

Inside the FBI

Summer internships provide two students with new career goals

After getting insiders' perspectives on the FBI, two RIT students were so impressed that they hope to pursue careers with the elite law enforcement agency.

Michael Mehlretter, a fourth-year public policy major from Grand Island, N.Y., and Justin Grover, a networking, security and systems administration graduate student from Wappingers Falls, N.Y., were two of only three students from New York accepted into the FBI's prestigious Honors Internship Program over summer 2007.

"It was an incredible experience," says Grover, who was assigned to the security division. "I can't even begin to describe it. I got to meet President Bush and work with some pretty amazing people in my field of study."

Mehlretter spent the 10-week internship in the applicant security area,

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Thomas Ginter

Special agent/applicant coordinator, FBI

where he worked with an agent doing background checks on FBI job applicants – a key job in an organization with more than 30,000 employees. "It was awesome," he says. "I'm so glad I did it. I got to see how big the machine is and what it takes to keep it going."

Mehlretter already has a fair amount of government service under his belt. He has worked for the U.S. Attorney's Office for three years, and in 2005 spent seven months in Iraq with his Marine Reserve unit. He was awarded a Purple Heart after being wounded by a truck bomb.

However, there were some positive results of his military experience. Prior to being called to active duty, Mehlretter had been studying economics at Buffalo State University. Kasey Smyth '07 (public policy) was in his Marine platoon in Iraq and the two became good friends. Smyth spoke so highly about his RIT major that Mehlretter transferred into the program in spring 2006.

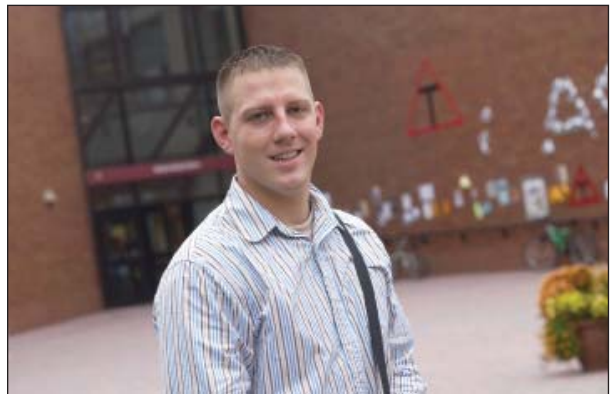
Grover, who earned his undergraduate degree in computer science from SUNY Geneseo, learned about the FBI internship from an acquaintance at a previous co-op job. "It sounded pretty neat, so I went ahead and applied, though at the time I thought I didn't even have a chance at getting it. After a grueling six-month process of interviews, polygraph and background checks, I finally got the official acceptance call."

"It's very competitive," explains Thomas Ginter, special agent/applicant coordinator at the FBI's Buffalo Field Office. The FBI considers factors such as academic standing, attitude, life experiences and demonstrated work ethic and motivation. Ginter, who has represented the FBI at RIT career fairs, says RIT students have critical skills the agency is looking for, such as computer technology and engineering.

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Justin Grover, a graduate student in networking, security and systems administration, is from Wappingers Falls, N.Y.



Michael Mehlretter is a fourth-year public policy major from Grand Island, N.Y.

Students interested in the program can find out more by going to www.FBIjobs.gov (look for Honors Internship Program in the Student Center section) or by contacting Thomas Ginter at the FBI Buffalo office at 716-856-7800.