

Summer semester— No easy living

6 a.m.

The alarm goes off.

7:30 a.m.

Taber Hammond arrives on the University of Hartford campus from his apartment in North Haven, Conn.



10:30 a.m.

Hammond heads to class in Dana Hall with a human anatomy book under his arm.



The summer session was his first in the Master of Science in Prosthetics and Orthotics degree program. In addition to human anatomy, Hammond studied kinesiology as part of a full schedule of 20 hours in class—plus a trip to the University of Connecticut campus in Storrs, Conn., each week for his anatomy lab.

Fall semester: A typical Wednesday 7:45 a.m.—3:45 a.m.

Hammond arrives at Hanger Prosthetics and Orthotics's North Haven office to begin his required internship. At the internship he works with David Knapp, who is also an adjunct faculty member at the University. Patient Tom Mickus '77 has lost both of his lower limbs. The patient is being fitted with new feet for his prostheses, and Hammond is observing his mobility.



A Degree of Difference

STUDENT HOPES TO WORK WITH VETERAN AMPUTEES

The alarm goes off at 6 a.m. every weekday morning. Taber Hammond, who lives in North Haven, Conn., with his fiancée, Megan, will leave by 7:30 a.m. and may not return to their apartment for dinner until 10 p.m., afterwards reading textbooks for another hour or so. With commuting, studying, going to class, and working at his internship, he spends more than 50 hours a week preparing for his future career, but he says it's well worth it.

A first-year student in the University of Hartford's new Master of Science in Prosthetics and Orthotics program, Hammond grew up in Farmington, Maine, and stayed close to home for college. He studied community health education at the University of Maine—Farmington and, after graduation, worked for a company that developed wellness programs for large corporations, giving employees tips on how to eat better and live a healthier lifestyle. He soon realized it was not the career he wanted.

When Hammond discovered the new program leading to a degree in the field of prosthetics and orthotics at the University of Hartford, he jumped into action.

"I was living in Maine when I heard about it in early January 2010. I came down and met with [Associate Professor Kevin] Ball. I made my mind up that this was the program that I wanted to be a part of. I went back to Maine, packed my stuff, and moved down to North Haven. I enrolled in Gateway Community College there to finish my prerequisites in the spring semester and then had two weeks before the summer semester started at Hartford."

Because Hammond already had a bachelor's in a related field, he was able to enroll in the first cohort of the two-year master's program and to begin taking classes this past summer. The University of Hartford also offers a five-year program, in which students earn a Bachelor of Science in Health Science and a Master of Science in Prosthetics and Orthotics. This is the

only combined degree program of its kind in the Northeast.

Professional organizations expect the number of patients using orthoses and prostheses in the United States to reach nearly 9.7 million by 2020, due to an aging baby boomer population, an increasing number of diabetics who have lost limbs, and injured veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Medical care on the battlefields has improved over the years, and that means more people are surviving and returning home with serious injuries that would have been fatal in past wars.

"After I earn my degree, I want to use my skills to help injured veterans," says Hammond. "This career path would be very rewarding and would give me the chance to work with state-of-the-art technology and develop cutting-edge prostheses."

It is exactly that kind of technology that Hammond is learning about in his classes at the University. After spending the summer



Watch a video about Taber Hammond at hartford.edu/stories.

Part of the training that students receive involves being fitted with prosthetic limbs and then trying to perform certain tasks. Here Hammond tries to write his name while holding a pen with a prosthetic hand.



5–9 p.m.

Leaves North Haven at 3:45 p.m. and drives to Newington, Conn., for his Materials and Methodologies class, where he is learning to make plaster casts as one of the steps in fitting amputees with prosthetic limbs. Hammond works here with Mathew Parente, clinical director of Prosthetics and Orthotics and a member of the College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions faculty.



10 p.m.

Hammond arrives home in North Haven to have dinner with his fiancée, Meagan, before hitting the books for a few hours.

semester studying gross anatomy and kinesiology, Hammond's current courses focus on lower-limb orthotics and trans-tibial prosthetics, used for amputations that occur below the knee but above the ankle. He is also getting on-the-job training, thanks to his internship with Hanger Prosthetics and Orthotics, where he works with patients who are being fitted for prostheses.

When he's not at his internship, going to classes, or studying, Hammond steals some time for the gym or the golf course, where he plays with three of his classmates.

"I'm a pretty social person, and it has been hard not knowing anybody in Connecticut," says Hammond. "But that is starting to change. I have made some good friends in the program so far."

He has also become close to his professors. "They're not only willing, but they enjoy helping their students," Hammond says. "It's a close-knit community, which is a good feeling." ■

Our Campus **CREATES!**

Onstage at Millard Auditorium, Aaron Flagg, dean of The Hartt School, and Salvatore Ranniello '83, of Hartt's Community Division, led a drum circle. In a Hillyer classroom, students juggled balls, rings, and plates before transitioning to juggling college classes, homework, and life.

Lea-Janelle Mitchell '15, a dance performance major from Laingsburg, Mich., gives her reaction. "It was a ton of fun and it helped me spend more time with my roommate and get to know other people in other majors. When I walked away from the [juggling] class, I had new friends that I still talk to. People were so welcoming that I felt right at home."

Scheduled for the day after Hurricane Irene swept through Connecticut, Our Campus Creates! went ahead as planned. As a part of orientation activities for the Class of 2015, the event offered first-year students a morning packed with sessions on creativity in all its forms.

Ben Grossberg, poet, associate professor of English, and director of creative writing, asked students to envision their futures by writing and sharing poems as the inauguration of their college journeys. Students wrote captions for cartoons in another session led by Barney Associate Professor Deborah Kidder to practice problem-solving skills.

Our Campus Creates! was one of several events that welcomed the almost 1,500 members of the entering class to campus. In all, 20 programs taught by faculty from each of the seven schools and colleges at the University presented creative approaches to problem solving in different disciplines and introductions to the visual arts through sessions in printmaking, drawing, and media arts.

Based on last year's successful Our Campus, Our Planet orientation event, Our Campus Creates! sought to forge bonds among first-year students and between them and the University, and to underscore the universality and necessity of creativity in our world. ■

Right: In a session called Juggle Your Way to a Bachelor's Degree, first-year students practiced spinning plates and juggling balls and rings before transitioning to juggling college classes, homework, and life in general. The exercise was part of Our Campus Creates, a welcoming day of activities for the Class of 2015.

Below: In a session on monotype printing at the Hartford Art School, students create an image on a block, roll ink over the block, and print.

