

7. PRACTITIONERS

The program is uniquely tied to the professional community through the cooperative education program and the active exchange with professionals in the classroom.

The cooperative education program was initiated in 1983 by Don Molnar. The program responsibility was recently assumed by Bernie Dahl. Over 500 offices across the U.S. and U.K. have been contacted at various times to solicit their consideration of Purdue students as co-op/interns. This contact includes receiving not only the student portfolio showing typical work, but also a description of the curriculum. Conversation with professionals concerning student employment and student activities occurs through all the faculty members by contacts at professional meetings. This invariably produces good feedback. The strongest relationships, interests, and helpful feedback comes from offices who employ co-op students. In all cases, though, the review of the work samples and discussion of objectives produces a mutual understanding of the needs, opportunities, and limitations on both the academic and the professional sides. The true messengers from practice (occasionally "missionaries" after an especially strong experience) are the returning students who bring back concerns and compliments as well as skills.

The list of co-op employers for the last five years (Appendix 7-1) is included as an illustration of the most current exchange with professional offices. Typically we have more requests for interns than we have students to fill the positions.

Contact between students is also a result of office visits that are a regular part of field trips to major metropolitan areas such as Indianapolis, Chicago, St. Louis, Louisville and Cincinnati.

Practitioners are frequent guests in the classrooms as guest lecturers, critics, and project consultants. A list of these guests over the past five years is included in Appendix 7-2.

The program also has a series of other lecturers. See Appendix 7-3. The Olinger Lectures (one year) are supported by an endowment from an alumnae. One or two lectures per year are supported by gifts from the Bookwalter family.