**Career Aspirations and Goals Essay**

Jacqueline Rios

Library and Information Science, University of South Florida

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Dr. Alicia K. Long

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**Introduction**

I am Jacqueline Rios, a senior at the University of South Florida majoring in information science with a concentration in web development. My major has helped me equip and develop a range of pertinent skills and habits for my career as an aspiring front-end web developer. In my programming courses, I found myself cultivating efficient coding skills alongside logical frameworks essential for a solid foundation for web development. My courses in information architecture and information needs underscore and put in practice the merit of user-centered design to create an effective web page. Finally, the major provided a comprehensive foundation that spans beyond the purely technical aspects. The major nurtured soft skills by encouraging conscientious collaboration and communication with clients, users, and peers. Additionally, as a front-end developer, my role in coding is inherently a collaborative process. The soft skills afforded have enhanced my ability to create effective user-centered web pages that will resonate with users through striking aesthetics and functionality through careful consideration of all parties' values.

On top of my education, my aspirations as a prospective front-end developer are founded on a culmination of my interests and hobbies. I have been programming well throughout my youth to and into the present in my adulthood. As a middle school Girls Who Code Club attendee whose interest transcended time, I found great achievement and progression in learning to code and create projects. At the same time, I grew up with a passion for aesthetics and designs in many fronts, from fashion to video games. I would take a step back to appreciate and reflect on the design and consideration invested into each element that would combine to create an enjoyable experience. This same detail and appreciation is something I want to invest and yield in my work. Front-end development provides an outlet in which I could collaborate with clients to cultivate websites that allow users to have a seamless efficient experience they can enjoy.

**Personal Experience**

As established, several skills pertinent to web development were developed through my past and throughout college courses. I only aspire to continue nurturing and improving my skills. From designing and organizing the information system of individual sites to coding the front and back end of the websites.

The project-based Information Architecture course for example provided great experience and skills for creating comprehensive user-centered design for websites from start to finish. For example, I learned appropriate research skills to evaluate users with methods such as user persona and scenarios. I have done additional research extending past the methods outlined in the course through learning about card sorting and contextual interviews to become further engaged with users and their feedback on content. As with the other skills, it is important to maintain occasional research to be up to date on beneficial practices. This skill allows me to understand the scope I may need to work within each website project. Another skill is creating wireframes. I can create low-fidelity wireframes and high-fidelity wireframes through programs to organize content, showcase potential designs, and test the design of the website. I have gained proficiency in several wireframing tools such as Balsamiq and Figma to create more efficient and realistic models.

Technical skills I have honed and developed for coding a web page include HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, along with web hosting relevant for coding the front end of a web page. My first major project included creating my online resume for my Web Page Design and Management courses. Projects such as these make me confident in my development, however, I have a lot more to learn. I could learn to be more proficient with popular IDEs to better manage my code, such as Visual Studio Code. I also have some proficiency in back-end programming languages such as Python, and Java, as well as SQL and database design- though it could be expanded in to allow me to potentially expand my role from a front-end developer.

**Internship and Job Experience**

I have visited career services prior to this assignment. It was a great tool to browse and assess cooperative education careers, internships, and requirements within my field. Despite not taking up these opportunities personally, I got an in-depth view of the requirements and expectations within my field. There were additional services I have found, such as the ‘My Plan + Pathways’ program that assists students in finding a major that best fits them and following career steps to achieve their chosen career.

I have attended career services events in previous semesters. I learned how important it is to network and showcase yourself, as well as learn about the various careers in person to gain a personal glimpse and insight into potential careers and their requirements. I recall being advised to come prepared in a style suitable as business attire and maintain professional etiquette. Besides your peers, potential employers are there not only for you to learn about them but the chance to learn about you! Companies and their potential employers are there to present a glimpse and insight into further inquiries about the careers and requirements. They can assess your resume, give insights into their careers and internships, etc.

I currently do not have job experience in internships or careers within my field. through which I gain experience and enhance my soft skills such as customer service and Spanish. Despite having only served careers in food service and retail, I have attained skills that are still relevant in my web design career as I will work diligently with future stakeholders to explain, and suggest ideal products and answer any inquiries in a way they can understand and contribute to efficiently.

Moreover, I do have volunteer experience in helping one of my previous careers make some updates to their website. Some of the images they had on their website would not appear correctly, while some would not load whatsoever. By editing some of the pictures, and updating the image file details so that they can appear on the website. It helped ensure their products can be found more efficiently and ensured a more enjoyable experience for their customers.

I have done research for my chosen career through the USF Library and the Internet. Through the USF Library, I have been able to access academic papers contributed to by those within my field. I was able to assess the importance of their studies and the relevance of research in my field in understanding the foundations of our career, or the importance of analyzing studies pertinent to finding better methods such as evaluating studies/techniques to achieve a better user-design.

Through the internet, I have learned about the pertinent skills necessary for my career and experience that is expected through websites such as LinkedIn. I additionally learned more personal accounts about what is expected and favored in interviews and portfolios through some of the content creators on web design and UX on TikTok.

**Conclusion**

As I approach graduation and reflect upon my experience and skills, I am eager to continuously improve my abilities in addition to getting a career in front-end web development. I am presently expanding upon my portfolio of projects, as well as continuously researching the skillsets expected for varying web development jobs. I also look forward to incorporating my values and passions towards these aspirations. For example, I plan to help local Hispanic business owners in Chicago develop websites or redesign their front end to help create more enticing and accessible digital platforms to reach their clients.