



# base camp

</CODING ACADEMY>

QUARTER 1 - 2023



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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From all of us at Base Camp Coding Academy, thank you for supporting us through another year of hard work and growth. 2022 saw the largest class of Base Camp Classic students ever, with 24 students on track to graduate this May. In the same year we started referring to the original Base Camp program as “Classic”, after launching the Graduate Institute (GI), our new offering for students 22 and older. The inaugural Base Camp GI class has been working hard since September, and also boasts an amazing group of 24 students on track to graduate in August. If you have followed the journey of Base Camp since 2016, you know that each step has been successful because of the

hard work of our community of supporters, (all of you!) and the students that lean into this opportunity and work through the challenges that arise every day. Thank you for your contributions to all this success, from mentoring, guest teaching, advising on our curriculum committee, and providing crucial financial support. Each of our students continues to receive a full scholarship, fulfilling our mission to make Base Camp accessible to every under-advantaged Mississippian who is ready to grind for a year and become part of Mississippi’s future tech workforce. This quarter we have turned the writing of this newsletter over to those amazing students. They continue to surprise and impress us every day.



# ADMISSIONS

Class of 2024

We are hoping you can help us identify several hard-working and diverse students from your school/area that may be interested in our year-long, 100% tuition-free software development training program. I have outlined our admissions process and student eligibility requirements below.

If you are a nominator, you only need to fill out the [Nomination Form](#). Please send the [Application Form](#) link to the student that you nominated.

If you are a student, you only need to fill out the [Application Form](#). Please send the [Nomination Form](#) link to the adult you would like to nominate you. Your nominator cannot be related to you.

Nomination Form: <https://forms.gle/A4ZaGnp59t7u35vJ8>

Application Form: <https://forms.gle/j8yDet9VVVuNfua6A>

## STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Graduating from high school during the 2022-2023 school year.
2. Ability to commute to Water Valley, MS for classes. This means the student either lives within commuting distance (50 miles) or has the ability to relocate to live within commuting distance. Base Camp Coding Academy does not cover the cost of housing for any students.

\* We do not have a GPA or ACT minimum requirement. We evaluate students based on their nomination, application, and interviews.\*

## STUDENT ADMISSIONS PROCESS

1. (Nominator) Students are nominated by an unrelated adult with insight into the student's aptitude and motivation. Link above.
2. (Student) Students are asked to complete an application. Link above.
3. (Student) We coordinate with the students to set up their first interview.
4. (Student) If selected, the students are brought back for a second interview and asked to complete a small programming challenge.
5. After the second interview, we will make a final decision about admission and communicate that with the students.



# Tech Talk

Written by Our Students



## HTML & CSS

HTML (The Hypertext Markup Language) and CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) are two languages that are the core technologies for building Web Pages. The HTML side of things is the base structure of the page, and the CSS side of things is the design and layout of devices. Here at Base Camp Coding Academy(BCCA) students learned HTML and CSS over the course of 5 weeks and their final product for these languages were their personal portfolios. "Overall it was an amazing experience and something I would love to pursue further."

Written By Gabriel Zinn

## Python

Python is a powerful programming language used for a wide range of purposes. It can be used to develop a website, create simple games, analyze data, and even create artificial intelligence. As powerful as it is, Python is the most recommended language for beginners as it has a simple "syntax" or grammar that reads much like the English language making it easier to understand. Our students began their first unit of Python with a basic program that prints "Hello world!" back to the user, and learned how to incorporate math into their Python code. Halfway through the first unit of Python, our students learned conditional statements which based on what a user entered into a prompt, the code would branch out into different states. While loops were introduced after that to repeat actions in python such as repeatedly asking the user for the password until the correct password was entered. They then moved on to data classes which create individual items such as a "Contact" and give it attributes like name, email, phone number, etc.

As a conclusion to the first unit of Python, the students were split into groups of their choice to create a project where they would showcase everything they had learned thus far. The programs created for the group unit projects included:

- Dungeons & Dragons character creation
- Biome simulator, where the player tries to grow food under different weather conditions
- Escape from Jail game
- Rick and Morty game, where the player explores different rooms looking for components of Rick's portal gun,
- Student directory that displayed each student's contact information
- Educational math game for children

Written By GI Students

## Django

Upon completing the HTML & CSS unit, students moved into Django, a Python framework designed to scale python into a fully fleshed web development language. Django was built with the developers time in mind, as it is a rapid development application without sacrificing security and speed. Key Django features day to day internet browsers might recognize are forms and models, used to collect customer information on online shopping websites when checking out. Django has been enjoyable for students because it has given them the ability to create fully functional websites and applications, giving much more creative freedom. Chevy Cook, a student at BCCA, says "Django was a challenging experience, but in the same token a rewarding one as well, seeing all of your work from months here come together like that is exciting."

Written By Cooper Mcvay



# GUEST SPEAKERS

## CLASSIC

Here at Base Camp Coding Academy we have been honored to have multiple guest speakers. Notable speakers & their respective companies include; Dr. Trina George ( USDA), Nicholas Confrancesco & Tannaz Sassooni (Netflix Animations), Clay McLeod (St. Jude), & Marlin Taylor (Homeland Security). These individuals have spared some of their time to speak to Base Camp Coding Academy and the students have been grateful, "I feel inspired by our Guest Speakers to pursue my desired field in tech. Real people sharing their experiences help us understand the industry we are pushing into" - Luke Murchinson. Through these guest speaker experiences we have learned about workplace culture, job behaviors, and more about embracing ourselves before stepping into the job field. At BCCA guest speakers are welcomed and encouraged. We hope to see more come by for a chat & a tour!



# GRADUATE INSTITUTE

NEW

Similar to the Base Camp Coding Academy, the Graduate Institute is a non-profit program that offers challenging, fun, hands-on software development training to adults in the Mississippi area with a 100% scholarship thanks to the generous support of Tennessee Valley Authority. In an intimate classroom setting three times a week, students work with real world technologies to learn the fundamentals of coding, app development, and the life leadership skills they will need to be successful in their career and competitive in the job market upon graduation. The main difference between the two programs, however, is the Graduate Institute is for anyone twenty-two years of age or older and classes only meet three times a week with ten hours of at-home coursework, totalling twenty-five hours per week.



Thirty-three students were admitted into Cohort 1 with their age ranging from twenty-two to fifty-five years old. In addition to the wide age range, admitted students came from multiple areas of north Mississippi, including Ashland, Banner, Charleston, Ecu, Grenada, New Albany, Oxford, Paris, Ponotoc, Sardis, and Water Valley; one of the students actually moved from Crossville, TN to Oxford, MS once admitted!

Cohort 1's first day of class was September 13, 2022, and since then have learned numerous skills of Python. Students are scheduled to complete their second unit of Python in mid-December, then move onto HTML/CSS. From there, students will learn several other programming languages and skills before their graduation from the Graduate Institute on August 31, 2023.

## G.I. STAFF



Briana Talley  
**Director**



Tom Greenway  
**Technical Director**



Trey Shelton  
**Technical Director's Assistant**



# GUEST SPEAKERS

## GRADUATE INSTITUTE



Rooted in one of the most highly decorated Special Operations units in the Iraq War: Echelon Front offers leadership development programs to get companies/teams performing to the highest standard. Their leadership solutions have been proven to be true in real combat situations, and now Echelon Front translates and teaches those skills into everyday life and business environments.

Corey Mize taught our students the meaning of extreme ownership and how to lead at every level of a company. Communicating clearly and being open to feedback are key parts of a successful team. Corey gave us examples of combat situations where after communicating to our team and asking if everything was understood, it will increase efficiency and allow each team member to achieve their task. Extreme ownership was a key part of the presentation where holding oneself accountable meant having to put personal egos aside for the better of the team. By owning to one's mistakes and stating what is being done to correct future mistakes, it inspires those working for you to follow in your footsteps.

After giving a brief introduction to how Fannie Mae operates its business and its role in the financial industry. John Lyon dived into how a company like Fannie Mae uses software development in their business. Creating a mathematical relationship from observed historical data and creating forecasts for the financial future. When doing the underwriting process for deciding if a person is approved for a loan, companies apply an automated system to weigh the individual's likelihood to not default on the loan. This is industry wide practice at this point in time.



John then goes into the various roles a company could employ as a software developer, and how a traditional education is not always required for these jobs. John himself started as an intern more than 20 years ago learning SAS. He has worked in Management for over 10 years now, but reflects on how learning to code helps him better work with his team to accomplish their goals. Not only does understanding coding help communication with the coding teams, but also when speaking with executives and clearly explaining the core essence of the program's functions. John has found his experience at Fannie Mae very rewarding, and asks that when someone contemplates their choices in what jobs they apply for in the coding space that they first decide what is important to them and make decisions based on that.

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[SEANENNIS@BASECAMPCODINGACADEMY.ORG](mailto:SEANENNIS@BASECAMPCODINGACADEMY.ORG)