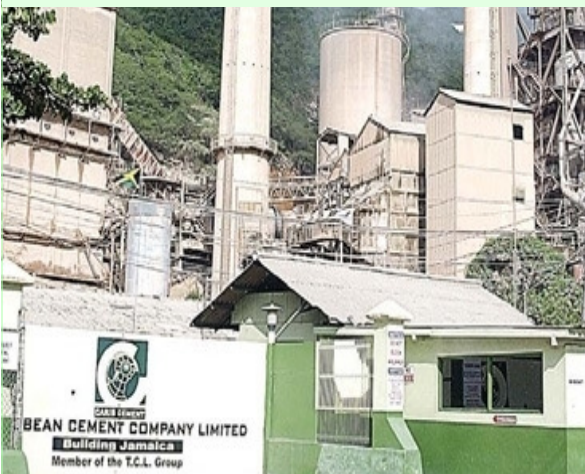


University of Technology, Jamaica Co-operative Education at UTech

"Partnering with Industry to produce work-ready graduates"

SUSTAINED PARTNERSHIPS: *The Carib Cement Story*



Front and Aerial View of Caribbean Cement Company Ltd., Rockfort, Kingston

Caribbean Cement Company Limited has been one of the University's most consistent partners in providing students with excellent opportunities to augment their academic course of study with relevant work experience in an environment where they are monitored and mentored by professionals.

Carib Cement, as the company is commonly called, has been in existence in Jamaica for approximately 62 years. The training partnership between the company and UTECH however, spans close to a decade with the company mainly accepting

Mechanical, Chemical, Electrical and Civil Engineering students to complete their Co-op Ed/ Industrial Work Experience. This partnership between both institutions has thrived over the years due to the positive feedback from students regarding the wealth of knowledge gained during the experience, as well as, from the engineers who have commended the students' for exemplary efforts in

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Co-ordinator's Pen

The Co-op Ed Unit is pleased to present our valued stakeholders with the 7th issue of *Co-operative Education at UTECH*. We trust that you will enjoy reading this issue and welcome your feedback and suggestions .

As we are about to embark on yet another major placement period (May to August), we trust that those engaged during this period will find the experience highly rewarding. We are still open to additional partnerships/ engagements for the period so I encourage you, make contact soon.

La-Cresha Gordon-Brydson
University's Co-op Ed Co-ordinator

SUSTAINED PARTNERSHIPS: *The Carib Cement Story Cont'd*

project designing and resolving problems on plant. These have been an agent of motivation in the continuation of the programme.

Partnering with UTech

An interview conducted with Ms. Sandra Cowell, Human Resources Officer at Carib Cement, revealed that the Company's initial decision to partner with the University resulted from the realization that over the years, students coming out of tertiary institutions, although quite knowledgeable in a particular discipline, could not apply themselves in the work environment. The Company therefore saw the importance of providing an environment where students would be exposed to the practical side of their learning.

Student Performance

The Co-op Ed experience has not only proven to be beneficial to the student participants but also to the company. Ms. Cowell further stated that although the students are lacking in practical experience, they are quick at absorbing practical approaches presented to them. As a result, these students after a short period, are able to offer invaluable assistance to the engineers in the various projects or in the routine operations of the Company.

In participating in such an undertaking, the overall expectation of the Company was that on completion of the Co-op Ed experience, students would have been better equipped to function effectively in an industrial environment. This expectation has been met, as feedback from the company speaks to the improvement in the performance of the students.

Mentorship

At Carib Cement, the employers take their roles seriously, as they act as mentors in coaching the Co-op Ed students. According to Ms. Cowell,

“Training is provided which offers students the practical experience needed to prepare them to function efficiently within the organization. The coaching received provides students with an intimate experience which later helps to affirm good performance and allows the students the ability to assess their strengths and weaknesses in their career planning and development”.

Stakeholder Benefits

For students, the Co-op Ed programme should not be viewed as merely a way to earn money. Neither should employers see the programme as a ready supply of inexpensive assistance for short-term projects. According to Ms. Cowell, the programme must be viewed as an important part of a student's career management as it allows early exposure to the world of work. Students have the opportunity for self evaluation and are more

prepared in ensuring the developmental gaps are targeted and filled. Employers also benefit from any new knowledge and cutting edge technology a student may bring to the Programme.

Ms. Cowell's concluding thoughts on the Programme surrounds the ability of students, who are engaged during the semester, to be fully emerged in some of the major projects being undertaken by the company. She felt that greater learning would occur for these students were they engaged on a full-time basis.

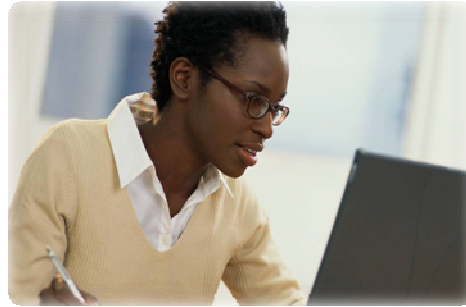


Sandra Cowell, HR Officer, Carib Cement & Ricardo Gardner, Electrical Engineer student, UTech in April 2014

“Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work in hand. The Sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus”

Alexander Graham Bell

Developing Employability Skill-Sets for Work In An Online Environment



Opportunities for online work are increasing and so UTech deems it an imperative that our students develop the skills required to successfully engage in professional careers working in an online environment. In November 2013, the University engaged a new partner Helpdeskja.com/The Self Publishing Center Help, a company that is founded, owned and operated by Corine La Font, a Self Publishing, Online Marketing and Virtual Events Consultant and Specialist. Ms. La Font caters to the needs of authors, coaches, speakers and start up entrepreneurs in helping her clients build an online presence with books and increasing their visibility and credibility through strategic online marketing approaches that extends to the use of webinar, teleseminars, telesummits and online radio.

Due to the suite of services offered by Helpdeskja.com, and because the company itself is in a growth phase, it was felt necessary to reach out to the student body of interns trained by the UTech as a source of assistance in meeting the demands of its clientele.

The Co-op-Ed Unit acknowledges the work of Miss Gail Pennant, with this issue of *Co-operative Education at UTech*. Miss Pennant is a final year student from the School of Technical and Vocational Education where she is pursuing a B.Ed in Business and Computer Studies.



As a former staff member of UTech and participant at its annual job fair, Ms. LaFont did not hesitate in making contact with the UTech Co-operative Education Unit in sourcing that assistance. Thus far, she has had approximately 5 students under her wings, exposing them to the world of work, the demands of the digital space and working in a non traditional or virtual environment that sees the students working from the comfort of their homes.

The students have fitted in and adapted quickly to technology and new challenging activities. Some of which include, social media, writing blogs, creating PowerPoint presentations, doing research, updating databases and using a variety of applications and tools online that allows them to work efficiently and effectively to meet the timelines given which proves challenging especially when they have to manage the deliverables of work and school.

Ms. LaFont believes that charting a business online is our present reality. She opines that once UTech continues to have this facility in place where students can gain this type of professional work experience while supporting entrepreneurs to grow their businesses, this would be a match worth the envy of those dare not to follow.

Progress Report on UTech's Co-op Education Programme Partnership with KPMG

In our last issue, stakeholders were made aware of the commencement of a promising partnership with KPMG (Jamaica), one of the largest operating professional practices on the island which provides a broad range of audit, tax and advisory services. The partnership is intended to be long-term and will become a vehicle for KPMG to nurture Jamaica's accountancy profession. The company stands to benefit from a pool of trained, work-ready entry-level recruits who could be engaged as needed by the firm. Students, it is expected, will acquire practical, organizational and technical experience and be exposed to the use of cutting edge technology. The Co-op Ed Unit has been tracking the progress/ performance of two of the 19 students assigned to KPMG. Below are their reflections on the experience so far:



Xavian Williams
4th Year Accounting Student

Working at KPMG has allowed me to gain a better understanding of the accounting field and become more professional while engaging in challenging projects and being able to contribute positively towards projects as

part of a team.

KPMG is most definitely a preferred employer as it offers quality training for its staff which can help me to better develop my professional character. I also like KPMG's commitment to community development, ensuring that all its employees are career motivated and its culture of making an impact; demonstrating innovation and delivering quality.



Kharis Howard
4th Year Accounting Student

Working at KPMG has provided me with the opportunity to use the knowledge gained at UTech in a practical way. For the past few months, I have worked with several persons at KPMG at different client locations.

I have learnt that each client's operations are different and so it is important to understand

how the client works before proceeding to audit. I have also learnt the importance of teamwork as for each audit, each member of the audit team is given an area of responsibility so that at the end of the audit, all areas of the company are sufficiently covered.


Some of my duties entail assisting the audit team to perform audit procedures on cash and cash equivalents, confirmations, bank reconciliations, depreciation logic test, etc. It is also my responsibility to obtain various documents from the client files so that these can be checked for completeness, accuracy, occurrence and other criteria.

So far it has been a great learning experience.

"Think not of yourself as the architect of your career but as the sculptor. Expect to have to do a lot of hard hammering and chiseling and scraping and polishing." ~ **B.C. Forbes**

Career Corner


What you should say instead?

 **Never say: "I'm too Busy"**


If you are working, it is assumed that you will be busy.

 **Alternate Response:** "Can I get back to you in (stated time) so I can give your request my full attention."


This shows you are in control and you are more than happy to assist based on your modified schedule.

 **Never say: "I'm having a bad day" or "Things are just crazy right now."**


This only shows your inability to cope with your workload or handle pressure.

 **Alternative Response:** "You caught me in the middle of a project. Can we discuss this at (stated time)?"

Your diligence as a hard-worker becomes evident as well as your interest to get back to the person.

 **Never say: "I'm waiting for a call back."**

Try to make an effort to speak to someone who will be able to say when the call might be returned in case your supervisor asks the status of the phone call.

 **Alternate Responses:** "The supervisor was out of office, however, his assistant assured me that he will call back as soon as he returned"

This shows that you not only made the call, but you went the extra mile to have your call addressed.

 **Never say: "You didn't hear this from me."**

If you are afraid of the repercussions of the spoken word, don't speak them.

 **Alternative Response:** "I'm not familiar enough with the situation to speak on it."

This type of response will not have any repercussions and you will be portrayed as a true professional.



Top 5 Tips on Keeping your Social Media Professional

1. **Delete inappropriate pictures, posts and comments.**

Do not post any religious, political or strong sexual content on your profile.

2. **Think before you post.**

Prospective employers are now using social media as a way of obtaining a better assessment of a person's character. Be careful not to post anything that can potentially harm your chances of gaining employment.

3. **Report fake social media accounts.**

A fake social media profile with your name and details can ruin your online or professional reputation. Report fake profiles so that administrators can block or delete these profiles.

4. **Create a professional profile:**

In the event that you are unable to remove negative comments you have made, try to counter that by creating a more positive social media profile.

5. **Remove people who can make you look bad:**

It is a good idea to "unfriend" or "unfollow," persons who might portray you in a negative light. You would not want a friend to tag you in a picture that would be best kept private.

Meet the School Co-op Ed Co-ordinators



Miss Camille Jackson

**School of Hospitality and
Tourism Management (SHTM)**

Met SHTM's Co-op Ed (Internship) Co-ordinator, Miss Camille Jackson, who is also a full-time lecturer in the School. The responses below were obtained from an interview conducted with Miss Jackson.

GP: How long have you been a School Co-ordinator?

CJ: I have been in this position since the beginning of the academic year 2012/13.

GP: What is most rewarding about being a School Co-ordinator?

CJ: On the students' return from their 10 weeks Internship placement, I am pleased to see the visible changes in their attitude and demeanor resulting from the experience they have garnered.

GP: What preparation is done, if any, before the students go out on Internship?

CJ: The School has an orientation session where students are informed of the University's expectations as well as the expectations of the industry.

GP: How beneficial is Internship to the students in your School?

CJ: From the responses of the students, when they return, there is an air of excitement as they now see the link between what is taught/learned and their chosen fields.

GP: What are your most challenging functions as a Co-ordinator?

CJ: There are many challenges namely:

- ◇ The students who do their Internship overseas are not gaining as much exposure as we would like, as these students normally work in one area of the organization for the duration of the experience and hence do not benefit from rotations in various departments. We are nevertheless lenient with these students as they use the overseas Internship opportunity as a means of earning their tuition to continue their course of study.
- ◇ There is limited space available in the Kingston Metropolitan Region for placing students. Additionally, many other institutions are competing for these spaces.

GP: What is the most important change that you would like to make to enhance the quality of the Co-op Ed (Internship) Programme?

CJ: I would make the Internship module available to students throughout the academic year instead of just during summer sessions. This is due to the fact that it is difficult to accommodate all students during the summer session.

GP: Where do you envision UTech's Co-op Ed Programme to be 5 years from now?

CJ: To have an advanced data management system that would allow us to track students from the time of commencement to the completion of the module. The system should be so designed to allow employers and students to make electronic submissions and also to generate reports for the Schools and the Co-op Ed Unit .

Also, Co-ordinators then would be able to visit those students who are able to find placement overseas for their internship, which is not possible now due to budgetary constraints.



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