



base camp
</CODING ACADEMY>

Issue #19
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Base Camp Coding Academy Newsletter

The Base Camp class of 2019 has passed their halfway point! Over the past six months they have conquered Python, completed front-end web development, (HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and Bootstrap,) and will have completed their back-end web development (Django) before the short holiday break. In January they will continue their full stack web development projects in Java.

The depth of knowledge these students are achieving continues to expand our understanding of what Mississippi youth are capable of. A new coding language is not considered “mastered” until two benchmarks have been met: First a student must be confident in their ability to write and test their own programs. Second, the student must be comfortable performing quality control on legacy codebases, inherited from other programmers who might have a completely different style of writing code. This skill in particular is critical to making sure our graduates are ready to hit the ground running when they join a team of developers wherever they start their careers.

There is nothing easy about this process. There are no shortcuts. It takes hard work, every day, to achieve the goals we set here. And every day we learn how exceptional Base Camp students are.

Classroom Visitors:

Barry Sando, Managing Director and Group Executive with CoreLogic, and native Mississippian, met with the Base Camp class to share his career path and talk about opportunities in the CoreLogic organization for strong coders.



It’s always a treat when Base Camp alumni swing through the classroom to share what they are up to, and encourage the current students to keep pushing themselves. Several graduates from the class of ’18 were able to drive up from CSpire.



Jacob Spense, class of '17, popped in for a visit to talk about his life as a FedEx employee since June of '17. Soon afterward Bobbi Landreth and Jason Campbell came to introduce the class more formally to the FedEx organization, and share the career opportunities available.



Dr. Michael J. Heindl, the new president of Northwest Mississippi Community College, introduced himself to the class of 2019, and spent an afternoon strategizing with us about the new facility that NWCC will co-occupy with Base Camp.



Jon Levingston, the Executive Director for the Clarksdale-Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce, came for a visit with a group from the Delta as well as the founders of RuralShores in India and their new enterprise, PeopleShores.



Not pictured, but equally appreciated for taking time out of their busy schedules to meet with the class and share their inspiring stories of personal career growth and opportunity in Mississippi:

- Ambassador John Palmer, a pillar of the current Mississippi telecommunication and technology sectors, and a Founding Sponsor of Base Camp.
- Kelly Hardwick, Executive Director of the Mississippi State Personnel Board, and Joe Goff, Deputy Director of the Mississippi State Personnel Board, visited with exciting news about a statewide change in policy: Base Camp graduates will now be eligible to fill 20 IT job categories across all state departments that previously have required a Computer Science degree.
- Corey Hart from Mississippi Public Broadcasting spent an afternoon with his documentary film crew collecting footage for a short film series promoting workforce opportunities across the state.
- Steve Russell, Executive Director of the North Central Planning and Development District, has visited a number of times this fall to assist with the work for Base Camp Phase 2.0. (See below for more on this!)

- John Rounsaville, Rob Stalder, David Campbell, Dwayne Casey, and everyone else who has been so generous with their time this fall.

Corporate Campus Visits:

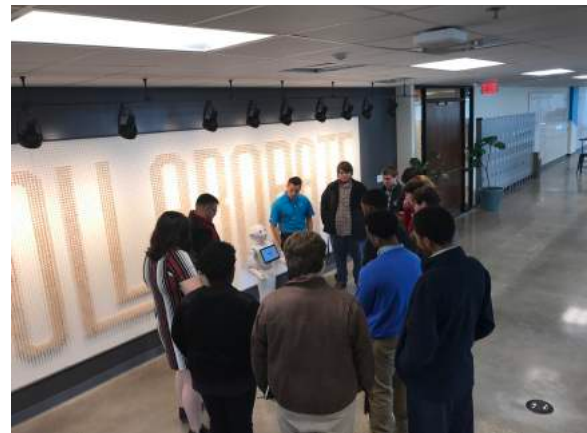
The class took a trip to CoreLogic | FNC, in Oxford, for their first exposure to a corporate work environment. Students were able to shadow software engineers in the office to get a sense of “a day in the life.” (Three Base Camp alumni that work at CoreLogic | FNC were part of the hosting team.) The energy and enthusiasm levels in the classroom in the following weeks were a testament to how motivating a clearly defined goal can be.

Renasant Bank welcomed the Base Camp class into their data center in Tupelo, MS. The students were treated to a full tour of the state-of-the-art facility, a Q&A session with all the onsite IT departments, and a video conference with the software development staff in Birmingham.



At CSpire the students met with department heads from across the IT spectrum, took a tour of the ever-expanding CSpire facility, and interacted with one of the Pepper robots that are part of CSpire’s efforts to expand interest in tech with youth across the state. The Base Camp alumni network showed up in force, and 9 of our graduates, (current CSpire employees,) brought the students to their work areas to shadow them for the afternoon.

A special thank you to Wade Creekmore, Beth Creekmore Pickering, and Wade Meena, (former Base Camp intern who’s about to finish his MBA at Millsaps,) for joining us for lunch.



Base Camp Alumni, classes '17 and '18. Missing Is Lizeth Buenrostro, who had a meeting she couldn't miss.



Glen and Kagan were invited to meet with the leadership of the MorganWhite Group earlier this year, and discovered a national leader in insurance with a strong mission of investing in Mississippi. This Mississippi-based company has decided to partner with Base Camp, and will open up the insurance industry as a new area with huge career potential for future Base Camp graduates.

Just a few weeks after first meeting with MorganWhite they hosted the class at their headquarters in Ridgeland, MS.



Personnel Changes:

This is the final year of the three-year pilot, and we are preparing for a larger Base Camp beginning next year. With a goal of graduating 25 students each year, we are in the process of expanding our teaching staff to support a larger student body. A search committee is actively vetting candidates to join our teaching staff, and Sean Anthony, our first hire who has served as Director for the past 2.5 years, has been promoted to Executive Director and will be taking full ownership of our recruitment and admissions processes.

John Terenzio has stepped into a new (volunteer) role as our first Software Engineer in Residence. John brings significant programming and technology experience from his 10 years in the San Francisco Bay Area at **Eventbrite** and **Airbnb** as both a software engineer and engineering manager

Nate Clark, our Technical Director for the past 2.5 years, has stepped into the lead position in classroom instruction, and continues to chair the Base Camp Curriculum Committee.

Financial Updates:

Pilot Period:

FedEx has extended a \$75,000 grant to Base Camp for the 2018-2019 academic cycle, the last year of the pilot period. This is the third year FedEx has provided financial support to Base Camp.

Phase 2.0:

There are two financial goals for Phase 2.0:

- 1) Securing the annual operating budget for Base Camp, and
- 2) A one time capital campaign to fund a facilities project for **Mississippi's first Rural Education and Innovation Hub**. The City of Water Valley has generously agreed to donate the facility (pictured below) to Base Camp. Remediation, renovation, and stabilization costs for the facility are estimated at approximately \$5 million. 60% of these costs will come from a combination of historic and new market tax credits, grants, and other public sources. The remaining \$2 million in costs will be raised with this capital campaign.

Once in the new facility, Base Camp Coding Academy will scale to 25 graduates beginning in 2019. Our growth strategy will maintain our \$15,000 per student budget, with a total annual operating budget of \$375,000. Glen and Kagan are in active discussions with several current and prospective corporate and philanthropic Base Camp supporters to partner on both the operating and capital investment funding. Several current and new partners have provided commitments that we are looking forward to announcing early in the New Year.

Co-locating with Northwest Mississippi Community College, our corporate sponsors, and other partners, Base Camp will be the beating heart of this new facility, and bring our education and corporate partners into one large facility to let the synergistic fluids flow!



Stay up to date with Base Camp activities here:

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

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

Founding Partner:

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