A summer camp at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock changed Wesley Ferguson's life.

After spending two weeks getting a crash course in life as a computer scientist during UA Little Rock’s competitive High School Research Program, Ferguson never looked back as he pursued a career in computer science at UA Little Rock.

Ferguson worked with Dr. Mariofanna Milanova, professor of computer science, to turn two-dimensional facial images into 3-D animations and videos.

"After the High School Research Program, I wanted to get into computer science," he said. "My mentor (Milanova) gave me a taste of what computer science was like. At the end of high school, the EIT (Engineering and Information Technology) department gave me the financial ability to pursue a degree."

After graduating from North Little Rock High School in 2013, Ferguson attended UA Little Rock with the Provost’s Academic Excellence Scholarship.

In the Donaghey College of Engineering and Information Technology, Ferguson worked as a student ambassador, where he enjoyed helping other students through tutoring. He said being an ambassador helped get him out of the dorms and helped him make friends and be "less reclusive" as an undergraduate student.

Ferguson's favorite experience has been working on virtual and augmented reality research at UA Little Rock’s Emerging Analytics Center.

"Working at the EAC is just really cool," he said.
Ferguson has worked on projects like the virtual cadaver, which can help train medical students. He has also worked on a video game called “Island Escape” and on “Scenario Generator,” an application that allows users to easily create 3-D environments using a paint program.

Ferguson and a fellow student researcher were able to present “Scenario Generator,” which has potential in military and city planning applications, at the 2016 Supercomputing Conference in Salt Lake City.

“This app can be used to create 3-D worlds very easily,” he said. “So many people would come by the conference and say it was really cool.”

After graduating with a bachelor’s degree in computer science and a minor in information assurance in May, Ferguson, 22, of North Little Rock, is now pursuing a master’s degree in information science from UA Little Rock.

After he graduates in 2019, he plans to move to a technology industry city like Seattle or Washington, D.C., to work as a software developer.