*What* ***communication skills and experiences*** *(as an individual, a team member, and/or team leader) would you bring to a job? Such skills are a key to success in past CTP project teams. (Write AT LEAST 200 words*!)

Some communication skills and experiences I have that are valuable would be my work on the Borough Student Advisory council in high school and my Finance Commission work in college.

Borough Student Advisory Council (BSAC) is a board comprised of student leaders of each high school in each borough of New York. Every month we would come together to discuss and advise ways we could improve our respective schools. It was here that I learned to not only how to quickly network but communicate important ideas to the board members in my school. During the two years I participated, I was able to give two presentations to Staten Island Borough President Oddo and successfully receive grants of approximately $790,000 to repair our auditorium and cafeteria. For each of these presentations, I was able to effectively conduct research and express the dire need for repairs in our school.

As for more recent experiences, I also serve on the Finance Commission for the College of Staten Island. Here, I discuss the allocation of annual school funds among school staff and student government. Before we approve any requests, we need to deconstruct the worth of each project on monetary and communal levels. If we believe something does or does not serve the school well, we respectfully debate so until a majority of us can come to an agreement.

By serving on both BSAC and the Finance Commission, I believe I can successfully communicate important ideas to co-workers and help drive effective decision-making with any project we may encounter.

*What are your* ***career goals****? Please describe how you think* ***CTP can help you achieve*** *those goals. (Write AT LEAST 200 words!)*

My career goals are to refine my programming skills with formal education and job experience, to eventually become well-versed enough to start my own business as an adult. By applying to CTP, I aim to continue to learn even when I am not in school, gain valuable connections to top employers and avoid a grueling job search out of college.

My first experience with programming was in late middle school to early high school, where I was introduced during our computer lab time and during open-house events while I was still looking at high schools. Once I entered high school, I chose Software Engineering as my “shop” class and continued to learn it until graduation. The goal of our Software Engineering class was to prepare us for college, as being new to programming and trying to start with little experience was something that our teachers described as very challenging.

While I did come into college having a better grasp on the subject than most of my peers, I quickly realized that I did not possess many practical soft skills and even some hard skills. I did not know how to make my code readable to others, I did not know how to deconstruct a problem without a rubric from class and I did not even know how to use a repository. When I heard about how hard it was for many millennials to survive after college and saw how the economy fell during the pandemic (which is when I started college), I knew that garnering these skills early would be very valuable. Therefore, I got in contact with two other guidance counselors and applied to many more programs by my sophomore year. As of now, I am part of the Associations for Computing Machinery (ACM), a Codepath class, and a weekly job market workshop. By being part of CTP, I believe I can increase my repertoire of technical knowledge while also developing career-ready skills. Being part of the web development CTP course will also pair nicely with the Intro to Web Development elective I plan to take in college.

*What are the first steps you would take to complete an assignment that required using a program language, technical skill, or tech concept* ***with which you are unfamiliar****? (Write AT LEAST 200 words!)*

If I were tasked with completing an assignment using technology I was unfamiliar with, I would try to deconstruct the problem, learn what I need to solve it, and fill in any additional knowledge gaps after I found my solution.

While I am yet to experience any pressure to complete projects in a workplace, there have been times in college when I had to complete projects based on concepts that I did not initially understand from class. Nevertheless, I became much more adept at using my immediate resources than I ever was before.

When I usually encounter a knowledge gap in my work, I immediately ask people around me to clarify. Whether that may be from my professor in class or a classmate during lab, I have been able to avoid misconceptions by getting insight from others. If I am not in class, I would search for the topic online, primarily with websites like Stackoverflow and Geeksforgeeks. Reading forums and tutorial articles helps me find a quick explanation or code solution for my problem. If somehow, I am still lost, video tutorials also help illustrate concepts to me and grasp what my programs should be doing. Then, I gradually develop my solution for a time before looking for more information online. I found that I work better with an allotted “Struggle time” to work on a problem and figure things out myself in between additional searches for information. Spending too much time gathering information will lower productivity, so a balance is needed. Whenever I start to feel lost with online resources, I also message my friends and other students online for their advice. I often join group chats dedicated to studying so I can quickly ask questions like I would in class. Then, work until I complete my assignments and receive feedback on my performance. If I manage to complete my work but feedback suggests there was more for me to understand, then I promptly try to learn more before I am given a similar task.

Overall, when I encounter a programming problem that I am unfamiliar with, I tend to seek out my peers and online resources to fill my gaps in knowledge, while still prioritizing the completion of the task. Once the task is completed, I pursue additional knowledge to alleviate future difficulties.