Departmental News

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UNO Computer Science Doctoral student Austin Schmidt awarded DoD SMART Scholarship

University of New Orleans (UNO) doctoral computer science student Austin Schmidt has been awarded the Department of Defense's (DoD) Science, Mathematics and Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarship. The SMART Scholarship-for-Service Program is a combined educational and workforce development opportunity for bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. students to gain technical skills in critical STEM fields and support the national security mission of the DoD.

This award provides students with full tuition for up to five years, mentorship, summer internships, a $38,000 yearly stipend, an allowance of $1,000 towards books/material, a $1,200 in yearly medical expense and full-time employment with the Department of Defense after graduation. This unique opportunity offers students hands-on experience at one of over 200 innovative laboratories across the Army, Navy, Air Force and larger Department of Defense. During summer internships, SMART scholars work directly with an experienced mentor, gaining valuable technical skills. After graduation Smidt will work at the Naval Oceanography (NAVOCEANO) Office at Stennis Space Center (SSC) in Mississippi.

The Department of Defense is committed to developing the Nation's STEM talent and is the largest employer of federal scientists and engineers with nearly 150,000 civilian STEM employees working across the Department. DoD STEM activities support this mission by providing authentic learning experiences through a variety of education and outreach initiatives, such as the SMART Scholarship-for-Service Program. For over a decade, SMART has trained a highly skilled STEM workforce that competes with the evolving trends of industry to support the next generation of science and technology for our nation.

" *Due to the support received from UNO's computer science department, I have had many fruitful opportunities for professional growth. The experience and connections offered to me by the department have guided me towards the prestigious SMART scholarship which will offer funding and invaluable work experience. This scholarship may only be awarded to a handful of students each year, but I felt prepared during the application process due to the help and encouragement of the computer science department. A heartfelt thank you to the computer science department for helping me gain experience and be more prepared so that I may properly represent UNO in a professional setting while continuing my studies further.* "

-Austin Schmidt

Schmidt was born in Chalmette and raised in Covington where his family moved after Hurricane Katrina. He attended Covington High School in Saint Tammany Parish. Smidt graduated with a B.S. in computer science from Southeastern University in 2014 and with M.S. in computer science from UNO in Spring 2021. He is currently a doctoral student at UNO's computer science department. Schmidt was the recipient of the Summer 2021 Naval Research Enterprise Internship Program (NREIP) where he was hosted by the Center for Geospatial Sciences at the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) at SSC. His dissertation research is a joint effort between UNO-CS and NRL-SSC and involves the "Automatic Fast Feature and Instance Selection Using Clustered Spatiotemporal Data."