

To: Dr. Erika Paterson, English 301 Instructor, Department of English, The University of British Columbia

From: Thu Vo, Student in English 301 99C course T.V.

Date: February 1st, 2019

Subject: 301 Thu Vo Formal Report Proposal for Enhancing the Participation of UBC Geological Sciences Students in the UBC Science Co-op program

Introduction

With the vast development in technology, economy and society, the competition in the job market for new graduate students has gotten fiercer than ever. A good academic performance is no longer enough, other aspects outside the classroom such as experience, skills, motivation, maturity, and attitude are highly considered in the hiring process. In order to bridge this educational gap, Co-op Programs introduce the concept of work placements within post-secondary programs, where students alternate academic terms with working terms within their industry of interest. Unlike other job placement platforms, the Co-op Programs pre-select qualified group of students and connect them to relevant employers, while providing on-going guidance, supervision and support to the students. Through Co-op Programs, students gain industry work experience, explore career options and build career networks while being supervised, evaluated and paid by employers.

At the University of British Columbia (UBC), all undergraduate students in the Faculty of Science are welcomed to participate in the UBC Science Co-op Program. However, the UBC Science Co-op Program has been failing to attract new Geological Sciences students.

The audience for my formal research report will be the directors of the UBC Science Co-op Program and the Earth and Ocean Sciences department. They are the core of the UBC Co-op Program for Geological Sciences students and have the power to apply changes to the system. However, they have limited time and resources to efficiently improve the program.

Statement of Problem

UBC is known for the largest Co-op program in Western Canada. Although the UBC Science Co-op program has been growing steadily, the number of Geological Sciences students take part in the program has been decreasing. The major implications of this problem are two: first, students will struggle to find suitable jobs after graduation; second, there will be a supply shortage of well-trained short- and long-term employees in the industry.

Proposed Solution

This proposal offers a realistic and effective plan to attract more Geological Sciences students to participate in the UBC Science Co-op Program. One possible solution is to improve the program promotion through utilization of platforms such as social media, information sessions, career fairs or student clubs. Another solution is to implement a new mentoring program between past and current Geological Sciences co-op students for peer guidance and support.

Scope

To assess the possibilities of enhancing the participation of UBC Geological Sciences Students in the UBC Science Co-op program, I plan to pursue five areas of inquiry:

1. What are the main reasons for Geological Sciences students to not participate in the UBC Science Co-op program?
2. What do Geological Sciences students look for in a program that supports gaining working experience?
3. What are the current marketing strategies of the UBC Science Co-op Program and their relative effectiveness on Geological Sciences student bodies?
4. How are current marketing strategies keep up with the changes in the industry/economy?
5. What is the employers' preference on hiring Geological Sciences students – with or without co-op experience?

Methods

My primary data sources will include interviews with Ms. Yasaman Azarpajouh, Life Sciences Co-op Coordinator of the UBC Science Co-op Program, and Mr. Geoffrey Anderson, former Co-op Coordinator of the UBC Science Co-op Program and Director of the University of Manitoba's Science Co-op Program – both have worked with numerous UBC Earth and Ocean Sciences Students in their advising careers. I will also interview Ms. Saoirse Carroll, Human Resources Advisor at Hatch Ltd. and Ms. Vicki Lloyd, Human Resources Consultant at VEL HR Consulting – both with extensive employee recruitment experience in the consulting and technology sectors. I will round out my primary research with a survey among recently graduates and current UBC Earth and Ocean Sciences Students, combine with my own observations for over two years as a Co-op student in this program.

Secondary sources will include publications on the advantages and disadvantages of co-op programs in different universities and industries, as well as the Co-op Education Manual developed by the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education.

My Qualifications

I am a UBC Earth and Ocean Sciences student, majoring in Geological Sciences. I participated in the UBC Sciences Co-op Program from May 2016 to December 2018. As a former Co-op student, I am familiar with initial application and interview process to enter the program and have first-hand experience in applying for jobs, connecting with the advisors (using the resources) and ... in the industry/employer. As a Geological Sciences student, I have a good understanding of different career options in the industry and the market of job opportunities for newly graduate students. My association with the coordinators at the UBC Sciences Co-op Program, the human resources advisors in relevant industries and peers within the same field of study gives me the opportunity for an in-depth study.

Conclusion

In order to continue developing a generation of well-trained graduates ready to jump start their careers in dynamic and demanding work markets, the UBC Science Co-op Program needs to take action to increase the participant of Geological Sciences students in the program. By addressing the areas of inquiry mentioned earlier, I can determine the options to enhance the participation of UBC Geological Sciences Students in the UBC Science Co-op program. With your approval I will begin research at once.