



Vidyard  
1 Queen St. N, Unit #301.  
Kitchener, ON, Canada N2H 2G7

Sep 12, 2022

**Re: Co-op Student of the Year Award**

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Co-op Student of the Year Award  
Co-operative Education, Trent Lane, Building #54  
University of Guelph  
Guelph, ON  
N1G 2W1

Dear Selection Committee,

I am so glad to have the opportunity to nominate Matthew McArdle as Co-op Student of the Year. My team was extremely fortunate to have him join us for his recent co-op term. He absolutely blew us away with his technical and interpersonal aptitudes during his time with us.

In his first week as a Software Developer at Vidyard, Matt demonstrated a learning speed faster than anything I've seen from other co-op students or even experienced developers, and he used that skill to engage as an extremely effective member of the team. I was shocked to hear him accurately surmise which of the Vidyard code repositories were on display in a testing session on his second day. It was no time at all before he was contributing to our new enterprise functionality, called the Team Performance Dashboard, which was in Beta at the time of his hiring.

Matt went on to lead a project to implement the final feature we needed to leave Beta. He has excellent organizational and time management skills, and was able to be trusted with a lot of responsibility. This wound up being critical for our successful launch, as he was a consistent presence through the peak of summer vacation season. He did a remarkable job keeping work moving along as developers took time off, either wrapping up tickets himself or coordinating their handoff to another developer. When they returned, he could be counted on to get them back up to speed without confusion.

While leading the project, Matt worked closely with Product and Design to make decisions and communicate with the business. When he encountered a particular problem creating a component that was unexpectedly challenging, he was able to clearly communicate the pain points to our designer and effectively brainstorm an alternative solution. On the product side of things, he was faced with the recent departure of our team's Product Manager. He worked instead with the departed PM's superior, who had not been directly involved with the majority of the Team Performance Dashboard. Matt was able to get the Sr. PM up to speed and worked closely with him to keep him in the loop.

Every week during our one-on-one meetings, Matt came prepared with relevant and insightful questions about our projects, technology, and his career (and mine!). On his own initiative he modified one of our peer review templates to receive feedback from other developers, which was an incredible way to enhance his efficacy on the team.



Despite never working with our frameworks before and being new to all of our repositories, he was able to self-teach himself all knowledge required. For example, despite having no experience with Vue, in no time he was creating new components with this framework. He would eagerly and confidently take on large tasks and tickets, and would independently figure out how to complete them.

He consistently impressed us with how fast he would complete tickets. His throughput of coding far exceeded what we would expect from a co-op student. In addition to quick development, the quality of his work was top-notch. He strove to always follow best practices in his code, and would look for the same when reviewing others' work. He had a great attention to detail, and as a result identified bugs missed by others both in individual and group testing sessions. He was very thorough when reviewing the code of other developers, and would catch inefficiencies and bugs that had been overlooked by more senior developers.

Twice Matt voluntarily took on one of the most harrowing challenges to developers - presenting our team's work to the company. Although our presentation space is lighthearted and casual, it can still be nerve wracking to represent your team on a live stream in front of so many peers, particularly in the student phase of a career.

In terms of soft skills, Matt was incredibly personable and greatly increased team morale with his social engagement. He'd consistently take part in our Slack conversations, and would always participate in any social events. He knows the importance of developing strong relationships with your coworkers, especially in a remote environment. Shortly after starting, he went out of his way to attend a work dinner, despite the fact that he'd know no one there. He easily formed friendships with folks across different teams and roles, and even provided suggestions for social team-building activities.

Matt operated like a high performing professional developer, far exceeding the expectations we have even for our occasional masters student. He required far less investment from us to onboard than the typical co-op, and provided far more value. We would be thrilled to hire him again, whether for a co-op or full-time after graduation. Thanks to him we are eager to see what other co-ops from the University of Guelph can offer.

Sincerely,

Jenn Bilawski  
Development Team Lead