

Exploration Activity Student Interview

1. For my Student Interview Exploration Activity I interviewed Eric. Eric is currently in his junior year at Purdue University, and is studying computer engineering, taking 300-400 level classes. To understand more about his experience within the major, as well as his experience with work outside of the major, I asked a series of questions.
2. Eric said that he chose the major after spending his freshmen year in First Year Engineering. He realized that he had a stronger understanding and interest in the software side of engineering compared to the hardware side. He also had a previous interest in computer software, so it made sense for him to act on this interest when he experienced it in his studies.
3. In terms of his current classes, Eric describes the format as the classic large lecture style. His instructors tend to teach material quickly to a large classroom, and the students are often expected to complete a large portion of the learning process at home. This means that much of the information the classes provide must be later reviewed outside of class. This does not make the learning process any more difficult, however, as there are many resources to help the student understand the material.
4. Eric's favorite class so far has been CS 159. He commented that making programs in C was interesting, and that he felt excited to apply C programming to future projects. This made sense, as Eric has always been interested in the software portion of his major.
5. Eric commented that the toughest classes he has taken involved using electric wiring and hardware. Classes such as ECE20001 and ECE20007, which requires much more

knowledge regarding electrical engineering. These were generally tougher for Eric, and he commented that many students struggle with the electrical engineering portions of the major's classes.

6. Eric said that students should be able to study content at home in order to be successful with computer engineering, and that students will generally do better with prior computing skills. Overall, students that are more familiar and comfortable with having a good balance outside of the classroom will be able to handle the content of the major.
7. After graduation, Eric plans to use his work experience to find a job in the workforce. He told me that many students don't go to graduate school, as there are a variety of work opportunities that students gain access to through internships throughout their college careers.
8. When asked to go further in depth with this point, he responded by saying that while there is no rush, it is very common for students within his major to find work over the summer in order to build a strong resume. He said that even if a student cannot find an internship, there are research opportunities both at and outside of Purdue.
9. For example, Eric himself was offered to work on research at the University of Alabama. Before the end of our interview, I asked Eric how he felt about the group-work content within his major. He said that group work is not extremely common in his classes, but study groups are very helpful. He commented that in his sophomore year, he often met with friends to study late at night for exams and hard assignments. He said that due to the difficulty of the major, studying with others was not only helpful academically, but good for his mental health. Finally, after being asked if he

had any additional tips for his major or for school in general. Eric, in his own words, told me that all students should learn how to “take the L” sometimes. In other terms, it is important for every student to understand that failure is a part of the learning process. There will be a point where any student at Purdue will have to learn from mistakes, whether said mistake be on a test or an assignment. Eric concludes the interview by saying that the most important thing is that they pick themselves up and understand their mistakes.