The University of Illinois Springfield is one of the original partner schools in the ATE/NSF Regional Center for Systems Security and Information Assurance (CSSIA). A component of the CSSIA grant included UIS and the other partner schools developing model internship programs with partners in the private and public sector. UIS has developed a productive working relationship with State Farm Insurance. In the spring semester of 2007 the Computer Science Department was added to State Farm Insurance's list of academic departments for targeted recruiting schools. Academic programs from target schools are selected based on curriculum, makeup of the student body, and unique strengths the department provides for computer science majors.

Doug Cowell transferred to UIS from Parkland Community College. Parkland and UIS have a formal two-plus-two articulation plan. The plan allows students to complete an associate degree from Parkland and transfer the hours earned toward a bachelor's in Computer Science with an emphasis in Systems Security and Information Assurance at UIS. Doug is a graduate of the University of Illinois Springfield a CSSIA partner school. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science with an emphasis in Systems Security and Information Assurance in May 2008. While completing his degree, Doug participated in the UIS Applied Study Term Internship program. His academic background and his internship work experience prepared him to enter the work force at a fortune 500 company. After graduating in May 2008, Doug accepted a job offer with State Farm Insurance. Doug is employed as a technical analyst for Security Identity Management Services (SIMS) in the Systems Department of State Farm. He is currently working in a security analyst workgroup. He is gaining work experience while learning procedures and the all-around operations of the different areas of Systems Security. The education and training programs Doug is involved in are designed to reduce production costs, free up personnel resources, increase the knowledge base and develop diversely skilled employees. Some of the present jobs he performs are ID creation/deletion/modification on test servers, scheduling/installing issuances of security patch updates, and the renewal/installation of server SSL certificates.

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Geoffrey Pearson is an undergraduate Computer Science major completing an emphasis in Systems Security and Information Assurance. His employment at Ticomix has provided him numerous opportunities to apply the theory he learned in college classrooms to real-world functional network environments. Geoffrey took a number of classes pertaining to Cisco networking and the Windows operating system during his years at a Rock Valley Community College. The background knowledge provided by these classes has been very valuable in understanding the environments in which the majority of his computer troubleshooting work occurs. Geoffrey noted he has not had occasion to tap all of the knowledge that he learned in the classroom. He acknowledges having a basic familiarity with networking concepts helps to streamline the troubleshooting process. His educational background provides him with a substantial knowledge base that he can use to accelerate the process of learning new concepts. In addition to courses in networking and security he has taken a variety of programming classes. Geoffrey has not had the occasion to use those skills on the job for actual programming, but he recognizes the concepts of problem solving that are cultivated in programming are applicable to some degree in the troubleshooting process of computer problem diagnosis. Geoffrey says that most importantly having gained a solid background in networks and security from his course work at Rock Valley Community College and the University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS) has provided him the skills he needs to solve real-world problems. UIS and Rock Valley have a formal two-plus-two articulation plan. The plan allows students to complete an associate degree from Rock Valley and transfer the hours earned toward a bachelor's in Computer Science with an emphasis in Systems Security and Information Assurance at UIS.

David Achilli is Geoffrey's supervisor at his internship at Ticomix. Mr. Achilli indicated Geoffrey was hired as an intern for basic PC repair and general building maintenance. He noted Geoffrey has been assigned increasingly challenging and complex technical situations. Geoffrey has moved from basic helpdesk support to performing more complex tasks including backup failure resolution, remote support and even computer virtualization. His most recent accomplishment has been implementing a Virtual Server using VM Ware and ESX technology.

In addition, Geoffrey's value to Ticomix is multidimensional. Mr. Achilli noted that Geoffrey successfully setup Ticomix's portable training lab and in minimal time, he developed and implemented a systematic approach to the setup. Mr. Achilli indicated Ticomix has plans to hire Geoffrey full-time when he graduates as a network engineer.