

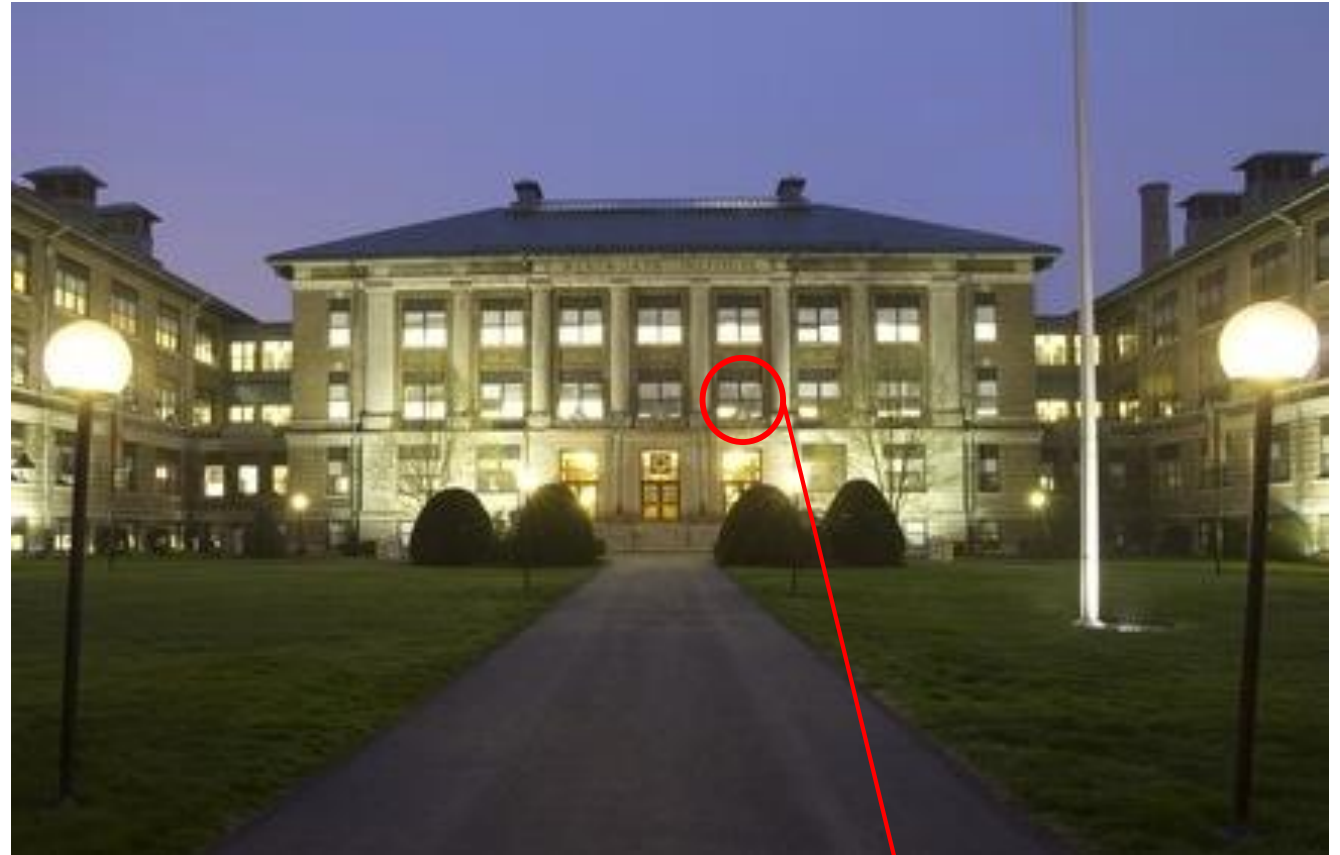
Alumni Relations Assistant
Wentworth Institute of Technology
January 2020 - June 2020

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What was your position and the organization you worked for on co-op?

- ▶ I worked as the “assistant” in the Alumni Relations Office at Wentworth. Although really I was just another member of the team. I had three co-workers and a director. I took on aspects of all of my co-workers jobs and worked with each of them often. They never made me feel like I was inferior or “just an intern”.
- ▶ The position was paid \$14 an hour, which is the current minimum wage in Boston. I worked 35 hours a week and there was no overtime.



My office in
Wentworth Hall

How did you spend the majority of your time on co-op?

- ▶ I spent the majority of my time managing our office's social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter). This meant finding interesting articles to share, designing graphics for posts, and working with my teammates as well as other departments to advertise interesting events to our alumni.
- ▶ My other duties included answering the phone, responding to emails from alumni, data entry, some craft projects, and other interesting projects that my director assigned me such as figuring out how to host a virtual video game competition.

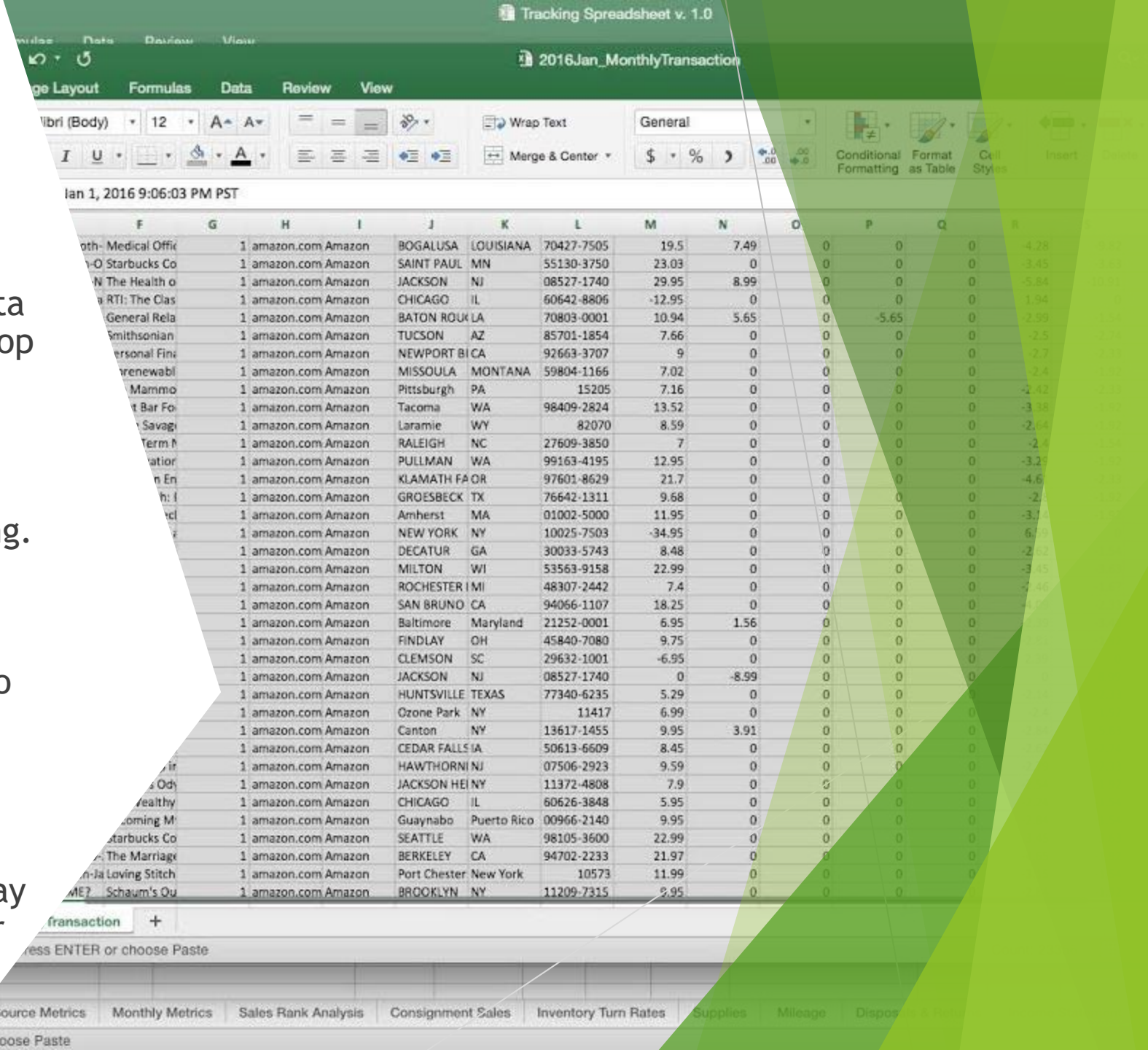


Discuss what you learned about yourself and your work/learning style on your co-op

- ▶ My boss was very energetic and was prone to shouting out new ideas and suddenly assigning people new tasks. This worked well as our office was just one room with desks not separated by walls so we could all easily hear each other. This meant that I was often given new things to work on but not given deadlines or told what I should prioritize. I enjoyed this because I got to prioritize things myself and choose what to work on when. I was simply expected to get everything finished in a timely manner without someone looking over my shoulder. I think that I work well with a more relaxed boss who trusts me to do my work.

Describe a job, task, activity that you did during co-op that you had never done before

- ▶ Something that was new to me was data entry and management. During my co-op my office was working on converting from one website design system to another. This meant that the location where our data on alumni (names, email, address, etc.) would be changing. As such we had to clean up data that was incorrect or duplicated before it could be moved. This meant combing through over 100,000 alumni records to make corrections.
- ▶ I was surprised by how much I enjoyed such work. While it is certainly a repetitive task, it was easy to quickly get a lot done and I found it a great way to end a hard day as it was relaxing for me.





Did this co-op help you decide what you want to do next?

- ▶ This was my first co-op so I had very few expectations for what my first “real” job would be like. I knew that my first co-op didn’t have to be the “perfect” job for me because it was only my first try. As such I was somewhat relaxed in choosing what field it was in.
- ▶ I found it very interesting to work in higher-ed, especially as the school got shut down due to covid-19. I got to see how each department of a university work together and communicate. While I enjoyed working in higher-ed, I want to try working at a non-profit next to see how it is different and if I would enjoy it as much.

Given the unprecedented impact of covid-19 describe the most meaningful learning experiences during your co-op

- ▶ There were many changes that happened during my co-op as a result of covid-19 and as well as things that happened to coincide with the pandemic and thus made an impact on my co-op experience during the pandemic.
- ▶ Mid-March, 2.5 months into my co-op, Wentworth decided to send their students home. Shortly thereafter Northeastern decided to close their dorms which meant I'd be losing my housing in Boston. One day after that Wentworth announced that we would all be working remotely. This meant that I had to scramble to find short-term housing in Boston before I was able to return home to Maryland. My boss was extremely understanding during this time which certainly helped ease my stress.
- ▶ The transition to remote work was not a transition at all, we went home on a Friday expecting to return the following week, then on Monday we began remote work. From the very beginning my team was very good at communicating. Pre-covid-19 we had a weekly meeting on Monday to discuss the week and so this made the first day of remote work seem more normal. We continued to have regular check-ins with each other throughout the week and often had 2-3 full team meetings per week, all on Skype or Zoom.
- ▶ Then in the beginning of May the director of our office took a job elsewhere and since the university was in a hiring freeze because of covid-19, we knew that he would not be replaced. This left me and my 3 teammates to assume his responsibilities and run the office on our own. While this put a halt to some projects at first as we had to figure out what to prioritize, we eventually figured it out. I learned that daily communication with every member of my team is truly essential to make things run smoothly. While some things were certainly easier when we had a director to default to and who could make the hard decisions for us, it was also really great to be treated as an equal with everyone on the team. We would vote as a group and discuss everything before presenting it to other departments. I learned that I really value great teamwork.

Please describe the most exciting, meaningful, or interesting job, task, activity, etc. that you did during your co-op



- ▶ The most interesting thing that I got to do during my co-op was attend PAX East. PAX East is one of the largest gaming conventions in the country and is held in Boston every year. Each year Wentworth has a table there to interact with alumni and attract potential students.
- ▶ I had never been to a gaming convention before, nor had I interacted with any alumni in-person before. My co-workers prepared me with a “script” of sorts of what questions to ask alumni, how to invite them to enter our raffle, etc. I was also there with employees from other departments so when I was asked a question I did not know the answer to, someone who has worked there longer was able to answer.
- ▶ It was a really cool experience because it’s a place I would never have gone to on my own but really enjoyed. I also loved interacting with so many alumni because they were so excited to see us there.

What did you hope to learn on this co-op?

- ▶ One major thing that I hoped to gain from this co-op was office experience. As I searched through the NUCareers I saw so many jobs that I couldn't apply to because they required previous office experience. While I was only physically in the office for 2.5 months before going remote, I feel like I did learn a lot about how to conduct myself in an office.
- ▶ Going in I had also hoped to gain some event planning experience. The experience I gained in this area was much different than I expected because when we began working remotely we suddenly began trying to plan virtual events, something that my office had never done before. I got to brainstorm with my team different events that we thought would be engaging. We would try them out and the next day we would meet again to evaluate how it went. This meant that we were constantly changing our approach to virtual events so it was a very dynamic process.

In what ways did your co-op experience help you to better understand the nature, organization, or manifestation of social inequality in society or in social organizations?

- ▶ My co-op coincided with the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement after the murder of George Floyd and others. Because I managed our social media platforms I wanted to address the BLM movement in a post. However, although our office's social media accounts are separate from those of the general university, we still speak for the university through our social media. This means that any opinions that we put out there have to align with those of the university. This is generally not an issue as we rarely post about controversial topics, but in this case we were not allowed to post something about the BLM movement until the university came out with a statement for us to follow.
- ▶ The resurgence of the BLM movement also coincided with the beginning of Pride month. Wentworth has historically celebrated Pride month and so I knew that I was allowed to post about it. However, I was told by one of my teammates to not post about Pride month until we came out with a post about BLM (something that we couldn't do until the university came out with a statement). This was the first time during my co-op that I felt halted in my work. I wanted to get a statement about both things out quickly but was not allowed to. It made me realize how difficult it can be for an organization, company, or university to post about controversial issues because the message has to be approved by so many people. Even when we were finally allowed to post about the BLM movement each post was approved by our V.P. as well as our Marketing and Communications department. While we often expect big institutions to move quickly and show support for various issues, and we shame them for being slow, it is often not the decision of one individual to slow down or speed up the process, it can take dozens of people and multiple departments to approve a single post.

**Black
Lives
Matter**