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College Co-Op Programs Go Global

College kids today have a whole new world of college Co-Op opportunities opening up to them around the globe. You can do six months in class at a top US university, and then do your new six months working at a company in your field in another country.

College cooperative (Co-Ops) education programs are great deal for students, employers and the universities that offer them, and today students can get their Co-Op experiences literally around the globe thanks in large part to an organization called WACE (World Association for Cooperative [Education](#)). The organization is led by a man that has lived and breathed cooperative education for much of his life, Mr. Paul Stonely, the CEO of WACE.



Paul Stonely,
CEO, WACE

Paul has just returned from an international symposium that he coordinated with colleges and universities from all over the world, and he was gracious enough to provide some great answers on what workforce and cooperative education is all about, and the unique benefits and opportunities that exist for students, universities and companies around the globe.

1) What is cooperative education, and why is it important for college students?

Cooperative education (co-op) is an academic program linking college classroom studies with professional work experience in a field related to a student's career goals. Co-op joins theory and practice through knowledge and experience. Co-op opportunities are available in all academic disciplines and open the door to life-changing experiences.

2) How many colleges and universities focus on a cooperative education mode in the United States?

The exact number of colleges and universities offering this co-op model is not known, although 50 institutions from the U.S. participate in programs offered by WACE. The WACE website lists institutions by country:http://www.waceinc.org/global_institutions.html

3) How does cooperative education help employers?

Co-op benefits employers in significant and measurable ways: first by employing talented and highly motivated co-ops for a three to six month period and subsequently by hiring co-op graduates leading to gains in

retention and productivity.

4) What can a student expect from a co-op experience?

Co-op students apply their classroom learning in real-life settings, earn a salary as they gain professional experiences, establish helpful networks, build impressive resumes, and receive job offers!

5) Not only have you been blazing the trail for cooperative education for a long time, you have lived it at home as well. Please tell us about your family's cooperative education experiences?

I am blessed with three children and each has participated and benefited from college-level cooperative education: mathematics at [Providence College](#); medical preparation at Georgetown University; and journalism at [Northeastern University](#).

6) What is the role that WACE plays in cooperative and work-integrated education?

WACE is the only international organization dedicated to advancing cooperative and work-integrated education. Our Secretariat, located at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, works with our two [International Satellite Offices](#) at Suranaree University of Technology (Thailand) and University West (Sweden) offering conferences, symposia, institutes, as well as a \$4 M co-op scholarship program. WACE connects industry with over 300 leading universities located in 26 countries and, with its 65-member Board of Directors, collaborates with its 55 Global Industry & Institutional Partners. (More information is available at www.waceinc.org)

7) Are there cooperative education opportunities for students globally, or just in the U.S.?

Co-op and work-integrated education programs are offered at many universities throughout the world. As examples, WACE's Global Institutional Partners are located in Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Namibia, the Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand and Turkey (visit the world's leading universities on <http://www.waceinc.org/institutional/partners.html>). Also, many international co-op exchanges exist between institutions among these 14 nations.

There's more to the College Co-Op story. Check out these very interesting posts that were launched as part of my feature on College Co-Ops. Check out my post on [Why College Co-Ops Totally Rock](#), the interview with two college Co-Op experts at the university that started it all, [College Co-Op Pioneer Is Still Leading The Charge After 100 Years](#) and my video interview with the President of [Drexel University](#) (a leading Co-Op university), [This College President Is A Game Changer](#).

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