

Making Connections

CEPS major's Apple internship result of UNH contacts

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For anyone who isn't certain if having connections can really make a difference, meet Brandon Blaesing '19, a [chemical engineering](#) major who landed an internship at Apple during the summer of 2018.

And while you may wonder what a chemical engineer would do at a tech company, you only have to envision the many colors that iPhones and MacBooks come in; Blaesing actually worked with some of the new shades that were released in the fall. During the internship, he spent time in the manufacturing design department as well as working with dye chemistry to color aluminum and working with the glass finishing process, both areas where the focus was on aesthetics and material strength.

The experience was mostly what he expected: a high-speed environment with creative freedom and employee empowerment. The learning curve came with adjusting to industry and all that involves. The biggest surprise, he says, was the casual nature — no dress code and relatively flexible hours for an engineering position.

“I feel fortunate. It was because of the connections at UNH that I got the internship,” Blaesing says. “I worked in professor Young Jo Kim’s lab between my sophomore and junior year, and he connected me with professor Dale Barkey, who had a contact at Apple. It was crazy; I talked with them in April, flew out the day after finals and then flew back the day before classes started again in the fall.”

It was a busy time but a pace that he is used to. In addition to his internship and being a member of several chemical engineering professional groups, Blaesing is a [STEMbassador](#) with UNH’s [College of Engineering and Physical Sciences](#) (CEPS), a role he’s had since his junior year. An outreach initiative started by CEPS in 2016, STEMbassadors help introduce K-12 students in New Hampshire to STEM experiences through activities that make science, technology, engineering and math accessible and fun. Sample projects include designing a theme park ride and developing packaging for drone delivery of iPhones, using an egg as a replacement for the phone.

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“It’s fun to see what the kids come up with,” Blaesing says. “It’s a great way to show why science is cool and how it can help with the silliest things.”

Blaesing also tutors UNH students in chemistry two days a week through Alpha Chi Sigma, the chemistry honor society. And he presented at the 2018 Undergraduate Research Conference. His project, “Structural Property Relationship of Biomaterials Using Intercalation of Group 1 Metallic Cation,” was overseen by his advisor, Young Jo Kim.

After commencement, Blaesing will attend a 12-week program — “it’s like getting a minor” — at Tufts University to learn programming. He has been applying for jobs, including a few he found on NASA’s website, but he says he hasn’t ruled out graduate school.

“I know I want to do something with computers; maybe aerospace,” Blaesing says. “Right now, I want to diversify myself.”

The Londonderry, New Hampshire, native describes himself as having always been the inquisitive type. Curiosity came naturally to him. But it wasn’t until he took an advanced math class during his senior year of high school that Blaesing got interested in chemistry. And that eventually led to his philosophy about science being cool.

So, why, exactly, does he think that’s true?

“Because science explains everything,” Blaesing says. “It’s cool because it empowers people to make a difference in the world. A lot of people do bad things with science. I want to see the ways it can do good, like through engineering. There is so much more

to know; it's unsettling that we settle. I want there to be enough curious people out there to figure the things out that we need to figure out.”

Learn the cool things you can do with a [chemical engineering degree](#).

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