

TECHNOLOGY GEEKS WITH A HEART FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE



DIGITAL FORENSIC SCIENCE

is the science and practice of preserving, extracting and analyzing digital evidence to support formal legal actions. What does that mean? It means helping to put away criminals who use computers and other digital high tech to commit their crimes. Majors in digital forensic science at Defiance walk away not only with a degree, but also with two professional certifications, the practical experience of an internship, and the satisfaction of having directly benefited the surrounding community during the process.

Almost eight years after its creation, DC's cutting-edge digital forensics bachelor's degree program - one of only a handful in the nation - has prepared students for careers in the ever-growing fields of high-technology crime investigation and computer network defense. In fact, the program has such a good reputation that employers looking for qualified new hires send emails to DC's DFS professors to fill open positions.

Students have the opportunity to stretch their skills with involvement in student organizations and projects. Many join the campus chapter of the High Technology Crime Investigation Association (HTCIA) or volunteer for Project 701's Defiance College Personal Computer Solutions (DCPC) project troubleshooting computer problems for members of the community. Students from DFS, criminal justice and forensic science majors have also recently taken the lead role in the planning and running of the college's summer camp "Got Clue: Detectives of Defiance." The camp introduces students in grades 8-11 to crime scene investigations and forensics through a realistic mock crime scene.

DC graduates can be found in technology companies, serving the government in a variety of roles and among the faculty at colleges and universities. With guidance from a diversified advisory board and internships that put their skills to work, DFS students are ready to excel when they graduate.

Advisory board member and Digital Forensics industry professional Gary Kessler says of the program, "All sound good and ambitious... and why you have one of the best programs in the country!" His notables include being the treasurer for the Consortium of Digital Forensics Specialists; Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Digital Forensics, Security and Law; and member of the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (FL & VT).



DFS STUDENTS ATTEND NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Eight Defiance College students attended the annual international conference of the High Technology Crime Investigation Association (HTCIA) held recently in Hershey, Pa.

HTCIA provides education and collaboration to members for the prevention and investigation of high tech crimes. In addition to law enforcement or private industry professionals comprising the organization's membership, there are also several student chapters including one at Defiance College.

Attending the conference from DC were digital forensic science students Daniel Lam, San Francisco; Miranda Behner, Warren, Ohio; Chelsea Bell, Walbridge, Ohio; Alex Frandsen, Frankfort, Ill.; Beth Wesche, Bryan, Ohio; Nick Mumaw (shown above), Wadsworth, Ohio; Steve Strahm, Toledo; and Matt Coons, Defiance. They were accompanied by Defiance College faculty member Tim Wedge.

Five of the Defiance students were selected as conference volunteers, helping with set up and registration and serving as ushers. Five students also gave poster presentations during the event.

For the students, the conference

offered numerous educational venues with lectures and labs. It also provided excellent networking opportunities. "We were able to talk to law enforcement officials, vendors of products, and experts within our field who gave good information about the routes we might want to go," said Lam. He noted that Defiance College had the greatest number of students in attendance. "Our program is special because it incorporates the criminal justice aspect that other schools don't. It's good to see."

Lam was asked to serve on a committee to organize student involvement for next year's conference.

Both Mumaw and Behner said that they had many opportunities to talk with professionals in the field as well as students from other colleges. "I was able to network with so many people," said Mumaw. He noted that many people expressed interest in the crime investigation camp that Defiance College holds every summer.

Behner said the conference reinforced her career choice. "Being there gave me the extra push that I needed to finish my degree and start my career in the digital forensics field," she said.

"I spent part of the summer and a good portion of the winter with the Defiance County Sheriff's Office working on real digital cases for an internship and then as a part-time employee. During one of the first cases I assisted, they left me to work on a cell phone while they interviewed the suspect. In the fifteen minutes that they were gone, I pulled several hundred pictures off the phone that the suspect thought had been deleted. That day, I gained complete respect from everyone in the office, including the sheriff.

"Since that day, they have done everything they can to help me out, even hiring me to work on more cases. Without the education that I received from DC and Dr. Gunsch, none of that would have been possible. I went into my internship feeling completely unprepared and ended up showing them that I knew exactly what I was doing.

"Overall, my experience with the program and working in the community has been an amazing experience! I have learned more than I ever thought possible and have met so many people to help me succeed."

Ilana Goch, class of 2012, currently working as a graduate assistant in Digital Forensic Science

"The digital forensics program at Defiance College prepared me for a unique and exciting career. It laid the foundation for my current graduate level endeavors in digital forensics, and has been the starting point for everything that I have accomplished."

**Casey Kahsen, class of 2010
Instructor of Computer Forensic Science and Collegiate Cyber Defense Faculty Advisor
The University of Northwestern Ohio**

