

Co-op Student of The Year Award: Getting Started

If you don't have a Co-op Student of the Year Award at your institution you are missing an excellent opportunity to promote your students, program, and institution. Starting a program doesn't need to take a lot of time and effort on your part. In fact, we're sure that if you use the resources provided in this kit you can start your own award program this year.

The enclosed kit provides you with tools to help you begin your Co-op Student of the Year (CSOTY) award program. In the process of putting this kit together we consulted a number of institutions with established CSOTY award programs, which have been successful in having their students recognized in the CAFCE CSOTY Award selection. These included: Conestoga College, University of Guelph, University of Lethbridge, Université d'Ottawa University, Mount Saint Vincent University, Simon Fraser University, Sheridan College and the University of Waterloo. We would like to thank all those institutions for their contribution to this kit.

In gathering the information we found that there were many similarities among the programs which we have summarized below:

1. The Co-op Student of the Year Award is a formal award presented annually;
2. Most schools offer an award for a student from each academic program (where the number of programs offered isn't too great), or faculty. Typically that ranges between 1 and 6 students per year;
3. One or two of the winners are often put forward for the CAFCE Co-op Student of the Year Award;
4. Students are nominated by co-op staff, students, or employers;
5. Nomination materials are modeled on the CAFCE CSOTY forms or ones slightly tailored to the institution's needs;
6. Nominations are typically submitted late November or early December in advance of the CAFCE deadline to allow time for the institution to decide whether there is a suitable candidate to put forward for the CAFCE CSOTY Award;
7. Winners are recognized at a formal awards ceremony with a plaque or certificate. Some award presentations occur in conjunction with National Co-operative Education Week activities, while others are included as part of the institution's annual awards program; and
8. Winners are promoted to students, faculty, prospective students, alumni, and employers.

To follow is a sample procedure for organizing an awards program. It includes letters and e-mails to employers, students and faculty, as well as an evaluation tool that is similar to the criteria used for CAFCE Student of the Year.

Co-op Student of the Year Awards Procedures

The Co-op Student of the Year Award is awarded to co-op students who have completed an outstanding co-op term. The students are nominated by their co-op employers, and evaluated based on their academic achievements, and their contributions to the co-operative education program, their employers, and their communities.

Call for Nominations

- 1) Set date for nominations to be submitted, e.g. late November or early December if forwarding nominations to the CAFCE National Student of the Year award by its submission deadline (normally at the end of January).
- 2) Include nomination date announcement in newsletters, recruitment information, and website.
- 3) Update nomination form using the CAFCE forms as a template.
- 4) Send a letter in October or November to all co-op employers who have hired students that year, inviting them to nominate their co-op student. See Appendix A for a sample call for nominations letter.
- 5) Send a reminder fax/e-mail to employers in December, if necessary. See Appendix B for a sample fax reminder.

Preparing for Selection Process

- 1) Acknowledge nominations from employers in January. See Appendix C for a sample acknowledgement letter.
- 2) Order transcripts from the Registrars Office.
- 3) Set date for students to submit their packages. See Appendix D for a copy of the e-mail to students who have been nominated.
- 4) Review evaluation tool. See Appendix E for a sample evaluation tool.
- 5) Contact faculty co-op advisors to confirm involvement in selection process.
- 6) Contact members of the selection committee and set date for meeting, e.g. Department Chairs and Dean.

Informing Students

- 1) Contact students who were nominated via e-mail or telephone. See Appendix D for a copy of the e-mail to students who have been nominated.
- 2) Ask if they accept the nomination, inform them about the submission criteria and request an up-to-date resume and a submission/package supporting the nomination. Also ask them to submit their extracurricular activities, i.e. presentations, promoting co-op, etc. on separate piece of paper, along with an essay and resume.

Pre-screening Nominations

- 1) Determine students who are academically eligible to proceed.

Distributing Nomination Packages

- 1) Copy nomination packages for eligible nominees and send to appropriate faculty members. (Both pages of evaluation form, with the GPA already filled out.) Please note that Chairs do not participate in this first round of review - even if they are faculty advisors.
- 2) Faculty members and coordinators identify two finalists per academic discipline.
- 3) Distribute finalists' nomination packages to the Selection Committee - Chairs, Dean, and coordinators. (Both pages of evaluation form, with the GPA already filled out.)

Selection Process

- 1) Each Selection Committee member reviews the nomination packages and evaluates the students using the tool prior to meeting as a group. This rating is on a scale.
- 2) Compare ratings for each academic discipline and average scores to select winner. If all members did not rate a clear winner, discuss reasons and come to a consensus.
- 3) Determine one winner for each academic discipline. Honourary Mentions can also be chosen if the committee feels it's appropriate.
- 4) Determine the two students to represent the school for the CAFCE Co-op Student of the Year Award.

Process for Announcing Winners

- 1) Inform the selected students for each discipline and their supervisors via telephone and letter. See Appendix F for letter to employers.
- 2) E-mail all nominees informing them of outcome.
- 3) Send a letter to all nominators. See Appendix G for letter to employers.
- 4) E-mail faculty co-op advisors.
- 5) E-mail all co-op students. See Appendix H and I for e-mails to students.
- 6) E-mail all faculty members.
- 7) Send announcement to internal newsletter.

CAFCE Co-op Student of the Year Award

- 1) Contact student(s) and ask them to provide revisions to their nomination package.
- 2) Inform employer nominator.
- 3) Prepare educational support documentation.
- 4) Complete CAFCE's nomination materials.
- 5) Prepare one (1) .pdf electronic document and e-mail it to the CAFCE Office.

Recognizing all Students Nominated

- 1) Send congratulatory letter and Certificate of Accomplishment. See Appendix J for letter that accompanies certificate.

Recognizing Winners

- 1) Invite student and employer to Awards Banquet.
- 2) Prepare Certificate of Achievement for perma plaquing (arrange for signatures).
- 3) Invite Director of Co-operative Education to present awards.
- 4) Write presentation notes/citation for Director.
- 5) Order banquet tickets.
- 6) Order gift certificates.
- 7) Prepare awards package: plaque, gift certificate, citation.

Publicity

- 1) Work with Public Affairs to book photographer for photo of award winners.
- 2) Order copies of photo for display purposes.

- 3) Work with Public Affairs to publicize awards program externally.

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Appendix A: Call for Nominations Letter

Dear <<MAIN_JOB.TAG>> <<MAIN_JOB.LAST_NAME>>:

Re: Call for Nominations - Co-op Student of the Year Award (YEAR)

In recognition of the 35th Anniversary of the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education (CAFCE), we have instituted the Co-op Student of the Year Award. We are seeking nominations from our Co-op Employers for this annual award.

The selection criterion is based on the student's achievements on the job, their extra-curricular activities and academic achievements, as well as contributions to the community and co-operative education. One student will be named Co-op Student of the Year from each of the academic disciplines offering co-operative education. Students who worked with you during the <YEAR> calendar year and who have maintained their standing in the co-operative education program are eligible.

<Name of School> is also proud to nominate a maximum of two co-op students annually at the national level for Co-op Student of the Year Award offered by CAFCE. The CAFCE Co-op Student of the Year Award nominations are based on the results of the Co-op Student of the Year. Please help us choose the students to represent <Name of School> for this year's award.

Please fax or e-mail your nomination to (555) 555-5555 by <December 12, YEAR>. Each nomination must include a 1-page summary that includes a brief description of: the student's responsibilities; how the student contributed to your organization's goals; how the student performed in comparison to your expectations; and the outstanding achievements on the job which you feel warrant consideration for the award.

We are pleased that you are an educational partner in preparing today's university students for tomorrow's workplace. We appreciate your support of our students and our co-operative education program. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Appendix B: Reminder Fax/E-mail

Message: Seeking Co-op Student of the Year Award (YEAR) nominees

We would like to remind you of the Co-op Student of the Year nomination deadline of December 12, YEAR. We realize it is a busy time of year, however, we know co-op students like <<Main_stu.FIRSTNAME>> <<Main_stu.LASTNAME>> would appreciate your consideration for a nomination.

The selection criterion is based on the student's achievements on the job, extra-curricular and academic achievements as well as contributions to employer, community and co-operative education. One student will be named the top Co-op Student from each of the four academic disciplines.

Please consider nominating a co-op student for this award. Please fax your nomination to (555) 555-5555 by <December 12, YEAR>. Each nomination must include a 1-page summary to support your recommendation. Please include a brief description of: the student's responsibilities; how the student performed in comparison to your expectations; and the outstanding achievements on the job which you feel warrant consideration for the award.

Thank you for taking the time to nominate one of our co-op students. We are pleased that you are an educational partner in preparing today's university students for tomorrow's workplace.

Appendix C: Acknowledgement of Nomination

We would like to thank you for taking the time to nominate <<Main_stu.FIRSTNAME>> <<Main_stu.LASTNAME>> for the Co-op Student of the Year Award <YEAR>. Your nomination demonstrates that co-op students contribute a great deal to their co-op employers. We know our students appreciate the public recognition of their achievements.

A co-op student will be selected to represent each academic discipline. A Selection Committee comprised of faculty representatives and co-operative education coordinators will meet later this month to review the nominations to determine the students' eligibility based on academic standing as well as their standing in the co-operative education program. The Co-op Students of the Year will be selected based on their contributions to their employer, to co-operative education and their community. The Selection Committee will also consider the student's submission describing how co-operative education benefited them academically, personally and professionally.

We will inform you of the results in mid-February after the students have been selected. Thank you again for your support of our co-operative education program. We are fortunate to have the support of employers such as you as educational partners in our program. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at (555) 555-5555.

Appendix D: E-mail to students who were nominated

Dear XXX,

In November, the Co-op Office sent out letters to all employers who hired a co-op student in <YEAR> calling for nominations for the Co-op Student of the Year Award. Once again the employers' response was overwhelming. We received a total of <37 nominations (this is a total for all 4 programs)>.

Congratulations on being nominated for this award by <Name of Employer>! You should feel very proud that your co-op employer was so pleased with your performance. We, in the Co-op Office, are extremely happy to see our students excel in the business community.

Once again, we will be choosing one student from each program for the Co-op Student of the Year. From the four students chosen, two nominations can be sent forth for the CAFCE Co-op Student of the Year Award <YEAR>.

We will need some information from you to complete your nomination package. Please submit the attached student form and supporting information to the Co-op Office by 4:30pm on Monday, January 5, YEAR. If we do not receive this information by the above deadline we will assume that you are not accepting this nomination.

Please reply ASAP to co-op@xyz.ca to acknowledge that you have received this message. If you have any questions, please get in touch with us at (555) 555-5555. Again, congratulations on your nomination!

Yours truly,

The Co-op Team

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Appendix E: Evaluation Tool

YEAR Co-op Student of the Year Nomination Committee Evaluation

Student Name:	
Co-op Term for Nomination:	Program:
Nominator:	Company:

Student's achievements at school - academic (10 points) * use transcript/grade reports

- GPA of 2.7 or higher (4 points)
- GPA 3.0 or higher (6 points)
- GPA of 3.7 or higher (8 points)
- GPA of 4.0 or higher (10 points)

TOTAL POINTS	
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Please rate the students *on a scale* according to the points assigned to each category. Use the bullets as guidelines for point distribution.

Student's achievements at school - extra-curricular and / or the community. (5 points) * use student resume and faculty/coordinator's knowledge of student

- general volunteer / member of associations, societies, etc. (1 point)
- demonstrated active involvement in activities (ie. committee member, varsity sports, etc.) (3 points)
- leadership role in activities (5 points)

TOTAL POINTS	
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Contributions to co-operative education (5 points) * use student resume, student essay and faculty/coordinator's knowledge

- co-op student who is positive about the program (1 point)
- secured own co-op employer and employer continued to hire from co-op (3 points)
- acted as co-op spokesperson at events such as high school Open Houses or classroom presentations, videos, etc. (5 points)

TOTAL POINTS	
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Student's writing skills and presentation (5 points)

- below what is expected from a student at this level** *do not proceed with this nomination*
- consistent with what is expected from a student at this level (2 points)
- superior to what is expected from a student at this level (5 points)

TOTAL POINTS	
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Student Name: _____ Page 2

Student's personal statement (5 points) * use student's essay

- enjoyed co-op experience (1 points)
- demonstrated how co-op has enhanced learning, career development, personal goals and academic experience (3 points)
- displayed superior demonstration of how co-op has enhanced learning, career development, personal goals and academic experience (5 points)

TOTAL POINTS	
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Contributions to employer (15 points) * use employer testimonial

- fulfilled position requirements (5 points)
- demonstrated initiative; expanded own role; demonstrated improvement as well as personal and professional growth (10 points)
- Made significant contribution to employer/ impact on organization: eg. dollars saved or generated, image or profile, employee morale, regional campaign to national campaign, affects more than one division, improvements to quality/design, innovations, initiatives, etc (15 points)

TOTAL POINTS	
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OVERALL TOTAL POINTS	/45
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Appendix F: Announcing winners to employers who nominated the student

Dear <<MAIN_JOB.TAG>> <<MAIN_JOB.LAST_NAME>>:

Each year, deserving students are nominated by employers for the Co-op Student of the Year Awards. Your nomination for <<Main_stu.FIRSTNAME>> <<Main_stu.LASTNAME>> demonstrates that co-op students contribute a great deal to their co-op employers. We are pleased to inform you that <<Main_stu.FIRSTNAME>> was named Co-op Student of the Year (YEAR) for academic discipline.

The selection committee had the difficult task of choosing one student from each discipline to be named Co-op Student of the Year (YEAR). The selection criteria included academic achievement, community involvement, contribution to employer, and the impact co-operative education has had on personal and professional development.

We are pleased to announce this year's recipients:

Jane Doe (academic discipline), nominated by ABC Company, in City, Province; etc.

The selection committee was comprised of (name committee members).

We hope you will be able to join us at the Awards Dinner where <Main_stu.FIRSTNAME>> will be presented with the Co-op Student of the Year Award. Please mark March 22, 2007 in your calendar for the celebration. Please R.S.V.P. to the Co-op Office by calling (555) 555-5555 by Friday, February 10, YEAR.

Thank you once again for your support of our co-operative education program. We are fortunate to have the support of employers such as you as educational partners in our program. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at (555) 555-5555.

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Appendix G: Letter to all employers who nominated a student

Dear <<MAIN_JOB.TAG>> <<MAIN_JOB.LAST_NAME>>:

Each year, deserving students are nominated by employers for the Co-op Student of the Year Awards. Your nomination for <<Main_stu.FIRSTNAME>> <<Main_stu.LASTNAME>> demonstrates that co-op students contribute a great deal to their co-op employers.

The selection committee had the difficult task of choosing one student from each discipline to be named Co-op Student of the Year (YEAR). The selection criteria included academic achievement, community involvement, contribution to employer, and the impact co-operative education has had on personal and professional development.

We are pleased to announce this year's recipients:

Jane Doe (academic discipline), nominated by ABC Company, in City, Province; etc.

The selection committee was comprised of (name committee members).

Thank you once again for your support of our co-operative education program. We are fortunate to have the support of employers such as you as educational partners in our program. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at (555) 555-5555.

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Appendix H: E-mail to all co-op students

The Co-op Student of the Year Award was instituted in 1998 to mark the 35th Anniversary of CAFCE. Early in November, the Co-op Office sent out letters to all employers who hired a co-op student in <YEAR> asking for nominations. Our objective was to raise awareness for the accomplishments of our students, and to celebrate their success and contributions to employers.

We are pleased to announce that <45 students> were nominated by their employers. They are:

<Academic Discipline>

Jane Doe, etc.

Two selection committees will meet later in January to review the nominations to determine the four <YEAR> Co-op Students of the Year - one student from each program.

All of the nominees will receive a letter of congratulations and certificate of achievement. They should be proud and pleased that their employers took the time to recognize their contributions.

Congratulations to all of the students nominated!

The Co-op Team

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Appendix I: Email announcing winners to students and faculty

Each year, deserving students are nominated by employers for the Co-op Student of the Year Awards. We are pleased that so many employers invested the time in recognizing students' contributions to their organizations. The employer nominations and students' personal statements are very rewarding to read.

The selection committee had the difficult task of choosing one student from each discipline to be named Co-op Student of the Year (YEAR). The selection criteria included academic achievement, community involvement, contribution to employer, and the impact co-op has had on personal and professional development.

The recipients are:

Jane Smith (academic disciplines), nominated by ABC Company, in City, Province; etc.

John Doe received honorable mention and was nominated by the Agency of Canada, in Ottawa, ON.

The selection committee was comprised of (name selection committee).

Yours truly,

The Co-op Team

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Appendix J: Letter to accompany certificate of achievement

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you once again on your nomination for the Co-op Student of the Year Award (YEAR). You must be very pleased and proud that <<Employer.COMPANYNAM>> took the time to recognize your contributions by putting your name forward for this award.

The calibre of the nominations received was excellent. The nomination package, which included your personal statement as well as your employer's nomination, was impressive. Your academic achievements, community involvement, contribution to employer, and the impact co-operative education has had on your personal and professional development were taken into consideration by the Selection Committee.

The Selection Committee had a very difficult task. The committee, comprised of <name committee members>, was impressed by the many accomplishments of our co-op students. The nominations received reflected the diversity of our academic programs, the strength of <Name of School> support from the employer community, and your personal achievements. We applaud your achievements.

Congratulations again on your nomination for the Co-op Student of the Year Award <YEAR>. You should be very proud of your achievements - ***we are!***