

Some Options for Summer Work in Computer Science

Author: *Samuel A. Rebelsky*

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This document summarizes summer opportunities for students interested in doing projects related to computer science and computing. It is not intended to be comprehensive. While I strive for accuracy, I do not guarantee the accuracy of any of the information in this document.

This document may be found on the Web at

<http://www.cs.grinnell.edu/~rebelsky/Department/cs-summer.html> and

<http://www.cs.grinnell.edu/~rebelsky/Department/cs-summer.pdf>

This document is certainly not the only resource available to you. For example, there is a plethora of information on summer opportunities listed at

<http://cerebro.xu.edu/summerinternships.html>.

ACM *Crossroads* also provides an internship database.

<http://www.acm.org/crossroads/resources/internships.html>.

Women students should look into the CRA Distributed Mentor Project,

<http://www.cra.org/Activities/craw/dmp/>. (Deadline 2009-02-15)

Warning! Deadlines for most programs are approaching quickly. Some may have passed already. You should move quickly.

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Setting Your Goals

As you investigate summer opportunities, you should consider your goals (both short term and long term). In particular, you should consider what you hope to get from the summer. Do you want to learn more about the discipline? Do you want to exercise your skills? Do you want to investigate a possible career? Do you just want to make money? Do you want to escape from Grinnell? Do you want to experience how Grinnell is different in the summer? I've tried to note some particular advantages and disadvantages of each kind of program.

On Campus

Research With Grinnell CS Faculty

Advantages

- Convenient/familiar
- For students entering their third or fourth year, can serve as a *mentored advanced project* (MAP)
- For students entering their second year, can serve as a *mentored introductory project* (MIP)
- Reasonable compensation (\$3400 or so, but you are taxed on it)
- Interesting projects
- 4 credits
- Potential for continuing work (sometimes with compensation)
- Often collaborative
- Stay in Grinnell

Disadvantages

- Limited availability (maybe 6-9 this summer)
- High expectations
- Continuing work (often w/o compensation)
- May require travel in the fall or the spring

Contacts: Samuel A. Rebelsky rebelsky@grinnell.edu & Jerod Weinman weinman@cs.grinnell.edu.

Work With Grinnell Statistics Faculty

Shonda Kuiper plans to supervise a few MAPs in the *StatsGames* project, which provides configurable game-like applets that can be used for data recording in statistics classes.

Advantages

- *See above*
- An opportunity to apply computing to another discipline.

Disadvantages

- *See above*
- Limited availability (2 or 3)
- Focus beyond CS

Contact: Shonda Kuiper, kuipers@grinnell.edu & rebelsky@grinnell.edu.

Student Assistant MathLAN Administrator

Advantages

- Convenient/familiar
- Explore a different aspect of computing
- Likelihood for continuing work (sometimes with compensation)
- Stay in Grinnell

Disadvantages

- Very limited availability (1 this summer)
- High expectations
- Unknown compensation

Contacts: John David Stone stone@cs.grinnell.edu

Work With Grinnell Math Faculty

Advantages

- Convenient/familiar
- Can serve as a *mentored advanced project* (MAP)
- Reasonable compensation (\$3400, but you are taxed on it)
- Interesting projects
- 4 credits
- Potential for continuing work
- Stay in Grinnell

Disadvantages

- Limited availability
- High expectations
- Not always relevant to CS

Contact: Emily Moore, moore@math.grinnell.edu, Chair of Mathematics and Statistics, should have a list of Math faculty who will be supervising summer MAPs.

Instructional Technology Services

Computing services typically hires a few students to work on a variety of projects over the summer, including help desk. We don't know how many students they plan to hire this summer.

Advantages

- Somewhat low-key
- Stay on campus

Disadvantages

- Unknown compensation
- Typically limited to students already working for computing services

Contact: Karen McRitchie mcritchi@grinnell.edu

Other Campus Jobs

There are, of course, a variety of other jobs available on campus students who are really interested in staying at Grinnell. Some of these jobs may have a computing component. You will need to spend some effort finding these jobs and convincing appropriate folks to hire you. I have been told that the library, admissions, and the security department often have the most opportunities.

Off Campus

Research Experiences for Undergraduates

The National Science Foundation sponsors a number of REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) projects nationwide. The NSF site can provide you with some pointers, including some that are nearby. Sites include Iowa State, DePauw University, Harvey Mudd, and Hope College. The CS faculty know folks at DePauw, Harvey Mudd, and Hope.

Advantages

- Looks great on resume/CV
- Work with other computer scientists
- Often pays better than Grinnell
- Escape from Grinnell

Disadvantages

- Limited to U.S. Citizens
- Highly competitive, with late decisions
- Some applications due asap

Contact: Individual institutions. See the list at NSF, http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/list_result.cfm?unitid=5049, for more details)

Here are a few institutions that we know a bit better. I've done a quick check of their Web sites, and it looks like they are all still operating.

- DePaul (medical informatics):
<http://facweb.cs.depaul.edu/research/vc/medix/2009/index.htm> (Deadline 2008-03-02; Decisions 2008-03-23)
- DePauw: <http://www.depauw.edu/univ/reu/> (Deadline 2009-03-12; Decisions 2009-03-30)
- Harvey Mudd: <http://www.cs.hmc.edu/REU/> (Deadline not yet posted; Decisions a few weeks later)
- Hope: <http://www.cs.hope.edu/reu/> (Deadline 2009-02-20)
- Iowa State, HCI <http://www.hci.iastate.edu/REU/> (Deadline 2009-02-15; Decision 2009-04-01)
- Iowa State, Math: <http://www.math.iastate.edu/reu/> (Deadline 2009-03-01)
- VCU Bioinformatics and Bioengineering Summer Institute,
<http://www.vcu.edu/csbc/bbsi/>. (Deadline 2009-03-01)

Corporate Internships

You should talk to career services about potential internships. You should also search on the Web and visit the ACM site mentioned above. Grinnell students have done internships with a wide variety of companies. Some that come to mind include:

- Advanced Technologies Group (run by a Grinnell Alum) <http://www.a-t-g.com/>
- The Aerospace Corporation (rumored to have Scheme projects)
<http://www.aero.org/careers/intern.html>
- AT&T labs
- CGI (formerly American Management Systems) <http://www.cgi.com/web/en/home.htm>
- Microsoft <http://www.microsoft.com>

Some students have also had good luck contacting alumni for ideas. The CDO is likely to be able to provide some leads.

Advantages

- Get a taste of the real world
- Escape from Grinnell
- Get your foot in the door
- Likely to have good compensation

Disadvantages

- Projects may not be interesting
- May use up “work time” on international student visas

International Students: The Career Development Office has a special form for obtaining curricular practical training (whatever that is) for the summer.

For more information and ideas, visit Grinnell's Career Development Office

Other Research Internships

You might also consider applying for internships at research laboratories.

Advantages

- Looks good on resume
- Likely to be interesting work
- Potentially good compensation

Disadvantages

- You'll need to identify potential research sites
- Likely to be highly competitive
- Status for international students unclear

Contact: Individual researchers.

Noyce-Intel Summer Internships

These are competitive internships available to Grinnell students to undertake interesting and socially responsible applications of computing and technology. The internship must be at a nonprofit or governmental institution. Certainly, not all of these internships are in computing related fields, but many are. In the past, some these fellowships have been used to support students working for Freenets, students developing computer applications for other disciplines at other Universities, and students doing computer work for nonprofits. Two are typically awarded. These can also be used for off-campus opportunities, and often are.

Advantages

- Self-directed
- Interesting projects
- Usually off-campus
- Looks good on resume/CV
- Reasonable compensation (about \$2400)
- Available to foreign students, even for off-campus study

Disadvantages

- Competitive
- Self-designed
- Requires fall presentation

Contacts: Janet Davis davisjan@cs.grinnell.edu and the CDO.

Miscellaneous

In summer 2007, three Grinnell students were supported for *Google Summer of Code* projects. The Google Summer of Code supports undergraduates to work on open-source projects.

- Some initial information:
http://groups.google.com/group/google-summer-of-code-discuss/browse_thread/thread/31e618ed693ed5
(you'll need to join a Google Group to read this)
- Advice for students:
<http://code.google.com/p/google-summer-of-code/wiki/AdviceforStudents>

Advantages

- Interesting projects
- Benefits society
- Looks good on CV
- Possibility for telecommuting
- Dedicated mentors

Disadvantages

- Competitive
- May not provide a physical community
- Often a much later deadline and decision date