

# STCC students land internships at MIT Lincoln Laboratory

SPRINGFIELD – Two Springfield Technical Community College students this summer are working as interns at MIT Lincoln Laboratory, a U.S. Department of Defense research and development center in Lexington.

MIT Lincoln Laboratory selected Douglas Bednarczyk of West Springfield and Shane Richardson of Hebron, Connecticut students from the Optics and Photonics Technology program at STCC. They will intern at the Lexington facility through August.

Richardson earned his associate degree from STCC in May, but will return this fall to take additional classes. Bednarczyk finished his first year in the two-year Optics and Photonics Technology program and hopes to earn his associate degree in spring 2020.

Students in the Optics and Photonics Technology program learn about the practical applications of light, optics and electronics. High-tech applications include lasers, fiber optics, holography, laser materials processing, optical systems and much more.

Nicholas Massa, department chair

for Optics and Photonics Technology, helped Richardson and Bednarczyk land the internships. They are not Massa's first students to get hired as interns at the prestigious laboratory. A former student, Gerald Gagnon, served as an intern in the summer of 2018 and ended up getting hired full time. He was chosen as a Lockheed Martin Future Leader in Photonics. Between January and May 2019, Gagnon contributed to the creation of a lab manual for a hands-on integrated photonics boot camp to be offered at Massachusetts Institute of Technology from Jan. 13 to Jan. 17.

"Students in the Optics and Photonics Technology program at STCC train on state-of-the-art equipment used in many commercial laboratories," Massa said. "There aren't any other associate-degree programs like ours in the region. That's why companies approach us. They discover our students know how to use the laser equipment and know the theory. They're ready to go to work."

Massa said there are not enough trained candidates to meet the demand for jobs in the optics and photonics

industry.

"I get calls every day from companies asking about candidates for internships and full-time positions. Nearly all of my students who graduate from the program get hired and they often get multiple job offers," he said. "STCC also is one of the most affordable pathways to a career and we are a point of entry for many first-time college students who come from low-income families. We provide one of the best values in higher education. After you get a degree in Optics and Photonics Technology, you can land a job that pays between \$40,000 and \$60,000 a year to start, and you go up from there."

Massa recommended both Bednarczyk and Richardson for the MIT Lincoln Laboratory internship, noting they are serious and hard-working students.

The internship was created through a collaboration between MIT Lincoln Laboratory, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and AIM Photonics (American Institute for Manufacturing

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STCC student Douglas Bednarczyk stands in the Optics and Photonics Technology lab at STCC.



Shane Richardson works on his class project at STCC.

