



# Sloan Career Cornerstone Center

## Profiles of Computer Engineers



**Jennifer Dietrick**

**Design and Development Engineer  
Lutron Electronics  
Coopersburg, PA**

### **Education:**

B.S. - Electrical Engineering, Vanderbilt University

M.S. - Electrical and Computer Engineering, Carnegie Mellon University

### **Job Description:**

Design and Development Engineer dealing primarily with graphical user interfaces for high end lighting control used in restaurants and high residential areas.

### **Advice to Students:**

Dietrick is a firm believer in the value of work experience for undergraduates, and points out that prospective employers look for candidates who have it.

### **Video Transcript 1:**

"I enjoy mentoring. I came here, and you're kind of assigned a buddy. Your buddy helps you out through orientation, is the individual you can go to with questions. It also depends on the employer. I know here we also have an open door policy. It's a catch phrase used by a lot of companies, but it is, without a doubt, the policy we practice. If you're not pleased with the situation, you can go to your mentor first. If you're not pleased with that answer you can go on, all the way to our owner."

### **Interview:**

Jennifer Dietrick of Lutron Electronics has always been in control of her education. As an undergraduate, she believed that getting pertinent experience would help her later on and found summer work for herself. Dietrick recalls, "I can't say the school had a career services (office) geared toward summer employment, so I took the initiative myself. I went out and found on-campus interviewers that might be interested in (recruiting for) summer employment as well."

At the end of one disappointing summer working for Kimberly-Clark, Dietrick spelled out her grievances in her summary report, explaining that she felt she could have been challenged more and could have contributed more. Assertiveness paid off. To her surprise, the same team offered her an internship for the following summer, and Dietrick got her wish. "The

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second summer there was exceptional. I was given projects that were not typical of a coop. And I feel that I excelled." Justifiably proud of her effort, she was offered a permanent position upon graduation, but Dietrick came to the conclusion that her education would not be complete with a bachelor's and went on to get her master's degree.

Dietrick is still a firm believer in the value of work experience for undergraduates, and points out that prospective employers look for candidates who have it. Now that she works full time, Dietrick has to make time to study. She travels to different parts of the country to numerous seminars. She does all she can to keep "up with the current software and the current industry practices." As a design and development engineer for lighting control systems, she attends conferences on both software and the lighting industry, sometimes as a contributor. In effect, Dietrick continues to take charge of her education.

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