

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

>> AARON MANGEL



When Aaron Mangel returned to UNI to finish his degree after spending almost 10 years in the work force, he knew it would be a challenge, especially with the added stress of supporting a family. Despite these overwhelming factors, with the help and encouragement of the faculty in the Department of Computer Science, this 30-year-old, non-traditional student will be graduating with his Bachelors in Computer Science this May.

When asked what the biggest challenge was when returning to school, Mangel said, *"In coming back to UNI, the biggest challenge was that I was working so many hours combined with schoolwork. I still had other obligations that I needed to meet in addition to going back to school. Keeping all of the figurative plates spinning was a challenge indeed."*

In addition to work, school and a home life, Mangel has spent the past two summers doing research with Instructor Hughes, Associate Professor Schafer and two other students in building student response systems for android phones. This research has played a vital role in Mangel receiving an internship with T8 Webware, a financial services website strategy firm that specializes in bank website design and development. His fascination with computers has been a determining factor in his striving to finish his degree. *"I first used a computer when I was 5 years old. Since then, I've been enamored with everything about them, their physical structure and the software that drives them."* He hopes this passion and aptitude for computers will help him obtain a full-time position at T8 Webware after graduation.

The professors in the Department of Computer Science have played an important role in assisting Mangel on his road to graduation. *"It's difficult to pick out who hasn't influenced me in some way. Associate Professor Fienup gave me my original chance to take a course during the summer semester in order to get to the challenging courses sooner. Hughes and Schafer have both spent three semesters working with me and two other students on a research project that has gotten me an internship, and likely a job after I graduate. Associate Professor Gray and Department Head and Associate Professor Wallingford have both challenged me to learn more and to extend the bounds of what I am capable of doing. Finally, my advisor, O'Kane, has been an extremely helpful resource in pointing me to people that can help and offer advice."*

To students just coming into the Department of Computer Science, Mangel says, *"Be prepared to work. If you put the effort into these classes, you will learn a lot, but it's not something that is going to come without effort on your part."*

If money were no issue, he would have his own development business, working with the most interesting technology that he could find. He would like to be doing something profitable that could help other people but would sate his own curiosity and desire for knowledge; that, *"or raise corgis."*