



Issue #10
January 26, 2017

Base Camp Coding Academy Newsletter

We have been experiencing a busy winter season. With the exception of the longest break in the academic year for the holidays, (a full week off, the exception to our policy of taking only banking holidays off,) the students have been working hard in and out of the classroom as the finish line for this inaugural class comes into view.

Classroom Progress:

The instruction period around the core curriculum has been completed, and students are currently submitting their proposals for individual thesis projects. These projects will have base requirements to demonstrate mastery of all the skills required to be an excellent software developer, and leave freedom to express individual interests and areas of excellence.

Each student's thesis project will include a program that manages inventory and sales for a rental company. For the remaining project components they are completing a project plan and undergoing an evaluation with their instructors, with a focus not only on producing high quality work, but also thorough documentation throughout the proposal, build, testing, and final evaluation steps.

During this period each student will be matched with a mentor from our regional employers who can answer questions about the lifecycle of software development, and provide encouragement throughout this process. (Thank you to C Spire, Renasant Bank, FNC / CoreLogic, and AOL for providing mentors for this period.)

These projects will be available at each student's portfolio page, along with other completed work, here: <https://basecampcodingacademy.org/student-portfolios>

Following the successful completion of these projects, students will be leaving the classroom for internships. These will last 2 to 3 weeks, and allow sufficient time before graduation for the class to regroup, compare workplace experiences, and close any skill gaps before officially leaving to enter the workforce.

The class has instituted a business-casual dress code one day each week in preparation for these upcoming events.



Classroom Visitors:

Toni Cooley, Michael Thomas, and Nicole McNamee from Systems Companies came to learn about what we are doing with Base Camp, and share their expertise with us. Systems Companies has built an impressive portfolio of Mississippi based businesses, including a technology education and consulting operation and several advanced manufacturing operations that support both Nissan and Toyota.

David Magee came to visit us twice, the second time bringing a photographer from the new Oxford Magazine that launched last fall. David spoke to the class about the challenges media has faced over the past decade, and how he has found success by embracing and accelerating the use of new technology in his media companies. He then went home and wrote a wonderful article about Base Camp, which can be read here:

<http://oxfordmag.com/voices/this-water-valley-coding-academy-is-changing-the-game/> (The print edition includes more pictures from the classroom. Look for the December issue.)

Bill Rayburn, co-founder of FNC Inc. and founder of Mortgage Trade in Oxford, MS, popped in to share inspiring stories about being an entrepreneur in the tech industry, growing up in Mississippi, and building successful businesses in his home state. If any of you have had the pleasure of listening to Dr. Rayburn, he was in full form, and left his audience more informed about business, personal finance, the mortgage industry, and time pieces.

Field Trips:

We were honored to be invited as a class and organization to participate in the Speaker's Edge events on the campus of the University of Mississippi. Each student spent two days in early January paired with a judge during this speaking competition. Two days of networking, observing, and simply being exposed to the larger world of business and education. At the same time, our students made a splash with their self possession, professionalism, and positive energy. Thank you to Randy Harrington for helping make this happen.



There was a celebratory trip to the bowling alley as the class passed the hallway point.



Class of 2018!

Base Camp is currently receiving nominations for the class of 2018, (classes starting June 1, 2017.) If you know of a high school senior with a strong work ethic, a problem-solving mind, and limited education opportunities following high school, please reach out to their teachers and recommend a nomination to Base Camp.

We are prepared for an incoming class of 25.

The first step in nominating a student is filling out this short form online:

www.basecampcodingacademy.org/nominate

We are in the process of visiting schools throughout the region to spread awareness in our teaching community about this opportunity. While in many places we have received a warm welcome, if you know of anyone that could help us reach the Calhoun County, South Panola, and/or Charleston high schools, we would love the opportunity to reach those teachers and students.

Access:

If you would like to keep up with the goings-on in the Base Camp classroom in between these newsletters, Sean does a great job posting updates to our social media sites:

<https://www.facebook.com/basecampcodingacademy/>

<https://www.instagram.com/basecampcoding/>

Fundraising Activities:

In December we received three donations:

- 1) Forty second-hand laptops from BrainShark, once again allowing us to move forward without needing to buy laptops for the incoming class.
- 2) A grant from AOL for \$10,000. Thank you Alex Eller for making this happen.
- 3) A \$5,000 gift from a private Water Valley philanthropist. This is particularly exciting for us as this is our first hometown investment.

Kagan and Glen continue meeting with business and philanthropic leaders across Mississippi to ensure Base Camp has the resources to fully serve our students. Any warm introductions you can offer are greatly appreciated.

Founding Partners:

Northwest Mississippi Community College

Founding Sponsors:

Diane and Dickey Scruggs

The C Spire Foundation

Paige and Glen Evans

Ambassador John Palmer

Corelogic

generous/modest philanthropist #1

Renasant Bank

Community Sponsors:

Trustmark National Bank

Generous/modest philanthropist #2

A candid photo taken on a cold day in December, during a break period. An intimate game of Uno, played by a group of young adults that will have each other to lean on for the rest of their lives.

