Cybersecurity attracts those with varied backgrounds

Don DeVolder has experience in military security, in an internship with the U.S. Department of Defense and has already earned two network security certifications.

“With my background, I knew cybersecurity was the way to go,” he said. “I had been in the Navy for five years, and I was a U.S. Army veteran. Then I found out about this program. It’s a highly rated, veteran-friendly degree program. It’s important to me that students have access to advanced lab facilities, including ActiveSim, which is funded by the National Science Foundation and works in collaboration with Wayne State University, in order to provide cybersecurity training, including Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH) Scripting for Security Protocols, Information Security Policies and Risk Management, Penetration Testing and Analysis, and more.”

Cybersecurity is a highly technical field, where a hacker computer virus or cyber attack can devastate a company’s data integrity. DeVolder has already seen the damage done by those who bring only a rudimentary understanding to the game.

“That’s what appealed to Tim Cooper, a student in the program, who is planning to pursue a Bachelor’s Degree in Information Technology (IT) at Walsh College, a U.S. National Security Agency/Department of Homeland Security-designated Center of Academic Excellence. “I have always had a way with computers and love to work with them,” says Cooper. “Macomb has all the up-and-coming in the field. And with the hands-on training I will have as a professional, I feel that the program is preparing me for a career in network security.”

That preparation involves both general IT classes and specific courses to cybersecurity, including Computer and Network Security, Information Security Policies and Risk Management, Penetration Testing and Analysis, and more.

The program, created under the National Science Foundation and works in collaboration with Wayne State University, is also promoting STEM through its new Career Exploration Lab. The lab allows students to try a variety of activities and see what they might enjoy.

“Students are able to select their interests and choose from a variety of activities. The goal of the lab is to spark interest in STEM careers and to show that STEM careers are not just for engineers but for anyone who enjoys problem-solving and creative thinking,” says DeVolder.

DeVolder adds that he hopes his students will consider internships in STEM careers, but he also wants them to take the time to explore other options.

“We talked with interesting people who shared their ideas about what they were working on and all that we can do as a student. Then we had an incredible discussion on what it takes to be a successful individual like Devon St. Louis.”

In the future, DeVolder hopes to see his students continue to pursue their STEM careers and to consider internships in STEM careers.

“With the STEM program, we hope to help students consider internships in STEM careers, but we also want them to take the time to explore other options.”

On Tuesday, DeVolder hosted a special field trip to Detroit to show his students the city of design. The event also covered offering them on a Career Services-organized tour. Students will visit Shinola headquarters in Detroit to see what “made in America” looks like, host a “test drive” at Jimmy Johns Field, and learn more about what it’s like to work in the city of design.