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Major: Sociology

Minor: Communication Studies

Co-op Employer: Kayla Small

Co-op Dates: 1/3/2019 – 6-28/2019



MIT Energy Initiative

# Working as an Event Services Assistant at MITEI

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- ❖ NUCOOL was pretty accurate in the description. About half my time was spent working the events, allowing me to gain insight into both the nitty – gritty of the event planning industry as well as more glamorous parts as well.
- ❖ The job was paid, and also allowed for over time, which I did end up having a fair amount of. That being said, I was still able to be active in my extracurricular activities. While working at MITEI I served as Event Coordinator on E-board for the Club Taekwondo team, organized multiple events and the Spring formal while attending 3-4 practices a week and competing in monthly tournaments. I also travelled to Philadelphia to compete in the College Union Slam Poetry Invitational with Northeastern's Slam competition team. That being said, I put my job first, and was clear with my boss and manager both on my capabilities and time constraints.



# The Events

- ❖ During my time at MITEI I worked approximately 60+ events. Each type of event was unique and required a different level of preparation.
- ❖ When I wasn't working events, I spent time working on data collection for things like attendance and budget.
- ❖ The rest of my time was spent updating the Events calendar and then pursuing personal projects focused on organization and streamlining other current processes.

# Expectations

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- ❖ I have always been interested in Event Planning, and as my last co-op experience did little in terms of solidifying my confidence in knowing what I want to do once I graduate, I was hoping to leave MITEI with a better understanding of that.
- ❖ Being my second office job, I was also hoping to gain more confidence in an office environment. Previously, I have felt that I didn't take full advantage of the opportunities I had due to not feeling like I was truly capable or able to contribute to meetings or projects.
- ❖ I also hoped to learn more applicable Microsoft Office skills such as Excel and other programs.
- ❖ Being that I was working at the MIT Energy Initiative, I was also hoping to learn a little more about clean energy use and its trajectory.

# Surprises and Challenges

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- ❖ There is a monthly Seminar that MITEI puts together. They are relatively small events, usually in the same classroom on MIT campus. Average attendance is 80-90 people. Due to unfortunate circumstances, there were several times where I was the only member of my team present to put together and run the event.
- ❖ The first time this happened I was a bit frazzled since I had never before been expected to handle such a big responsibility, but once the event began, it became easier to simply tell myself that I knew what I was doing, and if I didn't, I had coworkers on the Communications team helping me as well.
- ❖ The next time it happened, I was fully prepared to manage the event myself, and much more ready to roll with the punches.
- ❖ The experience leant me a better mindset to face problems head on and be prepared for anything. It also gave me more confidence moving forward in my ability to problem solve with a level head and steady hands.

# Making a Difference as a Co-op

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- ❖ As a co-op at an organization and in a department that had figured out their general on-hand process to the T, there was little difference I could make in terms of the preparing for events themselves.
- ❖ Despite this, the data processing and general behind-the-scenes steps had room for improvement. I took it upon myself to work on streamlining their data collection processes (with hotel, attendance and event tracking).
- ❖ I was also asked to make our HR rep's retirement card, which exciting for, since it was an opportunity for me to exercise my artistic abilities to make something long lasting for someone that was also a major hit at the retirement party we threw.



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# Things Learned

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- ❖ I had never worked in events before, nor had I ever been in charge of such a variety of tasks in my professional career before.
- ❖ I had learned flexibility and diversity of skills from previous positions working with children. At MITEI I learned a to not only be flexible with my methods of task completion, but also with my hours.
- ❖ I was also able to hone ability to maintain professionalism in the face of the the inevitable problems that would arise with each event.
- ❖ Above it all, at MITEI I was able to develop myself as a professional individual working in the service industry. This is, I believe, a valuable skill, and I owe it mostly to my co-workers. They were incredibly patient with me and



# Preparation

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- ❖ The co-op class, as many have stated and will likely continue to state, was immensely helpful when applying and interviewing for positions.
- ❖ As a sociology major, my coursework at face value didn't contribute much to helping me succeed in my position at MITEI. That being said, the creative thinking skills I have learned, and my ability to look at situations more analytically than others might, have definitely assisted me in both the co-ops I've been on so far.
- ❖ One thing I would advise future co-ops against, would be accepting the first co-op you get out of nerves, and not because you prefer the position itself. Of course there are exceptions to every rule, but ask most co-op students and they'll tell you how their dream co-op opportunity offered them a position just a couple days or a week after they accepted another position.

# Overall Take Away

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- ❖ Working at MITEI was an incredible experience. I met some amazing people and made connections I wouldn't have otherwise.
- ❖ I was able to gain a level of insight into the service industry I hadn't had before, and wouldn't have been able to any where else. I firmly believe that you can work with anyone if you can work within the service industry. And being able to function in an environment like that is a valuable skill.
- ❖ At MITEI I was given the freedom in my free time to pursue projects of my choice. This gave me the self-confidence I had been lacking previously in my professional career. I discovered I do well in a self-management type of work environment, and will definitely look for positions like that in the future.

Thank You!

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