Tyler Heavin '14 has a habit of tackling things in twos. First, there was his double major in biology and chemistry, and now there is his participation in back-to-back internship and study-abroad programs, both of which will give him a head start on his career in medical research.

After a short break in May, Heavin headed to Albany, N.Y., where he’s currently interning at the Gen*NY*Sis Center for Excellence in Cancer Genomics. He is primarily involved in investigating a drug showing promise in treating breast and prostate cancers.

“I’m excited for the opportunity to work with potential cures for cancer. I want to pursue medical research as a profession, so this is a major stepping stone,” said Heavin.

Heavin’s interest in medical research has been strong since his freshman year of college when he began independent research on the effects of antioxidants and oxidative stress on DNA. Heavin has presented his results at regional conferences hosted by the Indiana Academy of Science and Indiana Section of the American Chemical Society, as well as Butler University’s National Undergraduate Research Conference.

After interning in New York, Heavin will move to England, where he is enrolled for the 2012–13 academic year at the University of Oxford. He began the lengthy application process last fall and applied to several Oxford colleges.

Oxford, the second oldest university in the world and oldest in the English speaking world, is composed of 40 independent colleges under a central administration. To apply to the university, one must apply to an individual college. Heavin applied to three separate schools and was accepted into them all: St. Anne’s, Lady Margaret and St. Edmund’s. He chose St. Edmund’s after being offered a spot within the Department of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, an opportunity rarely offered to international students. During the program, he will be taking medical courses such as developmental biology, immunology, pathology, endocrinology and protein-protein interaction.

After spending a full year at Oxford, Heavin will return to Franklin College for a fifth year to finish up his double major, plus his minor in biochemistry. He is planning on applying to several medical and doctoral programs.

“I would love to be able to do stem cell research because of its promise in changing modern medicine,” he said.

Heavin received one of the 2009 Putnam County Lilly scholarships and attended Indiana’s South Putnam High School. He attributes his roots and experiences in Putnam County as the foundation for his successes thus far.

“Being involved in 4-H, FFA and other organizations in high school, as well as having close ties with my family really helped shaped me into who I am today. It really set me up to thrive at Franklin College and make the most of the small-school atmosphere. I have developed close relationships with my professors, who really care about their students, and that makes a world of difference.”

Heavin’s involvement in Franklin College student life includes membership in Student Foundation, Up ’Til Dawn, Chem Club and Scrubs Club. He is currently president of his fraternity, Sigma Alpha Epsilon. He also has been inducted into various Greek honor organizations such as Chi Beta Phi (science), Omicron Delta Kappa (leadership) and Order of the Omega (scholastic).

Heavin hopes to move back to the Putnam County area someday, if possible, to become involved in and give back to the organizations he was once a part of.

“I believe that giving back to your community and to the organizations that help youths is crucial. Giving young people the freedom and opportunity to achieve their potential is key to helping them become tomorrow’s leaders. I also think there is a demand for small-town Midwest values in the world, values that my family imparted to me at an early age.”