WHAT IS IT?

Pathmaker is a residential intern program at Purdue University. Participants perform entry-level engineering and computer science jobs for companies while still enrolled as full-time students. The jobs are located on campus, in the nearby Purdue Research Park, or in company offices in West Lafayette. Pathmaker is currently in year two of a planned three-year pilot phase.

WHY PURDUE?

Purdue produces the highest number of undergraduate students with degrees in engineering or engineering-related technology fields of any institution in the United States, according to yearly data from the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. Companies involved in the Pathmaker program recruit plenty of qualified students from Purdue as a matter of course. Pathmaker gives them an early opportunity to identify potential future employees.

“there is no program at Purdue that I’m more excited about. An internship gives students experience and exposure, but most importantly, real world practice in their chosen field of study. All evidence, including the Gallup-Purdue Index tells us that internships lead to more engaged employees with skills that employers value the most.”

MITCH DANIELS, PURDUE PRESIDENT

BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS & COMPANIES

Students involved in Pathmaker gain real-world work experience in their chosen field, which is one of the college experiences that have been identified by the Gallup-Purdue Index as contributing to success later in life. Also, students gain part-time employment that often pays more than they would earn in fast-food or retail service jobs. This helps students with college affordability, a significant issue today, one of ten 10 major initiatives in Purdue President Mitch Daniels’ Purdue Moves plan.

Companies often need extra people for a variety of limited-duration, entry-level tasks, such as benchmarking and alpha and beta testing, or preliminary security risk assessment. Purdue students are being trained to perform such tasks, giving participating companies hiring flexibility. The program also enables the companies to identify the highest-performing students and hire them as permanent employees when they graduate.

STUDENTS INVOLVED

The majority of students involved in Pathmaker major in computer science or engineering, but the program employs students studying agriculture, liberal arts and sciences as well. Nearly 100 students currently participate in the Pathmaker program.
There are a few companies with which we have agreements to work together on new products and testing of those products, and these are the companies that have so far been asked to join the Purdue Pathmaker program.

“In the future, the program may expand to include other companies, and there seems to be quite a bit of interest out there. But during this three-year pilot phase we’re only extending invitations to companies that we already have a close working relationship with.”

“This program brings important benefits to both our partner companies and our students, and we hope other corporations follow the lead of our charter companies in playing an active role in our students’ education.

GERRY MCCARTNEY, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

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