

Some Options for Summer Work in Computer Science

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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, it is not guaranteed to be accurate.

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's a plethora of information on summer opportunities available at

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

ACM *Crossroads* also provides an internship database.

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

Warning! Deadlines for most programs are approaching quickly. Some have already passed. 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? I've tried to note some particular advantages and disadvantages of each kind of program.

On Campus

Work With Grinnell CS Faculty

Advantages

- Convenient/familiar
- For students completing their second or third year, can serve as a *mentored advanced project* (MAP)
- For students just completing their first year, can serve as a *mentored introductory project* (MIP) [probably not this year]
- Reasonable compensation (\$3400, but you are taxed on it)
- Interesting projects
- 4 credits
- Potential for continuing work (sometimes with compensation)
- Often collaborative
- Stay in Grinnell

Disadvantages

- Very limited availability (Unknown number)
- High expectations
- Continuing work (often w/o compensation)
- May require travel in the fall

Contact: Janet Davis davisjan@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: Marc Chamberland, chamberl@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

Work with the Campus Webmaster

Leonya Ivanov, the campus Webmaster, often has projects for interested students. Unfortunately, he rarely has funds to pay students to work on those projects.

Advantages

- Cool projects
- Leonya provides great advice for post-graduate opportunities

Disadvantages

- Unknown or limited compensation

Contact: Leonya Ivanov, ivanovl@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.

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
- Escape from Grinnell

Disadvantages

- Limited to U.S. Citizens
- Highly competitive, with late decisions
- 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 still operating.

- DePaul (medical informatics): <http://facweb.cs.depaul.edu/research/vc/medix/2008/index.htm> (Deadline 2008.03.07; Decisions 2008.03.24)
- DePauw: <http://www.depauw.edu/univ/reu/> (Deadline 2008.03.12; Decisions 2008.03.30)
- Harvey Mudd: <http://www.cs.hmc.edu/REU/> (Deadline 2008.03.14; Decisions a few weeks later)
- Hope: <http://www.cs.hope.edu/reu/> (Deadline 2008.03.07 or so)
- Iowa State, HCI <http://www.hci.iastate.edu/REU/> (Deadline 2008.02.10; Decision 2008.04.01)
- Iowa State, Math: <http://www.math.iastate.edu/reu/> (Hmmm ... they're still awaiting funding; check back)

Corporate Internships

You should talk to career services about potential internships. You should also search on the Web. 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. Here are a few possibilities.

- VCU Bioinformatics and Bioengineering Summer Institute, <http://www.vcu.edu/csbc/bbsi/>. (Deadline 2008.03.01)
- Graphics work at the Naval Research Lab, <http://www.ait.nrl.navy.mil/vrlab/> (no deadline specified) (U.S. Citizens only)..
- Women should look into the CRA Distributed Mentor Project, <http://www.cra.org/Activities/craw/dmp/>. (Deadline 2008.02.15)

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: Samuel A. Rebelsky (rebelsky@grinnell.edu) and 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. Right now, I can't find information on summer 2008 (will they have it?), so you'll have to look.

Advantages

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

Disadvantages

- Competitive
- May not provide a physical community