The Data Sciences Summer Institute (DSSI) program has graduated many “Star” students since its beginnings in 2007. Two of those students were: Tim Weninger and Michael Paul. Here is what they have to say about how the DSSI program has helped them climb in their academic careers.

Tim Weninger: (DSSI 2008)

The DSSI program at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign gave me the opportunity to work on interesting research projects with many of the best data scientists in the world. That summer solidified my desire to continue research and contribute the technologies developed at DSSI to the scientific community. Ultimately, I believe that these projects will mature into applications used by the general public.

After graduating with my PhD from UIUC I plan to join a four-year university as a faculty member. My long-term goal is to serve in university administration.

--PhD Student at UIUC
--NDSEG Fellow
--NSF Graduate Research Fellow

Michael Paul: (DSSI 2008)

I attended the DSSI the summer before my senior year, when I started doing independent research. DSSI helped get me started by introducing me to both the fundamentals of performing research and the foundations of Machine Learning and Data Science. It was also the first research I had done, and it got me interested in the information science field (now I am focusing on language processing). It was good research experience to put on my CV, which is something that is sometimes hard to get as an undergrad, with a functional project I can demo to people. The crash course and tutorials helped in that I learned a lot of the basics I needed to know before I started on my senior thesis the following year.

My career goal is to be a researcher either in industry or academia. Of course it's hard to predict what I'll want to do several years from now, but I think I'd like to be a professor some day.

--NSF Fellow
--PhD Student at Johns Hopkins University (JHU)