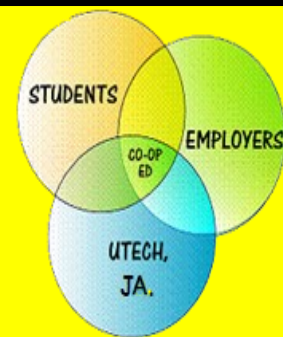




University of Technology, Jamaica

Co-operative Education at UTech, Jamaica



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Co-operative Education



UTech_cooped



Co-op Ed UTech

From the Desk of the Acting Co-operative Education Coordinator



Sandy Lawrence | Acting Co-operative Education Coordinator

Hooray! We made it to 2021! Despite the challenges that 2020 brought us, the Co-operative Education (Co-op Ed) programme stood strong. Yes, we had to change the way we did some things. In March when the pandemic reared its ugly head, many arrangements for physical placement had to be cancelled and some of our students had to be engaged virtually.

Several of our students had to do alternative means of assessments in order to complete the Cooperative Education module. This paradigm shift was not without hiccups, but as a result, we have learned many valuable lessons.

We have come to better understand our strengths and weaknesses. We have also learned to navigate the new technological landscape which promises to be a mainstay going forward.

So now, as a new placement period approaches, we are better prepared to face the difficulties that lie ahead. The Co-op Ed programme has embraced the concepts of virtual engagement and alternative means of assessment, while ensuring the safety of our students and meeting the needs of industry. Our industry partners stand ready to continue to train, mold and prepare our students to achieve excellence.

To you our students, I say make full use of this opportunity to gain relevant on-the-job learning experiences and enhance your chances of permanent employment thereafter. The Co-operative Education Unit remains committed to providing the support that is needed to make your success a reality.

A Message From UTech, Ja Students' Union President



Kahlil Hutchinson | Students' Union President

Kahlil Hutchinson is currently serving in his second term as USU President after being re-elected in 2020.

“The pandemic has both negatives and positives. This is so as many students missed opportunities to participate in the J1 programme. On the other hand, students can connect globally with companies due to the shift in paradigm from physical to online” he expressed. When asked what the Union has done to alleviate some of the stress the pandemic has caused on students, Kahlil stated that the Students' Union Council has implemented an initiative aimed at providing students with data plans to access classes. As gloomy as things have been this past semester, Kahlil's optimism when faced with the challenges geared towards continuing to learn during the COVID-19 pandemic is something that others should try to emulate.

Many students have been suffering, both mentally and emotionally due to the unusual circumstances presented by the conditions of the Coronavirus. However, not many students are in the unique position Kahlil Hutchinson has been in, balancing both academic responsibilities with student services during a time where the pressures of both duties have increased significantly.

Kahlil, who is the President of the UTech, Jamaica Students' Union (USU), has acknowledged that it has been quite difficult to manage both responsibilities as student and student leader, but states that his passion for helping others has been carrying him through.

While he has been focusing on balancing his responsibilities, he has also been aware that many students, for whom he is responsible, have been finding it really difficult to cope since the pandemic has severely affected the Jamaican society.

Upcoming Event – Save the Date!

**The Inaugural Co-operative
Education (Internship) Fair
March 10–12, 2021**

**For more information contact
the Co-operative Education
Unit at ced@utech.edu.jm or
sjunor@utech.edu.jm**

Coordinating the Co-op Ed Module During the COVID-19 Pandemic



**Melville Cooke | Co-op Ed Coordinator |
School of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Teachers have faced many challenges during 2020 and educating students under the restrictions of a pandemic is perhaps more difficult than it seems.

Melville Cooke, lecturer in the Faculty of Education and Liberal Studies shared this sentiment and explained how adjusting to the new lifestyle of teaching remotely has impacted him. Mr. Cooke has been a Co-op Ed Coordinator since October 2019 and says the role gives him much joy especially when he is able to receive feedback from students about how their placement has aided them in developing satisfaction within the working environment. “While I am sure of two students whose Internships resulted in job offers, my most

rewarding experience was reading the high proportion of students’ journals which reflected satisfaction with being placed in their area of interest, where they could apply their preferred skills.

As a lecturer, Mr. Cooke has had to adapt to the “new normal” that now governs everything that was once centered around face to face interactions. The main area of concern that he faced during the remote learning experience was communication.

“Communication with some students was an issue; however, as the University is in a remote learning situation all the students have had to optimize their internet access and this is reflected in the rate of response to Co-op Ed matters ,” he explained. In understanding that much improvement can be made to the Co-op Ed module, Mr. Cooke identified some areas that could be adjusted to better facilitate the students. “We need to stimulate initiative and the ability to generate ideas. This may require specific sessions with the students on the significance of bringing these attributes to an employment/entrepreneurship environment,” he emphasized. “We have to emphasize that getting into an income-earning position is not enough – you will be required to come up with ideas, not only execute ones that are given to you.”

Résumé Building Tips



Kristofferson Nunes | CEO & Founder | UCA Limited

The importance of a résumé is really to document what you can offer to a company.” So said Kristofferson Nunes, CEO and Co-founder of UCA Jamaica Limited who explained the importance of building a résumé and using it as a tool to advertise personal brand as well as your skills. Nunes, who is also a well-known résumé developer, stated that the résumé is simply a window into who you are and what qualities you will bring to a company. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, many students have been granted more time on their hands, partly due to the fact that many areas of recreation are closed and the majority of classes are online.

Consequently, more opportunities to focus on other areas of self-development have arisen, one of which areas is résumé building. But as students, how can you improve your current résumé or, if it is that you do not have one, what are the key things to include? “When you’re young, you may not have much

networking to rely on so you don’t have much of a track record,” Nunes explained. “You depend heavily on your learning to get a job, so your degrees, your courses, your competencies and your certificates will be on your résumé.” He also explained that if you do not have any work experience to put on your résumé, you could highlight achievements or roles that you performed throughout high school or even while doing voluntary service.

In concluding, Nunes encouraged students to seek help from a résumé building software that aids in aligning the contents of your résumé specifically for the job you are applying for. He recommended HR Staffers as one such software as well as Novo Résumé. “In the advent of technology and specialization, you have to tailor your résumé to the job that you are applying for. You are adaptable therefore your résumé should be adaptable.”

Things to remember:

- * Your résumé must pass a 10 second or less test for making a strong enough impact.
- * Avoid using résumé templates that do not meet international standards
- * Ensure that your career statement is powerful yet succinct.
- * Your résumé as a student/recent graduate should not be more than two pages in length.

Nunes , a young entrepreneur (age 26), is the CEO & Founder of UCA Limited which bridges the gap for millennials & Gen Z audience with corporate brands while offering freelance and career building opportunities for that generation.

Partnership with Neustone Projects



Dr. Michelle Miller | Manager| Neustone Projects

Dr. Michelle Miller, Manager at Neustone Projects, expressed how thrilled the organization was to continue the partnership with UTech, Jamaica, and explained how the Co-operative Education programme has benefitted them over the years. “We had excellent performance from graduates who are employed in the business,” she stated. “We believed that we would have a greater impact by facilitating a real-world and first-world exposure for the students during internship.”

Neustone Project’s partnership with the Co-operative Education programme was sustained primarily because the company has continued to receive employees from the programme that have

made a significant impact in their working environment. One of the company’s senior managers was in fact a former intern that arrived five years ago via the programme, having joined them full time upon completion of his degree. Last year, Neustone also engaged three interns from their 2019 cohort, another indication that they firmly believe in the credibility of the Co-operative Education programme.

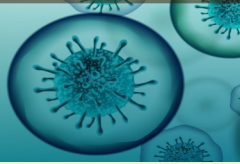
Unlike many other businesses, Neustone was not severely affected by COVID-19 according to Dr. Miller. In fact, she claimed that they were always prepared to facilitate remote work so it was a seamless transition.

The only issue that they faced as it related to the recruitment of new students was that these students were unable to enjoy the full comfort of working due to having internet issues, an all too familiar story that many people have faced across the island for a number of months now. In summarizing the overall impact of the Co-op Ed Program, Dr. Miller encouraged students to participate in what she described as a “wonderful opportunity.”

She encouraged employers to engage students in their organizations as this is a great way to improve nation building. Not only will students be able to get access to first-hand experience of what working in their field would feel like, but she also expressed how important the opportunity would be to creating meaningful connections and friendships that could prove pivotal in one’s career path.

A Global Look on the Impact of COVID-19 on Co-op Ed Students

CORONAVIRUS
COVID-19



C OVID-19 has made life difficult for everyone but the impact has perhaps been felt more so by young individuals who were eagerly anticipating entering the workforce. Internationally, the unemployment rate for young persons increased drastically, doubling to be exact, in many parts of the world, including the current epicenter of the virus, the United States. In the US. the overall unemployment rate for young workers ages 16–24 jumped from 8.4% to 24.4% from spring 2019 to spring 2020 (Gould, et.al, 2020). Why is this so? Well, the main reason is that young workers are more likely to work in jobs that have been impacted by the pandemic such as jobs in hospitality, leisure and entertainment.

Co-op Ed students worldwide have been affected. However, some universities abroad, such as Memorial University of Newfoundland in Canada, have put measures in place to ensure that their students still obtain some amount of work experience during these very conflicted times. Continuing to engage students with employers and providing essential travelling are some of the implementations the university has taken on board to ensure that their students still get their Co-op Ed experience.

FACTS ABOUT JOBS IN COVID-19

- ◆ The Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) is reporting a 10.8 per cent reduction in the number of employed persons as at July 2020, relative to the corresponding period last year .
- ◆ Female employment declined by 62,700 or 11.2 per cent, from 560,900 in July 2019 to 498,200 .
- ◆ The unemployment rate for youth, aged 14 to 24, was 30.4 per cent in July 2020, compared to 20.2 per cent for the corresponding period last year.
- ◆ The unemployment rate for male youth was 28.5 per cent compared to 16.8 per cent in July 2019 .

Sources

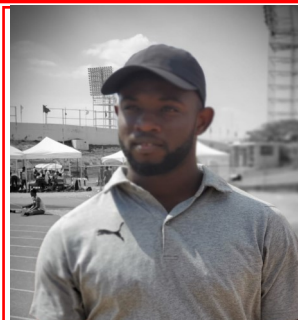
<https://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/covid19-what-about-us/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-52660591>



HOW WERE THE STUDENTS' CO-OP ED EXPERIENCE AFFECTED BY COVID-19

This was an unusual year for everyone, but, for those engaging in the Co-operative Education experience, it was one of a kind. We asked a few students the question, “How was your Co-op Ed experience affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?”



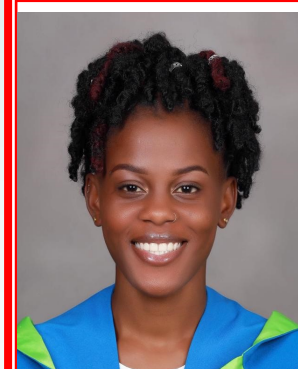
My Co-op Ed experience was not adversely affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic. I was able to complete my hours before the lockdown in March. However, challenges leading up to the lockdown, were my athletes were frustrated and discouraged. Mostly, the final year athletes who needed the opportunity to get their scholarships.

Tevin Dixon | Caribbean School of Sport Science
Co-op Ed Placement: Jamaica College



The business I was placed at was very slow. They got most of their customers from schools and churches; so it was definitely affected by COVID-19.

Ginelle Gravesandy | School of Hospitality & Tourism Management
Co-op Ed Placement : Comprehensive Hotel Sales



Because I did my studies in sports which means that most of what I would have learnt during my internship would have been in the field..COVID-19 Pandemic didn't allow that because sports was placed on a halt. Doing my internship my supervisor and I had to resort to doing the internship online and my supervisor had to pivot and create something like a project for me to do so that I would still learn and get that experience even though it was via online. So COVID-19 allowed us to adjust to the new norm of online.

Zehola Ricketts | Caribbean School of Sport Science
Co-op Ed Placement : Strategic Sports Consultancy

Questions You May Have about Co-op Ed during COVID-19

Question #1: When do I select the Co-op Ed module?

Answer: If students are doing the Co-operative Education module for academic credit, once the module appears on their Diet Sheet, they will be able to select the module. However, once the module is selected, it **must** be completed in the Academic Year of selection. If the module is pursued voluntarily, as soon as an opportunity arises, students may make an application to the Co-operative Education Unit indicating their interest in pursuing a Co-operative Education experience and submit their résumés in writing.

Question #2: Why is the Co-op Ed module/experience offered later in my degree?

Answer: The Co-op Ed module is offered post second year through to fourth year. At this point, students are better able to build on the knowledge they have received earlier in their programmes and therefore have a more productive internship and a greater impact on industry.

Question #3: Can I work remotely on my Co-op Ed engagement?

Answer: It is possible for students to work 100% remotely on Co-op Ed engagement. However, this has to be determined by your School. The School will determine what are the learning outcomes required and if same can be achieved in a virtual context.

Question #4: How will my Co-op Ed experience be impacted in light of COVID-19?

Answer: The COVID-19 will in some ways impact the Co-op Ed experience that, there are some industries operating below normal capacity and may or may not be able to engage students at this time. Should students be engaged, the full Co-op Ed experience may not be accommodated. Students may for example complete 200hrs of 400hrs required due to industry restriction. In such cases, theoretical assignments will be given to complete the remaining hours. Other students based on the Industry, will be given Alternative Means of Assessment such as project based assignments. While others will work remotely and be also be required to complete added theoretical assignments.

FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US!!

Email: coopedutech@gmail.com | **Telephone:** 876-927-1680 Ext: 3546

Instagram: Co-operative Education | **Twitter:** UTech_cooped | **Facebook:** Co-op Ed

Adapting to the New Normal



Ryan Miller | Operations Engineer

Ryan Miller is the second child to both Garfield Miller (father), and Diania Walters (mother). He was raised in a very small rural town called Block gate, which separates the communities of Islington and Rosend in the parish of St Mary. Like any normal child who grew up on the countryside, Mr. Miller's childhood was not easy, but he was destined to break the generation barriers and stigmas attached to growing up in the rural parts of Jamaica.

Miller, who is an Operations Engineer and a UTech, Jamaica graduate with a degree in Industrial Engineering, presented on the topic 'Challenges and Opportunities for Success in the New Normal' at the Co-operative Education Unit webinar held August 13, 2020. His piece focused on the impact the Corona virus has had on the country and to a larger extent the world.

He stated that the pandemic has impacted our lives in one way or another, many persons have had to adjust their standard of living in order to cope.

Many persons have lost their jobs, some have to be working from home while children get familiar with using online platforms for their education.

Miller continued to state that these times are strange and so a new normal is expected if we are to survive. Many people refer to it as the "new normal". Everything from our social gatherings to our daily errands has been completely changed and most of us are not too fond of the switch. We then have to be adaptable to the new norms, not just in our personal day to day lifestyle, but at work, school and as we go about in public spaces.

He maintained that there will be an upsurge in online businesses as people are forced to stay inside. Universities will benefit from financial support from the government and other stakeholders. All in all, Miller reiterated that individuals must begin to accept the new normal and adapt to the situation if they are to make the best out of the situation.

Tribute to the late Jamar Thelwell

By Brian Piiter



**Jamar Thelwell | Former Co-op Ed
Coordinator, School of Humanities and Social
Sciences**

When I heard the news that Mr. Thelwell had passed away, it almost didn't feel real. I had just been taught by him a few weeks prior and we had held several discussions like we always did about a wide array of topics, ranging from school to football to issues pertaining to life itself.

So, you can imagine, when I heard that someone who I had shared so many experiences with over the two and a half years I have been at the University of Technology, Jamaica had sadly succumbed to his illness; I was devastated. Mr. Thelwell was a Co-operative Education Coordinator for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) until August 2019.

His vision for Co-op Ed within SHSS was to become a leader in Co-operative Education with employers and fostering a dynamic learning environment in which students are provided with opportunities to make a positive impact.

There was no one like Mr. Thelwell; he was always present to help you with whatever issues you had, whether relating to school or just life itself. As recounted by a former schoolmate of mine, during her final year of university and needing to submit an assignment or risk not graduating, at 11pm in the night Mr. Thelwell got up out of his bed, came to the University and assisted her in completing and handing in the assignment. Jamar Thelwell will be surely missed.

The relationship that he had with his students was perhaps an experience many of us will never experience again from a university lecturer. The talks, the jokes and the constant motivational speeches that he would include in his class sessions when he would realize that we are feeling defeated were rare commodities to come by. He felt like one of us. He was one of us.



Meet Our Student Editor Brian Piiter

A final year student pursuing a BA degree in Communication Arts and Technology. Brian was assigned to the Co-op Ed Unit as a part of his internship experience in order to complete

his undergraduate degree at the University of Technology, Jamaica. He is very action oriented and also has a passion for journalism. For Brian, attending classes during the pandemic was a challenge and, like many other students, faced a lot of difficulties balancing both school, work and other important activities. However, he was able to overcome the challenges. In life, he goes by the mantra: "Without commitment you'll never start and without consistency you'll never finish."