



CUTLINE: Participating in a partnership which pairs SSCC students with local business partners are (l-r) Bill Condo, Candle-Lite HR Manager; Scott Higham, Candle-Lite Maintenance Manager; Seth Walker, SSCC Co-op Student; Jim Barnett, SSCC Engineering Faculty; Tom Dettwiller, Candle-Lite Maintenance Engineering Technician; and Dr. Nicole Roades, SSCC Vice President of Academic Affairs.

SSCC's Engineering Co-ops pair students with businesses

Southern State Community College's new co-op tracks in Computer Assisted Design (CAD), Electrical/Electronics Technology and Electro-Mechanical Engineering pair students with local business partners in an alternating rotation of learning and working.

To better explain the co-op tracks, as well as all of SSCC's engineering programs, two Engineering Info Sessions will be held for prospective students and business partners -- 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, May 11, at Central Campus, 100 Hobart Drive, Hillsboro, or 6-8 p.m. Thursday, July 28, at Brown County Campus, 351 Brooks-Malott Road, Mt. Orab.

Students in Southern State's engineering programs have the option of choosing between two pathways toward degree completion. The direct track (applicable for all engineering degrees) is designed to be completed in three semesters and includes only classroom work. The co-op track (applicable for the Computer Assisted Design CAD, Electrical/Electronics Technology and Electro-Mechanical Engineering degrees) is designed to be completed in six semesters broken up into three classroom semesters and three work semesters.

Students who choose to apply for the co-op tracks can expect to follow a timeline that includes:

- Meeting with SSCC's Jim Barnett or Amy McClellan prior to beginning the program in the fall;
- Attending a career success workshop which includes a mock interview;
- Interviewing for a work position with a partner business; and
- If selected, alternating between 16 weeks learning in the classroom and then 16 weeks working with the business partner, for three rotations.

"Students who take advantage of the co-op and internship opportunities available through SSCC and our partners are able to put classroom knowledge to use in real world situations," said Jim Barnett, SSCC Full-Time Engineering Faculty. "This experience allows the students to experience the material, not just read about it. Students return to class and answer questions with confidence since they have actually seen the science in action."

The co-op tracks are offered in collaboration with leading local employers – currently Airborne Maintenance & Engineering Services, Candle-Lite Company, C-Mold, and GE Aviation's Peebles Test Operation.

"On behalf of Southern State, we are honored to have partnered with some of our area's most coveted employers to create cooperative work experience for our students," said Dr. Nicole Roades, SSCC Vice President of Academic Affairs. "This requires commitment from both entities and we couldn't be more pleased with the positive outcomes we are all experiencing as a result of this collaboration. Our deepest appreciation is extended to these employers for recognizing the value in this exercise and working with us to create a quality hands-on experience for students in the engineering field."

The co-op program for the 2015-16 academic year was centered on students in the Electrical/Electronics Technology engineering program. This fall, students in Electro-Mechanical Engineering and Computer Assisted Design (CAD) will also have a co-op option.

"Our partnerships with area businesses continue to grow, which allows for more opportunities for students to learn real world experiences in their field of study," said Amy McClellan, SSCC Internship and Co-op Coordinator. "Having served in an internship while I was in college, I know the value of these experiences from both a student and employer perspective. The sustainability of this program will help the regional companies establish a skilled pipeline and provide valuable experience for our students."

SSCC student Zachary Reid, who is participating in the co-op track with GE Aviation's Peebles Test Operation, said: "This co-op benefited me by giving me the opportunity to learn various skills and knowledge I wouldn't have learned elsewhere. It also gave me the motivation to complete my degree. To anyone considering the co-op track, I would say to try it because you could have the opportunity of a lifetime."

Apart from the benefits offered to students, the co-op program proves valuable to employees by providing a pipeline of skilled employees and helping establish professionalism among the students that aligns with company culture.

"We enjoy the opportunity to partner with the team at Southern State to develop and keep local talent," said Bill Condo, Candle-Lite HR Manager. "Candle-Lite has opportunities for co-op students to apply what is learned in the classroom to our complex manufacturing processes. Each student that we have had the opportunity to bring into the program has been eager to learn

and had a great work ethic. We enjoy seeing them develop as they work through their projects, and realize that they enjoy being a part of the manufacturing engineering team.”

For more information about the Engineering Info Sessions on May 11 and July 28, or to learn more about co-op and internship opportunities at Southern State, contact McClellan at 800-628-7722, ext. 2785, or amcclellan@sscc.edu.

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