From Tech Camp to the IOL
By: Samantha Martell

Recently I had the pleasure of interviewing Griffin Leclerc, a new employee at the UNH-IOL, to learn about what led him on his journey to working at the lab and where he hopes to be in the years to come.

I did not know it yet, but the first time I met Griffin Leclerc in the summer of 2013, was not going to be the last. Griffin was a rising sophomore at Trinity High School who chose to spend his summer participating in UNH's Tech Camp as a Techsplorer. UNH Tech Camp intrigued him because "it offered exposure to seven different engineering disciplines in just the first week of camp, then immersion in the topic [he] liked best for the entire second week." Like many others, he selected the IOL hosted program learning various programming languages, including Scratch and Python.

Griffin returned to UNH Tech Camp in the summer of 2014 where he participated as a Techventurer, again choosing the IOL hosted program. It was that same summer when he realized the IOL was the place for him. He had learned about how competitive our selection process was for the High School Summer Internship Program so he began the process early by maintaining a good GPA, doing community service, getting good references to complement his application, and building a good resume. Griffin wanted to "apply on the first day the application was available online." When I saw Griffins application come in, I knew who he was right away and when I had the opportunity to interview him, I was impressed by his drive and willingness to learn. With that in mind, Griffin was selected as one of ten interns out of a list of 42 applicants into the IOL's 2015 High School Summer Internship Program. He was placed in the AVnu Consortium with two other students, writing leap second tests using a language called Sikuli and learning about Time Sensitive Networks.

Currently, he is working in the AVnu Consortium as an IOL full-time employee. He is anxiously awaiting his freshman year at UNH in the Fall, where he will pursue his degree in Information Technology. When asked why he chose this program, he said it was because he is "an inventive thinker and hands-on type of individual." He finds it easy to understand complex technologies and is skilled at translating their uses to non-technical types. In the workplace, an IT degree will allow him to position himself between the product(s) and the users of technology and open up his employment options to include a career in IT and/or technical sales.

When I asked Griffin why he decided to attend UNH he said, "I was influenced to attend UNH because of the opportunity at the IOL. It was explained to me by a Senior who was a student employee while I was a Tech Camper that, "A Computer Science degree is the same no matter where you go to school. The difference at UNH is that you also get four years of practical experience on your resume by the time you graduate because of the IOL. It's the only place like it on the college level in the United States." With that knowledge, it was easy to choose UNH."

Many of the students that come through the IOL say the same thing, that it's not UNH alone that appeals to them, it's the IOL and UNH together.

The experience Griffin had at UNH started in 2013, he plans to continue learning and growing at the IOL until 2020, when he graduates from UNH. Learn more about the many programs offered to students at UNH and the IOL.