



Julia Smith

Graduation Date:	May 2010
Hometown:	Greeneville, Tennessee
ChE Co-Op Employer:	DuPont
Co-Op Program:	5-session

Why did you choose Purdue and to participate in the ChE Co-Op program?

I chose Purdue with the intention of majoring in chemical engineering. I wanted to attend a large school with a great reputation and a well-established curriculum. I have an older cousin who is a chemical engineer and had participated in the Co-Op program at his university. It sounded like a good opportunity, and when I learned about Purdue's high placement of students with industry partners, I knew this was the place for me.

What types of experience did you get as a ChE Co-Op with DuPont?

I completed five Co-Op rotations with E.I. du Pont de Nemours. My first three terms were spent in New Johnsonville, TN at a titanium dioxide (TiO_2) plant. TiO_2 is a white pigment used to color everything from paper to paint to personal care products. I worked my fourth and fifth terms in Richmond, VA, manufacturing Tyvek(r), a nonwoven polyethylene material used for envelopes, protective equipment, and medical packaging. As a Co-Op, I had the opportunity to work in the areas of product development, process improvement, and technical support to manufacturing.

What do you think are the benefits of participating in the ChE Co-Op program?

Although work experience is the greatest part of the Co-Op program, I found that I gained many "life skills" as well. Moving to new places and meeting new people has made me more independent and well-adjusted. Co-oping is a great way to network, and it provides a much needed break from semester after semester of engineering coursework. I often get the question "Wasn't it difficult to make friends and be active on campus as a Co-Op?" I think co-oping strengthened my friendships and made me a better leader in my extracurricular activities. I also believe that a balanced engineering education needs perspective - co-oping was an excellent complement to my Purdue engineering degree.