporate, nonprofit, and governmental sectors seeking students, as well as from various Ryerson centres. Communication is not an industry-specific function. All organizations in all sectors need communication specialists – to maintain their reputations and brands; cultivate and manage stakeholders through social media and other channels; write newsletters, news releases, promotional brochures, employee communications, grant-seeking and proposal documents; design websites; and help create communication strategies and conduct communication audits, among other activities. MPC students have worked in a variety of companies and activities; the same would hold for undergraduate students.

Benefits for Students:

- Demonstrate to students the intersections between theory and practice, and allow them to deepen their ability to think critically
- Gain employability skills and enhance career options
- Clarify both education outcomes and career aspirations
- Develop personal networks for personal and career development
- Increase maturity and gain confidence, both personally and professionally

Course description: CMN376 Professional Communication Internship

In the internship Professional Communication students have the opportunity to gain insight into professional practice. The internship will be 240 hours minimum to 320 maximum and is scheduled in May to June between third and fourth year, covering approximately 6 to 8 weeks. The internship is optional with admission at the discretion of the internship committee. Students will be required to write a series of weekly journals, submitted to the undergraduate internship coordinator, and a final reflective internship report. Internship sponsors will submit interim and final student assessments. The final grade will be determined with consultation from the sponsor.

- The internship is a 1 credit optional course; it is graded pass/fail.
- Students applying to the internship course require a minimum GPA of 3.0 (B) and must submit a written request to the internship committee. Admittance to the internship remains at the discretion of the committee.
- A maximum of 30 students will be accepted annually for the BA internship.
- The undergraduate internship is 240 to 320 hours maximum (depending on internship sponsor needs), approximately 6 to 8 weeks at 35 to 40 hours a week.
- The students will be investing additional time in written work – students will be required to write a series of weekly journals, submitted to the undergraduate internship coordinator and a final reflective internship report.
- The internship will be positioned between the third and fourth years in the program, running approximately from mid-May to the end of June.
- Students will attend an orientation session in the Winter semester preceding the start of the internship.
- The internship will be a fourth-year course; the final report will be due at the end of week 4 in the Fall semester in fourth year.
- Internship sponsors will submit both interim and final student assessments. The final grade will be determined with consultation from the sponsor.

Internship Coordinator: The BA internship will be coordinated by an instructor. The coordinator will be the point of contact for students and sponsors, contribute to the maintenance of sponsor and student databases, oversee student insurance, create and update an undergraduate internship handbook (for both students and sponsors), and handle any other matters as needed. While students can find an internship sponsor on their own, the internship coordinator will also prospect for internship placements.

The BA internship coordinator will provide information documents to students and sponsors outlining the nature of the internship, student and sponsor responsibilities, and assessment procedures. Documentation will also include an intern-sponsor contract describing obligations of both parties.

Copies of signed contracts will be distributed to both the intern and the sponsor, along with relevant student insurance coverage.

Recommendation

Having satisfied itself of the merit of this proposal, ASC recommends: *That Senate approve the Inclusion of an Internship in the Bachelor of Arts Degree Program in Professional Communication.*

B. ARCHITECTURAL SCIENCE OPTIONAL CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION INTERNSHIP

Overview: The optional Architectural Science Co-operative Education Internship (ASCEI) reinforces the Department of Architectural Science's ability to empower students to enter "a wide range of professional roles in the construction industry".¹ Drawing from an extensive network of local employers, the co-operative education internship will provide top students with the opportunity to undertake a 16-month work placement, or internship, in an architecture or construction firm². The co-op internship program will enhance the academic environment, improve relations with the local architectural community, and provide students with a unique opportunity to apply their skills in a professional environment while gaining new insights on shifts in a dynamic industry. In accordance with university, co-operative education, and internship regulations, students' experiences will be documented and integrated into the academic environment.

The program option is incumbent on a synergy between Ryerson University, Ryerson University's Co-Operative Education Office, and the Department of Architectural Science. As such, all effort has been made to address the mission and needs of each party.

The Architectural Science Co-operative Education Internship Option continues the tradition of Ryerson University's developing co-operative education paradigm by integrating academic study with the application of knowledge in a professional context. The special mission of Ryerson University is the advancement of applied knowledge and research to address societal need, and the provision of programs of study that provide a balance between theory and application, and that prepare students for careers in professional and quasi-professional fields.

In order to participate in the Co-operative Education Internship students must have successfully completed all required and elective courses as listed in semesters one to six, inclusive, for the Bachelor of Architectural Science degree in the official University calendar with a cumulative grade point average

¹ Ryerson University, Department of Architectural Science Website <http://www.arch.ryerson.ca> (December 30, 2010)

² A Co-operative Education Program as defined by CAFCE is a program that formally integrates a student's academic studies with work experience in co-operative employer relationship organizations. The usual plan is for the student to alternate periods of study with periods of work experience in appropriate fields of business, industry, government, social services and the professions.

Programs with more than one work experience period integrated into the overall academic program provide students with the opportunity for career exploration, development and exposure to more than a single type of work environment in their discipline. Programs with one work experience period are co-operative education Internship programs. Internship programs provide an in-depth exposure to one employer organization, which provides the student the opportunity for development commensurate with the length of the overall program.

(CGPA) of no less than 3.0. After completing the third year curriculum, students are in a strong position to contribute to a professional environment.

In its initial phase, the Co-op option will be limited to a maximum of 15 students per year, prioritized by GPA. The Co-op option will be available to students from the ¹Architecture, Building Science or Project Management options. Applicants will participate in an open competition process for jobs, facilitated by Ryerson University's Co-op Office. The Co-Op Office and Ryerson University's Co-Op Faculty Advisor will make every effort to find full employment for all co-op students. However, "the competitive nature of the hiring process means that there are no guarantees of a student being hired."³ Initial investigations into the makeup of potential employers indicate that the diversity of potential placements will satisfy the needs of students in all options and will only increase over the years.

All students who qualify and participate in the Co-operative education internship program at Ryerson University are required to pay a Co-operative education fee of \$1875 (as of Winter 2013).⁴

It is proposed that the ASCEI initiate operations in May, 2014. Students entering their third year in September 2013 will be invited to apply to the Co-op Option.

Learning Outcomes: The Department has identified seven learning outcomes to be met by each graduating student. By the end of the program, all students should be able to:

1. *Design and document a comprehensive building project of moderate scale and complexity.*
2. *Critically analyze buildings, other aspects of the built environment, and related texts; communicate that analysis in written and graphic form.*
3. *Analyze, design and integrate building technologies in the context of building projects.*
4. *Engage in the discourse of architectural culture and theory in relation to a broader understanding of historic, current and evolving human culture.*
5. *Apply principles of collaborative management to the development of the built environment within the context of the AEC professions.*
6. *Make appropriate use of established and emerging technologies and processes in all areas of the curriculum.*
7. *Demonstrate achievement in an area of specialization within Architectural Science beyond basic proficiency.*

While all of the above learning outcomes are expected to be met by current students, those engaged in a co-op option will be able to extend their learning beyond the expected level of proficiency in most if not all of these learning outcomes. In particular, co-operative work experience within the industry will help students to develop their proficiency in learning outcomes #4, #5, #6 and #7.

Student Benefits: By providing a sustained work placement within an architecture or construction industry position, students will:

- Gain over a year (up to 16 months) of relevant work experience upon completion of their co-op
- Develop and learn skills and operations from professionals in the industry

³ Ibid.

⁴ Co-op fees may be diffused over installments at the discretion of the Co-op office. This preliminary installment model accounts for a student's improved financial situation over the course of the work terms.

- Apply skills and abilities from the classroom into the workplace
- Gain exposure to leading edge practices, technologies, software, and innovations in the Architecture, Engineering, and Construction (AEC) industry
- Learn workplace skills including time management, etiquette, protocols
- Earn a salary to offset living and education costs
- Develop stronger work experience and portfolio material
- Build invaluable relationships and networks with contacts in the AEC industry
- Have a co-op designation on their degree and academic transcript⁵

The limited internship intake and competitive placement process will give students an incentive to improve their academic performance in relation to their peers. It is expected that the overall quality of student work will increase across courses, as the entrance metric of greatest importance is the student's cumulative GPA. The high admission standards of the Co-op Internship will serve to nurture the culture of academic accomplishment, enhancing the overall learning environment.

Program Benefits: Given the nature of students' potential entry into the workplace, the Co-operative option will ensure a consistency in technical and design skills necessary for placement within firms. This ameliorates technical skill inconsistencies within the program by driving standards in knowledge bases within the curriculum. With a strong desire to participate in this system, students will value and inquire about the connections between classroom material and industry practice thereby enhancing the classroom experience and pedagogy. This will also serve to leverage the extensive backgrounds and experience of the Department of Architectural Science's faculty in the classroom. The additional layer of student experience brought into the classroom in the fourth year from students that have participated in the Co-operative Education Internship will not only bring real world experience into the classroom discussions, but also further refine the foci of course material for a student audience poised to either enter graduate studies or professional practice.

Employer Benefits:

- Recruitment of young, skilled, and bright students motivated to learn from and participate in projects in the AEC industry
- The hiring of students well-versed with the design process, construction project, and building technologies including familiarity with industry standard software and process
- A Co-operative Education Tax Credit (CETC) of up to \$12,000 in order to offset additional employee salary rates⁶
- Insights into potential directions and innovations based on current work from faculty within RUDAS (Ryerson University Department of Architectural Science)
- The cultivation of potential future employees upon graduation from the undergraduate program

⁵ According to Ryerson University's Co-operative Education homepage, "If you have successfully completed the minimum requirements for the co-op designation in your program it is recorded on your degree. Work terms are also recorded on your academic transcript with pass/fail grades." <http://www.ryerson.ca/co-op/students/fag/#q3> (November 21, 2010)

⁶ The Co-operative Education Tax Credit is an incentive offered by the Canada Revenue Agency for up to \$3,000 per student per term (10 weeks minimum up to four months). The proposed RUDAS Co-operative Education Program will last for FOUR terms (16 months) from the end of third year (i.e. beginning in May, 2020) until the following year (September, 2021).

Types of Work Opportunities:

- Development of models to resolve design decisions for competitions
- Participation in site evaluations and decisions
- Working within design teams to develop conceptual, schematic, design development drawings
- Preparation of contract documents, specifications, and code research for design execution
- Partaking in the bidding and contract negotiations process
- Oversee construction administration from within the office and on site
- Assist in the management of the office and discrete projects

Co-op Internship Work Placements: Employers will be identified through the Ryerson University alumni network and through faculty connections to industry. Currently, even without any coordination of potential employers or job opportunities by the Department, numerous enquiries are received from potential employers seeking to hire students (usually referred to as “co-op students” by potential employers), every year. As the Program Advisory Council made clear in a recent meeting, it is common practice to hire students – and by extension, co-op students – as junior employees in architectural and engineering offices.

The architecture industry is cyclical. Consequently, there is an expectation that there will be periods where job opportunities are difficult to find. Not all students who qualify for the Co-op Internship will necessarily find a position within the architecture field offered through the direct channels of the Co-op system. Should a student in the Co-op Internship find a position that will potentially qualify as an architecture work term on their own, it may be counted as a co-operative term. In order to qualify, the position must meet the approval of the Co-op Office and the Co-operative Education Faculty Advisor.

Student Compensation: Given the incentives provided by the Canadian government via the CETC, employers are expected to compensate students at fair market rates. As there is a spectrum of potential employers, students are not guaranteed a specific amount of compensation within the internship. Salary surveys will be conducted by Ryerson University’s Co-operative education operatives with all participants in the Co-operative Education Internship upon securing employment. Though there will be anonymity among the employers, a median salary will be established for reference.

Work Terms: The minimum requirement for each work term is 12 consecutive 35-40 hour weeks. In order to complete the co-operative education internship, students must complete 3 work terms in total⁷. Given the arrangement of the schedule, Ryerson architecture students will likely work under a single employer for up to 4 terms (16 months) which provides ample opportunity to gain exposure to a professional environment. The long work term allows students to properly transition to a workplace environment, experience a diversity of phases and tasks related to the design and construction industry, and undertake a greater degree of responsibility on projects. That students are required to complete 3 of 4 terms provides a buffer should the industry be in recession or other contingencies.

Should the situation arise where it may be necessary, students may withdraw from the architecture co-op internship prior to the withdrawal date at the end of the first Co-op Term (in August). Students who withdraw from the co-op option will not be permitted to re-enter the co-op internship option.

⁷ According to the CAFCE regulations, the total co-operative work experience is at least thirty percent of the time spent in academic study. A student under this co-op model would have completed at least 3 (if not 4) work terms and 8 academic terms.

The Co-operative Education Office: The Co-operative Education Office is Ryerson University's primary channel for supporting departments and their students in finding "paid, productive workplace opportunities in fields relevant to students' academic and personal goals".⁸ Within the Architectural Science co-op internship model, they are responsible for:

- Seeking, forming, and maintaining relationships with employers providing placements for co-op students
- Preparing students for the job search process through the development of networking, interview, and resume-writing skills
- Administering and overseeing procedural matters with students including processing CEFCO-related documents and liaising with the Faculty Advisor on student status, and
- Managing the co-op employment process
- Visiting students in the workplace and conducting worksite visits
- Assisting in the development of the co-op internship program

The Faculty Advisor: The Faculty Advisor serves as the link between the Architectural Science Department and the Co-op office. As a full-time RFA member, the advisor is the point of contact for students with issues pertaining to academic progress (i.e. work term reports and presentations) throughout the year. The ASCEI will follow such a model as it is used in the co-op programs within the Engineering departments. Within the Architectural Science co-op model, the Faculty Advisor is responsible for:

- Assisting in the recruitment of potential employers
- Assisting in resolving student issues
- Assisting in validating placements as relevant to the field of study
- Serving as a resource to the Co-op staff regarding the academic program
- Approving non-traditional co-op positions or work schedules
- Scheduling and meeting students at the critical evaluation periods (refer to as Appendix B)
- Overseeing academic matters related to student work terms including evaluating work term reports and presentations
- Preparing architecture-specific information sessions on entry into the workplace including portfolio production, skills updating, and professional practice

The Co-operative Education Internship mandates periodic assessments, reports, and meetings with the Faculty Advisor to foster greater enthusiasm, investigation, and application in their specialization.

For many students, this will be their first direct experience with the working methodologies and practices specific to their area of specialization (architecture, building science, or project management) and strong preparation for academic study in the option in the following year.

⁸ Ryerson University, Co-operative Education Office. <http://www.ryerson.ca/co-op/aboutUs/> (December 30, 2010)

CO-OPERATIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM Architectural Science

		CO-OP STREAM	NOTABLES
YEAR 1	Fall (September -December)	Study Term 1	
	Winter (January - April)	Study Term 2	An early presentation on co-op opportunities is made to all to students to encourage interest and high academic performance
	Spring/Summer (May - August)	Break	
YEAR 2	Fall (September -December)	Study Term 3	
	Winter (January - April)	Study Term 4	
	Spring/Summer (May - August)	Break	
YEAR 3	Fall (September -December)	Study Term 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Students are selected for co-op by the beginning of the semester based on CGPA from 1st and 2nd years. ▫ Mid-term presentation on Co-op program ▫ Qualified students begin developing early interview portfolios
	Winter (January - April)	Study Term 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Determine Specialization from ARC, PMT, BSC ▫ Refinement and submission of portfolio and documents ▫ Co-op Fees Due (\$375) ▫ Co-op Applications, Portfolios, and Interviews
	Spring/Summer (May - August)	Co-Op Term 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Deadline for withdrawal from Co-op ▫ <i>Interim Update & Co-op Report</i>
YEAR 4	Fall (September -December)	Co-Op Term 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Co-op Fees Due (\$750) ▫ <i>Interim Update & Co-op Report</i>
	Winter (January - April)	Co-Op Term 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ <i>Interim Update & Co-op Report</i>
	Spring/Summer (May - August)	Co-Op Term 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Co-op Fees Due (\$750) ▫ <i>Interim Update & Co-op Report</i>
YEAR 5	Fall (September -December)	Study Term 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Co-op Presentation ▫ Option Studio 1
	Winter (January - April)	Study Term 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Option Studio 2
	Spring/Summer (May - August)	GRADUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Co-op designation on transcript and degree

Students in co-operative education must not only complete their full-time placements within an AEC-related organization but also meet the standard requirements for academic assessment as outlined by the CAFCE regulations and Ryerson University. The combination of periodic onsite visits by Ryerson University co-operative officers, co-op reports to the Faculty Advisor, and presentations to the school serve to draw stronger connections between Ryerson University's academic program and preparation for professional practice.

During the 16 month period students are required to complete at least three work terms each lasting a minimum of 12 weeks. Students are required to complete a report at the end of each co-operative term. During each work term, a site visit with the faculty advisor or member of the co-operative education

office will be conducted; however in the event that such a visit is not possible, students and their employer will be required to complete a brief, online form. Upon returning from the 16 month co-operative period, students are to deliver a brief presentation to the school outlining their co-operative education experience. Completion of the co-operative education option demands that students complete the following components in the schedule below:

WORK TERM 1	
Interim Update	Online OR Onsite
Work Term 1 Report	Electronic and Hard copy submission to Faculty Advisor
WORK TERM 2	
Interim Update	Online OR Onsite
Work Term 1 Report	Electronic and Hard copy submission to Faculty Advisor
WORK TERM 3	
Interim Update	Online OR Onsite
Work Term 1 Report	Electronic and Hard copy submission to Faculty Advisor
Public Presentation	Electronic Submission and Presentation to RUDAS

Recommendation

- Having satisfied itself of the merit of this proposal, ASC recommends: *That Senate approve the Inclusion of the Co-Operative Education Internship Option in the Bachelor of Architectural Science Degree Program.*

Respectfully Submitted,



Chris Evans, Chair for the Committee

ASC Members:

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