

Charles Vorhees – cybersecurity

Why did you choose your degree program? How has it helped you grow personally and professionally?

I chose to dual major in computer science and cybersecurity due to my passion for technology and my inspiration drawn from my father and sister, who also attended McKendree to complete degrees in computing. This has helped me grow by expanding my knowledge base and has given me many opportunities to translate what I have learned in the classroom to a professional setting.

What activities are you involved in at McKendree?

Throughout my time at McKendree, I was involved in work-study positions with the IT helpdesk and computing division as a tutor. I was also in Air Force ROTC and returned to my high school's Air Force JROTC unit as a technical mentor for the cyber team. I was on the cybersecurity team my freshman year. Most recently, I helped bring back the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) Chapter and was the president.

What are you most proud of accomplishing during your time here?

Helping revive some of the components of the computing division and inspiring other students to pursue extra activities within the division and on campus.

If you could go back in time, what advice would you give your first-year self?

There is a lot of value in networking – start early.

Who helped you the most on your journey?

All my mentors have helped guide me on the path through courses and getting to my dream career. On campus specifically, Capt. (Ret.) Daryl Hancock, vice president for operations at McKendree, has always been there to trade stories and other assistance with internships and jobs. Dr. Tim Ros, assistant professor of business, has his door open to offer advice on leadership, and Dr. Kian Pokorny, professor of computing, pushed me to consistently learn and build my computing knowledge.

What's next after graduation?

An internship with a technical operations division within the Department of Defense. I am also applying for Air Force Officer Training School to become a cyber warfare officer.