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## Up to Code: Computer Science majors join the team at CGI in Waterville

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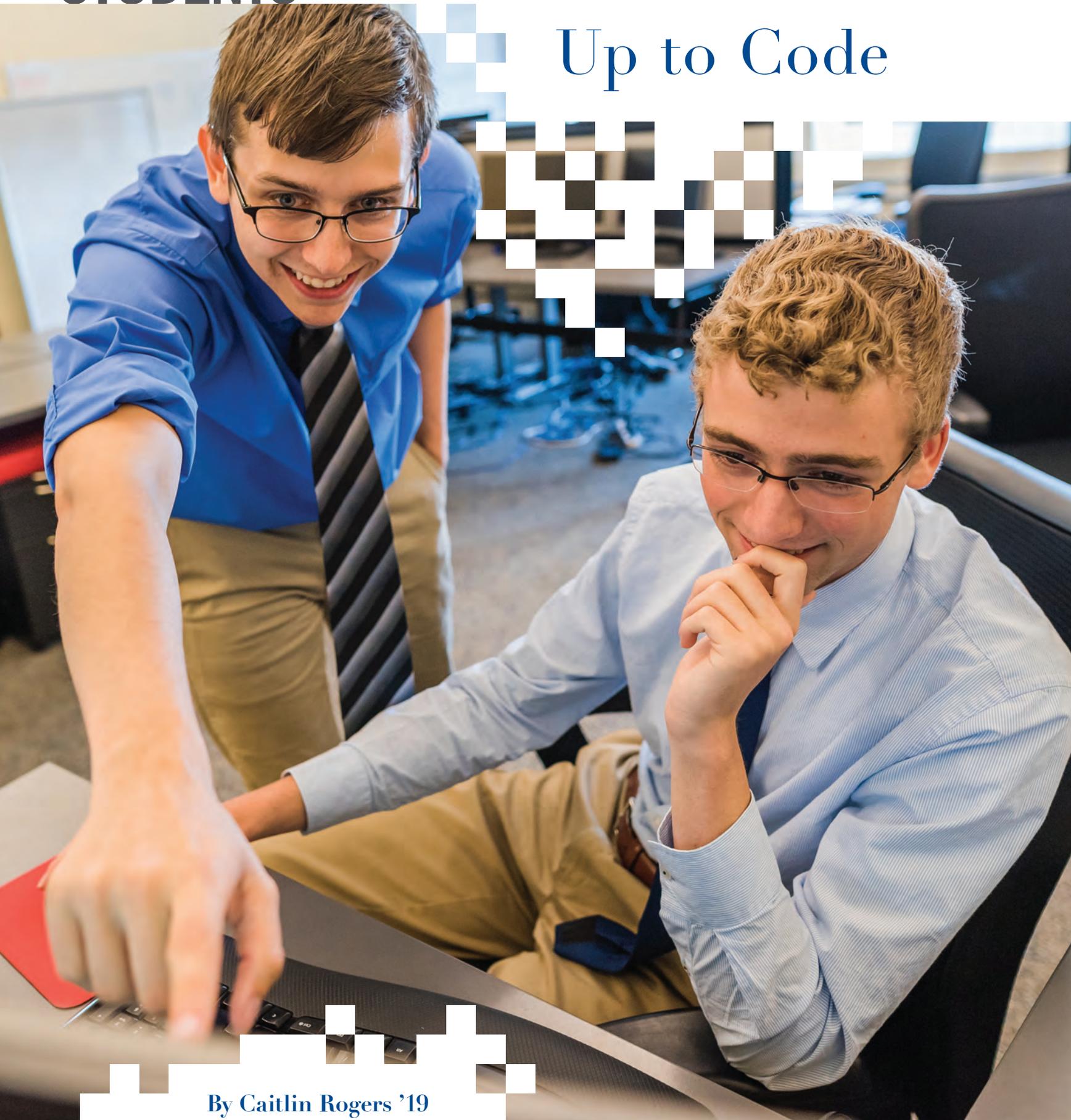
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# STUDENTS

## Up to Code



By Caitlin Rogers '19

## COMPUTER SCIENCE MAJORS JOIN THE TEAM AT CGI IN WATERVILLE

**FOR** computer science majors Austin Nantkes '19 and Chris Marcello '19, the path to a summer internship began with some serious competition.

CGI, Inc., a Montreal-based computer consulting firm that Colby recruited to Waterville as part of ongoing downtown revitalization efforts, chose to do more than the usual application process for the paid summer positions. "During Jan Plan we competed with another team to pitch an idea," Nantkes said. Based on the pitches, the company would decide who would get the paid summer internship.

Two teams of Colby students were instructed to create a project proposal that used blockchain (the basis for bitcoin online currency) to make the process of sending and receiving college transcripts easier. Nantkes and Marcello chose to focus on making the process more secure for users. In the present system, once transcripts are downloaded, people have the ability to edit the documents. "It looks official, but [with altering] they also have a 4.5 GPA via Photoshop," Marcello explained.

The other Colby group took a more business-oriented approach, and the company ultimately liked both ideas. As a result, all four entrants earned summer internships, but only Nantkes and Marcello accepted the spots.

The Colby students work at CGI's offices at the Hathaway Creative Center (the company planned to move to downtown offices at 173 Main St. in September following renovation of that Colby-owned building). "We're basically developers, so they give us full developer computers, they give us a workstation, they set us up and they say, 'This is what you need to do today, get it done,'" Nantkes said. Because they are interns they look to their supervisors for advice and help. Their supervisor gives them both responsibility and respect, Marcello said. "If we tell our boss, 'I don't know if we can do this,' or 'There's a better way to do this,' he's immediately listening."

Rick Bryant, CGI's Waterville site manager and the students' supervisor, said interns like Marcello and Nantkes are "true members of the team." At daily staff meetings, the Colby

interns and their coworkers give a synopsis of the project they are working on: what they did yesterday, what they plan to do that day, and what the roadblocks might be. In this way, Bryant hopes to prepare his interns for post-graduation work in the tech industry.

Because CGI is a consulting firm, developers work on varied projects, making for an interesting work space filled with short cubicles and individual stations. When different teams form, workers simply put their belongings into a rolling filing cabinet and set up in a new configuration.

In addition to learning what it's like to work an 8-to-5 job, Nantkes said one of his favorite things about CGI is the opportunity to work with a wide array of colleagues, from Thomas College interns to older developers with advanced degrees. Nantkes, who is considering entering a master's program after Colby, said it's been helpful to learn about colleagues' career paths and the ways they have specialized within their field.

**"We're basically developers, so they give us full developer computers, they give us a workstation, they set us up and they say, 'This is what you need to do today, get it done.'"**

**Austin Nantkes '19**

While the interns have had much to gain from working at CGI, Bryant said they have been a valuable addition to the office. "I love those guys," he said. "Both have really good skills and are fitting in well." Though Marcello plans to go abroad during the fall semester, Bryant said they have offered Nantkes a part-time position during the school year.