PANEL DISCUSSION

Why Co-Op in Computer Science?

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My reason for desiring to present this panel is to encourage Computer Science programs not in the co-op tradition (most are probably in Arts and Science Colleges) to once again consider the benefits of establishing such a program. I believe that it makes sense for students, but it also forms a bridge of cooperation between academia and industry which is so vital to establish at this time. It gives specific corporations more than an abstract reason for assisting computer science programs in any of the various ways which have been suggested (financial contributions, sharing staff, faculty interns, etc.).

William Mitchell

Cooperative education for computer science majors is beneficial for the students, the employers, and the schools. For the students it represents valuable working experience, exposure to the myriad of jobs available, financial reward, knowledge of courses needed to further a specific chosen data processing career field, direct knowledge of strong and weak points of the employer, and generally much easier access to a permanent job. For the employer, it represents a chance to view the student in the actual working environment, actual work is accomplished that would be delayed or go undone, provides a source of well-trained and highly motivated new employees, and in the long run it is the most cost effective way of obtaining new employees. For the schools, it represents a good way to continue to be informed as to the needs of the data processing community in business.

H. R. Halladay

McDonnell Douglas regards the Cooperative Education Program as being very valuable and beneficial for several reasons. The Coop Program allows us to maintain a year-round flow of qualified talent available for employment at a given time. Coop also allows us an opportunity to evaluate students in several different applications of their major before making a commitment for full-time employment. This on-site training and developing capability becomes a known factor and increases our chances for a good hire following graduation. Due to this training and experience, the coop is immediately productive upon the first day of permanent employment and makes the transition from the college environment to the work setting with ease. Coop also provides an infusion of bright young people and a source of new ideas into the company.

Regarding the Computer Science major specifically, McDonnell Douglas utilizes many applications of Computer Science including: data processing, systems programming, scientific programming, computer aided design and manufacturing, teleprocessing, etc. Many college curricula allow the student to perform in several of these areas and we try to expose the student to as many of these areas as possible. Since we are committed to the continued utilization of computer hardware and software as well as the many applications of computer science, we are pleased that Coop provides a steady flow of new talent for these job opportunities.

Rick Hendin

The first job is always the hardest to get get - so any amount of actual, hands-on, paid experience (on-the-job-training) becomes invaluable when the student becomes a job seeker. Even in a short assignment, a student becomes a job seeker. Even in a short assignment, a student can build a "track record" which can be verified for such important characteristics as attitude, attendence, punctuality, current knowledge, learning speed and performance under pressure.

In addition, the student benefits from exposure to the "real world" of business,

and can learn from observation the accep-
ted standards for appearance and behavior
which will enable him to fit into the
"corporate image" more quickly.

Of course, a real possibility exists
that a full-time position will develop
for the student who impressed the company
during a co-op program.

Roberta Weller