



LAKELAND
UNIVERSITY



COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

EMPLOYER GUIDE

2019-2020

INTRODUCTION

Beginning in 2017, Lakeland University launched its Cooperative Education program. Cooperative education is a structured method of experiential learning that combines the traditional classroom-based education at the university with practical work experiences. Cooperative education students at Lakeland will have the opportunity to engage in 12-18 months of work experiences which are credit bearing and assist them in degree completion.

Lakeland University's Cooperative Education & Career Readiness team aims to partner with organizations and assist employers in creating successful and robust co-op programs that can serve your needs, as well as the student. Cooperative education is, at its core, a collaboration predicated on the best interests of all the parties involved. Thank you for your willingness to work together to provide high quality, successful co-op programs that are providing real-world examples of best practices in your industry.

The Co-Op and Career Readiness staff at Lakeland University are well experienced in working with organizations to assist in the creation and development of co-op and internship opportunities. This guide will aid in providing you clear steps to the process to best recruit your next Lakeland University student or graduate! For additional support, please contact us at career@lakeland.edu.

Career Readiness & Cooperative Education

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to Cooperative Education	3
Key Terms	3
Founding Partners	4
Process.....	5
Hiring Timeline.....	7
Hiring Co-Op Students	9
Orientation.....	11
Evaluation.....	13
Evaluation Questions.....	15
Recognition Events.....	17



Lakeland University Mission Statement

Lakeland University educates women and men of diverse backgrounds, preparing them to think critically, to communicate effectively, to succeed professionally and to lead ethical, purposeful and fulfilling lives. Rooted in the values of the United Church of Christ, Lakeland integrates the liberal arts and experiential learning to develop the whole person for success in a dynamic, multi-faceted world.

INTRODUCTION TO COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

We know that students often learn best by actively applying what they are learning in the classroom.

As a student participating in cooperative education, you will have the opportunity to apply what you are learning on a daily basis.

By incorporating work experiences into an academic experience, students deepen their learning and are challenged to develop themselves as professionals.

Students can gain valuable technical and professional skills through multiple co-op work experiences. Cooperative education at Lakeland University is a partnership among students, the university, employers and academic faculty.

Employment partners representing a diverse group of professional work environments and industries, eagerly collaborate with the university to hire well-prepared, highly motivated students.

By participating in co-op, employers are actively developing their future pipeline of talent and directly influencing the education of students entering a variety of professions.

KEY TERMS

Cooperative Education (Co-op) Experience

A professional learning experience that is paid and supports your skills development. It is supervised, evaluated and disciplined.

Co-op Employer

The organization or corporation employing a cooperative education student for the duration of a term, and provides professional development opportunities and mentorships for students.

Professional Protocol (EXP 100)

Required, preparatory, career and job search course. Students must be enrolled in this one-credit, graded course and satisfactorily complete the course to participate in credit-bearing co-op employment.

Cooperative Education Seminar (EXP 300)

Required during an active work experience to reflect upon the opportunity and and further develop professional skills.



FOUNDING PARTNERS

Lakeland University is very grateful for the support from the Sheboygan County community to establish cooperative education. We continue to actively engage with these area businesses to develop the model and structure that prepare Lakeland University students to be competitive for opportunities. The following employers have been involved from the beginning, and we thank them for their contributions.



CliftonLarsonAllen



As cooperative education grows, we will be engaging in conversations with new partners to help identify opportunities that will provide appropriate experiences for degree specific programs. For a current listing of partners, visit: lakeland.edu/partners

STEPS OF THE PROCESSES

1

Create a job description.

2

Market your opportunity.

3

Select your intern.

Co-op student responsibilities should vary based up a student's experience, academic preparation, and academic discipline. First-time cooperative education students may need more support than students who are completing a second, or even third, co-op placement. In order to assist in this regard, Lakeland University allows for students to complete two different levels of cooperative education experiences.

FOUNDATIONAL CO-OP EXPERIENCES

Students who are completing a foundational co-op experience can be employed in a variety of capacities across an organization. We expect students to gain experience working in teams, understand the way in which an organization functions and how to embody the professionalism necessary for being a productive employee of the organization. These students will vary as to the amount of work experience they've had prior to this foundational experience. Some may have only worked on campus, while many others have worked significant hours through their high school experience. Positions should be focused on very basic work place skills, which can include customer service interactions or the manufacturing needs of an organization.

PROFESSIONAL CO-OP EXPERIENCES

Students who are completing a professional co-op experience should be engaged in work responsibilities that align with their academic discipline and/or personal and professional goals for career success. These are generally upper classmen in their second co-op placement. These experiences should require a higher level of thinking, additional project responsibilities and/or more significant contributions to the department/team environment.

Regardless of what type of co-op experience students complete, successful co-op programs engage students in meaningful and real-work projects and responsibilities. Lakeland recommends developing programs that increase responsibilities as a student progresses through their experience. When possible, co-op experiences may even involve rotations across departments, which will aid students' larger organizational knowledge.

CREATING A POSITION DESCRIPTION

- What are your project needs?
- What could a student possibly assist with?
- Who in your organization is going to mentor/supervise student?
- What skills does a candidate need in order to be successful in this role?
- What type of training and development can you provide a student to be successful?
- What types of hours are required or is there scheduling flexibility?

To download sample job descriptions visit Lakeland.edu/co-op

How you present your organization and your specific co-op opportunities to students is incredibly important. Students need to have a concrete interest in your company and the opportunities you provide. Who you are, what you do and what that student will be doing should be the key components of your messaging. Lakeland University works to provide a variety of ways you, the employer, can attract talent and present your value to the university, specific programs of study and to the students.

Marketing is a key component of having a successful co-op program. Marketing your positions well help you attract students who fit the specific needs and culture of your organization. Your needs may include identifying permanent hires for a recruiting pipeline, evaluating students as potential employees and cultivating work-specific competencies relating to your organization prior to full-time employment.

ONLINE JOB BOARD

Lakeland University utilizes Handshake, an online platform to connect students to co-op, internships and career placements. Additionally, Handshake will connect your organization to more than 9 million students from more than 500 colleges and universities. Once you create a profile and connect to Lakeland University, you will have the opportunity to present any co-op opportunities available to our students. Students utilize Handshake as a main platform through which they can search for co-op jobs and see descriptions of opportunities.



CO-OP, INTERNSHIP & CAREER FAIRS

Lakeland University hosts a co-op, internship and career fair two times a year on the main campus to connect students to potential employers. These fairs generally occur in mid-October and early-February. These fairs provide a great opportunity to present your organization and employment opportunities to students. Students who are enrolled in Lakeland's prerequisite course for cooperative education are required to attend these fairs and engage with potential employers. Even as first-year students, we are developing a culture where students connect and engage early in their college experience to explore ideas and develop an awareness to opportunities. Employers may register for the fairs by emailing career@lakeland.edu

INFORMATION SESSIONS

Information sessions can provide you a great opportunity to showcase your organization to students. This forum works very well when organizations can utilize alumni or current co-ops to talk about their experiences and the value they see in working with your organization. Career Readiness is able to suggest days/times that will work to attract students to attend. Organizations should plan prior to the start of each term to ensure enough time to market and promote to students accordingly.



CO-OP CYCLE

The following is a suggested hiring timeline for our employer partners and to ensure that organizations have a fair opportunity to hire Lakeland University students.

JAN – SUMMER		JUNE – DEC
Summer	Sept – Oct	Explore hiring needs with Career Readiness
Aug 1	Jan 5	Positions posted via Handshake
Aug – Oct	Jan – Feb	Students submit applications via Handshake
Early Oct	Feb	Internship Co-op Fair Participation
Mid-Oct – Nov 30	Feb – March	Interview Candidates
Dec 15	April 15	Deadline to extend an offer to student to ensure academic credit for spring term.
Dec 15 – Jan 1	April 15 – May 1	Student reports co-op via Handshake for academic approval and verification of offer.
Jan 6	May 15	Student can begin employment prior to the start of the term, but must begin within the first 10 days of the term.
End of Feb	End of June	Evaluation Requested
Early May	Early Aug	Evaluation Requested
Summer Term	Fall Term	Continued work experience and evaluations

FLEXIBLE START

We recognize that employers may have needs that are developed/created during times of organizational growth and may not always be able to follow the timeline suggested above. If your hiring needs occur at mid-points in a term, please understand that we will still do our best to still provide candidates of interest.

Some academic programs are more competitive and require further advanced planning, such as computer science and accounting.

Select programs also have variable hiring needs based on industry demands. Connect with Career Readiness to plan accordingly.

If a student works part-time hours and for a longer time period than suggested above, the hiring timeline is still the same. However, credits/hours of work can vary based on employment needs/demands.

BUDGET

Employers will need to develop a budget for their co-op program. Supervisors are encouraged to assume fiscal responsibility for individual students. The Career Readiness team can provide suggested hourly rates based on industry standards.

INTERVIEWING

Resumes, portfolios and other credentials of Lakeland University students will be available through Handshake. The Cooperative Education & Career Readiness team at Lakeland will also work with recruiters to pre-screen students according to individual needs. Organizations are encouraged to conduct interviews on-campus for maximum exposure. The Career Readiness team can assist in scheduling days/times that will work for most students.

EXTENDING THE OFFER

The employment offer is an agreement between the employer and the student. Lakeland asks that the employer is clear when working with the student on the start date, required hours, schedule and pay. Although Lakeland has designed this program so students can have six-month work experience with generally one online reflective course, many students are still engaged in other responsibilities that they need to balance when entering a work experience. Students may have little experience in the hiring process, so the employer should communicate any and all details. Many companies follow-up an initial offer with a formal acceptance letter.

THE CO-OP STUDENT

It is important to acknowledge that beginning a co-op experience can be an anxious time for a student. Overwhelmingly, most students who are enrolling in these work experiences are doing so in order to gain the necessary, hands-on learning experiences needed to be successful in a career. Companies should be proactive in understanding that co-op students may need additional support in adjusting to:

- Work routines and deadlines
- New systems of accountability and responsibility
- Organizational culture
- Planning and time management

Lakeland requires every co-op student to have completed a professional practice course that addresses many of these areas prior to students enrolling in a co-op work experience.





WORKPLACE ORIENTATION

Lakeland University highly encourages employers to help put the student at ease the first day of work. This would be an opportunity to provide a brief tour of the organization's facility, have them meet a few team members and have a small orientation of what their first day may look like.

The organization should also notify the student of necessary information prior to their first day of employment. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Where and when to report to work
- Proper contact information for the student
- Directions to the appropriate office
- Parking availability
- The student's supervisors name and contact information
- Dress expectations for the environment
- Any other information important for the co-op student's success

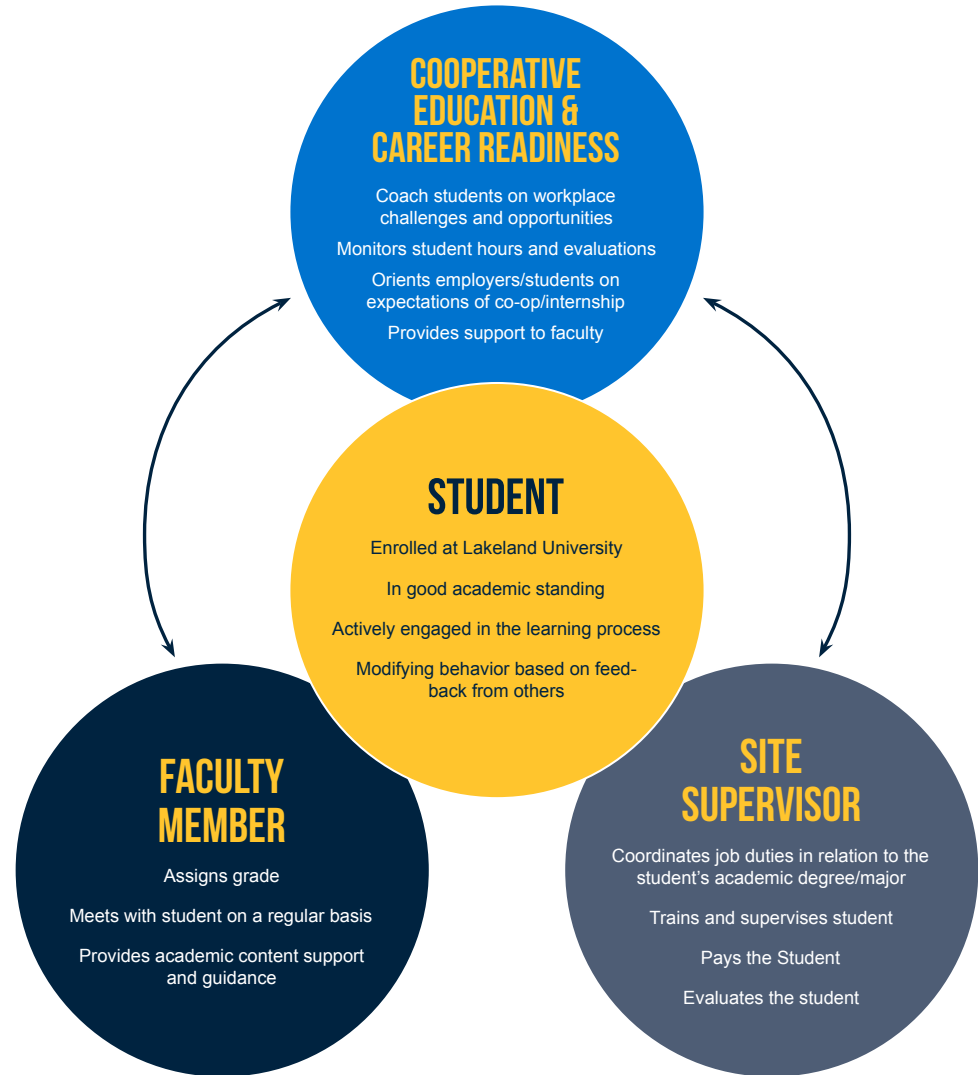
TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Areas of training are job dependent and will also depend on the student's educational background and work experience. There are three general categories of training that should be addressed with a co-op student:

- 1 **Technical training** that pertains to the specific tasks to be performed in the job.
- 2 **Process training** that helps student identify the appropriate methods of conducting work within your specific organizational context.
- 3 **Personal development training** that helps students work effectively within your organizational development. This may include skills such as communication, self-assessment, self-confidence development, time management and interpersonal relations.
- 4 **Professional development** that helps them understand the work and relation to the industry needs. Invite students to participate in area seminars, workshops, or chamber events that will help them connect to the larger community.

PARTNERSHIP

We believe that students learn best when they feel supported and guided through a process. While a student is working with your organization and a direct supervisor, there are also regular check-in points with a Cooperative Education & Career Readiness team member and a student's faculty advisor. It is our goal that as we strengthen partnerships, site supervisors feel comfortable engaging in regular communication with the Lakeland University faculty and staff, as we hope to positively support and mentor the student every step of the way.





THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

The co-op supervisor plays a crucial role in helping craft a co-op experience that is beneficial to both the student and the organization. This individual will guide the student's training and performance, act as a role model for the student, craft tangible short- and long-term outcome objectives for the student and provide crucial experience that, when crafted well, benefits the student and the organization tremendously.

- Assessing areas in which a co-op student may need more developmental support at the outset of a work experience.
- Create specific guidelines for co-op compensation and benefits to avoid discrepancies and support uniformity.
- Communicate clearly with the student the work objectives and acceptable levels of professional conduct.

Evaluation of student performance is a cornerstone of effective co-op programs. It is important that students are provided evaluation through formal and informal methods. If students feel that their supervisors are providing them with timely feedback, they will be more successful in their work throughout the co-op placement.

Students respond well when they view their supervisors as mentors. It is important to provide both clear formal feedback through traditional performance metrics as well as informal feedback on

how the student is doing in their role. Individuals vary in what feedback they feel is the most valuable for them, therefore, it is important to make sure you are providing both forms.

MIDPOINT EVALUATION

Lakeland University requires that a midpoint evaluation. This process will act as a feedback loop for the student, organization and the university. This allows all parties involved to communicate effectively about how a co-op experience is progressing and act strategically in the interest of the organization and student if any areas of concern need to be addressed. The Career Readiness team will send out evaluations via email to the direct supervisor of the experience prior to mid-term grades being due.

END OF EXPERIENCE REPORT

Lakeland University requires that at the end of co-op experience organizations provide Lakeland and the student with an end of experience report. This evaluation will be available online and will help the student reflect more on their experience, areas of strength and areas of development and growth. Lakeland encourages organizations to write specific comments that reflect actual student performance in the role. This feedback is essential not just for the student, but for the university in order to track student's competencies and growth over experiences.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Lakeland University requests that supervisors who are experiencing challenges with a co-op student that cannot be addressed directly with the student to contact the Cooperative Education & Career Readiness team. Our goal is to mitigate any conflicts before termination is considered.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The Lakeland University student experience evaluation process is based on the 10 NACE professional competencies. Students are rated on these competencies throughout their undergraduate enrollment including through on-campus employment, and foundational and professional cooperative education experiences. These evaluations allow us to track soft skill development as a progression over time. We program and adjust curriculum based on deficiencies recognized in various populations.

1. **CRITICAL THINKING:** The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and can demonstrate originality and inventiveness.
2. **PROBLEM SOLVING:** Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems.
3. **PROFESSIONALISM:** Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, time workload management and understands the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image.
4. **WORK ETHIC:** The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from his/her mistakes.
5. **ORAL/WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:** Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization.
6. **TEAMWORK:** The individual is able to work within a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict.
7. **COLLABORATION:** The individual exchanges ideas and opinions with others to build positive working relationships.
8. **LEADERSHIP:** Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others.
9. **TECHNICAL SKILLS:** Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.
10. **GLOBAL/MULTICULTURAL UNDERSTANDING:** The individual demonstrates openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and appreciate individuals' differences.
11. **INITIATIVE:** The intern meets or exceeds the demands of the internship, without needing to be told what to do.
12. **OVERALL:** Overall quality of the intern's work.
13. **Comment** on how well the intern's cognitive ability and academic preparation meet the demands of the internship experience.
14. **Share** any suggestions you might have which would help the student to improve during the remainder of the internship and as an employee in this career field.
15. **Comment** on any other factors which you feel should be mentioned, or which you feel should have a bearing on the overall evaluation of this student, his/her performance, and/or potential.



RECOGNITION EVENTS

CO-OP SIGNING DAY

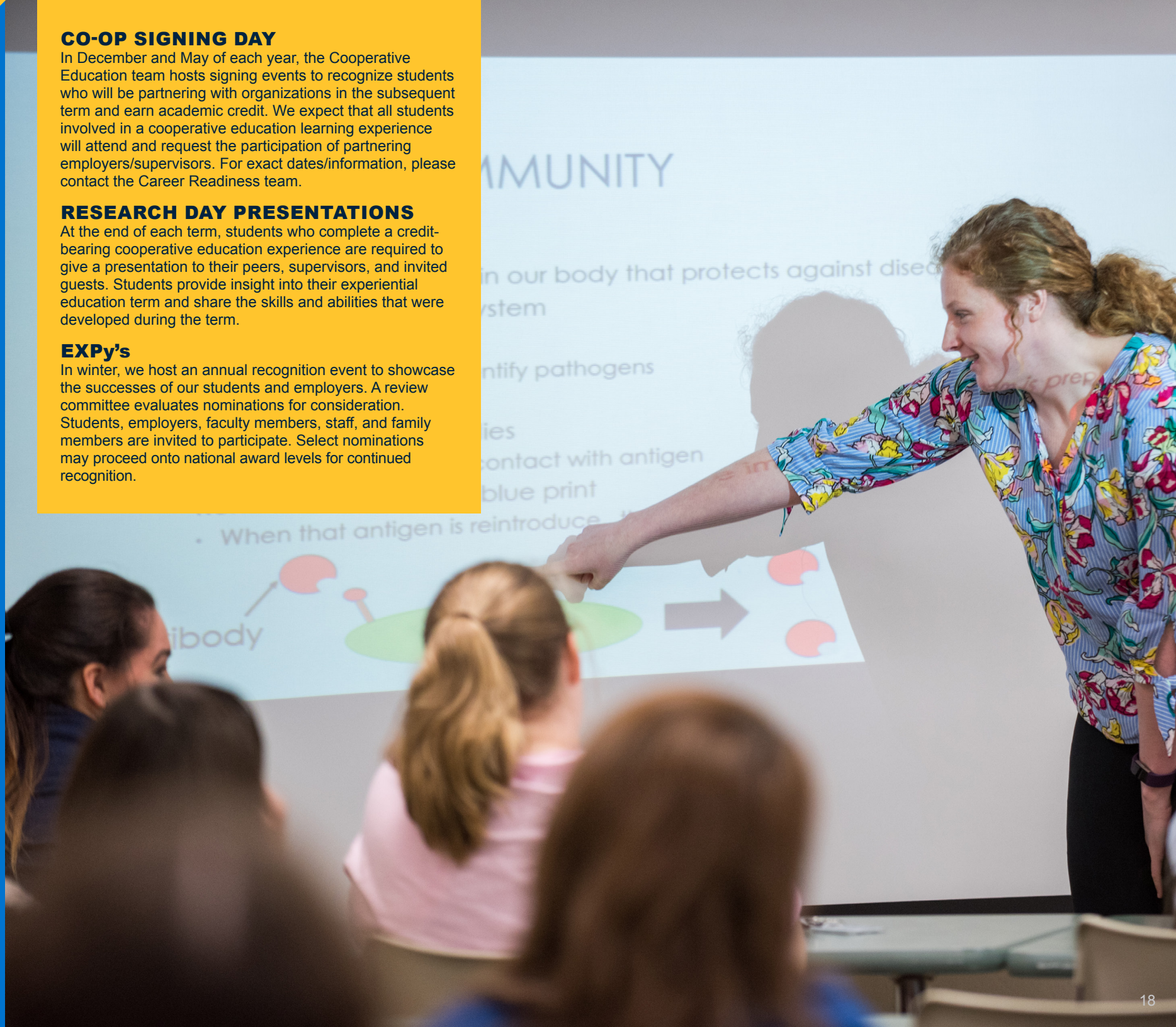
In December and May of each year, the Cooperative Education team hosts signing events to recognize students who will be partnering with organizations in the subsequent term and earn academic credit. We expect that all students involved in a cooperative education learning experience will attend and request the participation of partnering employers/supervisors. For exact dates/information, please contact the Career Readiness team.

RESEARCH DAY PRESENTATIONS

At the end of each term, students who complete a credit-bearing cooperative education experience are required to give a presentation to their peers, supervisors, and invited guests. Students provide insight into their experiential education term and share the skills and abilities that were developed during the term.

EXPy's

In winter, we host an annual recognition event to showcase the successes of our students and employers. A review committee evaluates nominations for consideration. Students, employers, faculty members, staff, and family members are invited to participate. Select nominations may proceed onto national award levels for continued recognition.





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