Reflective Essay

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As I reflect on the BSIS program that USF offers, I can firmly say that it has prepared me to work in this field. I feel as though the program itself has offered me a solid foundational understanding of web development technologies, although it is plagued with a few problems that I feel should be addressed for future students in Information Science with a concentration in Web Development Technologies.

I should preface this by stating that I greatly appreciated my time working through this program at USF. I became completely enthralled with the field of information science and web development due to this program and I am incredibly grateful for having the opportunity to learn so much through it. I greatly enjoyed the hands-on aspects of the program a lot. The process of writing code to fulfill the requirements of a project made learning enjoyable and rewarding. The program does have it's share of problems. These issues are twofold, many of the course teachings contain some fairly dated information regarding web development specifically, and I do have some issues with the program format being entirely online.

Regarding the first issue of outdated web development curriculum, I don't feel as though this issue is as widespread as the entire major. However, those courses required to complete the web development technologies concentration are the ones that I take some issue with. Many of the courses surrounding web development cover best practices from many years ago, not even approaching newer elements from HTML5 or CSS3. We were taught many things that are simply no longer best practices, some of which have even been deprecated. I was taught to format my sites with tables instead of utilizing current standards like flexbox and grid.

I also would have liked to have learned more about modern frameworks that web developers use every day like React or NodeJS. Just to provide the student with a complete stack of technologies that they can take into a job outside of college. Employers simply aren't looking for people that have a dated understanding of the baseline technology for web development.

I would love to see more in person courses offered for concentration as well. That's not to say that the online format doesn't have its benefits, and it may be especially helpful to do schoolwork in this setting as it is somewhat similar to the sort of setting a web developer might have in the field. However, I would have liked to have had the option to take some in person classes at USF. In all my time here, I have only really had the opportunity to meet a select few people within my major, even less so in my concentration. I can think of plenty of occasions where it would've been incredibly helpful to quickly ask a question of a professor face to face, instead of having to email them and wait hours or even days, just to get a response.

Despite these shortcomings, I am still incredibly grateful for the knowledge and skills I have gained during my time in the program. I still strongly advocate for updates to the curriculum, integrating current industry standards and technologies, and offering a blend of in-person and online classes to enhance the educational experience and better prepare future students for the dynamic field of web development. Overall, my journey through the BSIS program has been rewarding, and though there remains significant room for improvement to ensure that future students receive the most relevant and comprehensive education, I do understand that the field itself is ever evolving and can only imagine the difficulty it might be to keep up in the realm of information science and web development technologies. Even still, my journey through the BSIS program at the University of South Florida has been an invaluable experience that has sparked my excitement for this industry and equipped me with a concrete

understanding of web development technologies that I plan to build upon as I continue down my

career path.