Unit 6 Goals and Priorities

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My time here at Purdue has been wonderful for both learning, and career advancement. I am not yet finished with my classes, but I do feel quite a bit more comfortable in pursuing internships that may lead to a professional position. As is the point of any college, I feel that I have learned valuable skills that can translate well into wherever I decide to pursue. This is all according to the goals I had set forth at the beginning of my time in university.

These goals were a wide variety of hopes that I had in exploring my potential career options. In the highest priority of goals, I had hoped to engage in an internship by the end of my third year. Unfortunately, I am two months away from that goalpost and have yet to land an internship for software design or front-end development. It seems I have hit a number of challenges throughout my searching including API integration that I have no experience with, a requirement to be in my fourth year of college, or technical limitations of moving to another state. These translate into my secondary priority goals to learn a more robust suite of tools to help me become a more varied developer. Going into the university, I had hoped to learn a popular software programming language such as C#, as well as an open-source graphics creation suite in order to understand what a real-world working process is going to be like, and what would be demanded of me as a designer. I am pleased to report that I have exceeded this goal. Particularly in the last year, I have strengthened my skills as a C# developer, and designed a program while working in a SCRUM team in the Windows Form Designer, as well as working with XAMARIN to design a mobile application. I did, however fall short in a few aspects. Primarily, I had recently discovered that the tools taught here at Purdue Global regarding Microsoft Visual Studio’s Windows Form Designer is not only almost never used in professional development, but teaches poor practices as workarounds for the poor implementation of things like positioning elements, and lack of toolsets for viewports of varying sizes. When learning about this, I shifted my priority to learning a hyper-popular toolset that could make me a valuable asset to potential hiring management. This came in the form of an HTML and CSS framework called Bootstrap. This was entirely extracurricular, and none of what I learned at Purdue helped me here, unfortunately. I am pleased to say that as of Monday (September 4th, 2023) I am confident enough in my abilities regarding this new method of design to completely do away with Bootstrap as a framework, and design my own website using GitHub Pages for a portfolio showcase, and HTML/CSS strengthener. In taking on this challenge, I had also learned the basics of JavaScript. I had the opportunity to enroll in JavaScript courses here at Purdue Global, but I had opted to learn C# instead. This is a decision I am thankful for, as my fundamentals in C# have been instrumental in learning both Python and JavaScript.

Sticking to my goal plan helped me in a number of ways. I was able to take a more agile look at where I am going, what velocity I had throughout my time here, and how I may expect to end up. Crucially, I was able to take what I was working on, and adjust my methodology to take on new concepts in order to be better suited for the real world. Unfortunately, this did have a number of drawbacks, however. Due to the increased workload of taking on a number of extracurricular projects, I had to re-prioritize what exactly I worked on throughout my day between work, school, extracurricular activities, and general productivity. This left a deficit in my total output for this class. You may notice that the majority of my assignments have been done rather last-minute. This was a calculated decision in order to make time for the aforementioned website design breakthrough. Upon the beginning of this class, I looked through the roster of assignments we had to do. I made sure to compare each assignment description page to their assignment rubric during the first week of the class, as well as go through the grade points system to ensure a satisfactory result. This methodology of calculation gave me the crucial time that I needed in order to put together a presentable array of skillsets that have helped me in the thirteen internship interviews I have had over the last month alone. Although I am unfortunately unable to report any acceptances yet, I am happy with the progress that I have made throughout my time studying these unfamiliar design concepts because of the time I had gained from grouping my homework assignments for this class together to more efficiently work, and prioritize the new development skills first. This let me present these development skills in interviews throughout my time in this class, while still allowing plenty of time to complete the assignments to a level of quality that I am truly happy with.

Overall, this class has been quite an enjoyable experience, and these goals have helped me stick to a rigorous routine to enhance my knowledge in ways that wouldn’t be possible without this structure. Following this plan has helped immensely in completing each step of my goal set by allowing me to focus on the smaller intrinsic parts of each heuristic, rather than being overwhelmed by the insurmountable amount of work and learning that had to be done. It is unfortunate that I had to sacrifice so much of my time to dedicate to learning a completely new skillset that Purdue Global could have offered as part of my curriculum. Overall, it seems that I have had to modulate how my goals are operated upon due to misconceptions I had in what content Purdue Global was going to teach to what depth. I am extremely thankful for the knowledgeable professors that I have had throughout my curriculum that help me understand the concepts in ways that bolster my own confidence towards my career path, but there have been many courses that I wish could be substituted for alternate curriculum that could further enhance skillsets of potential developers to a greater level. This class on System Architecture has been a wonderful cornerstone to help me understand and interact with what I use on a daily basis, but other classes such as the history of photography and industrialization serves no purpose past my middle school curriculum requirements when I could have been learning about industry leading tools like GitHub, HTML, CSS, C++, and more that I have had to invest valuable time into on my own schedule.