Diversity in Tech Scholarship

Essay Question (300 word minimum)

Diversity comes in many forms - ethnicity, culture, gender, age and professional experience. How would you contribute to bring more diversity in tech?

Technology needs creative and innovative thinkers in order to continue progressing applications forward. I have worked, played and learned in very diverse environments. Ever since high school I have been participating in diversity education programs. I started with LEAD Business Institute at the Cornell University Johnson Business School where I gained my entrepreneurial spirit. When I got to college at Stony Brook University, I was a part of many student organizations including the Spirit of Stony Brook Marching Band, Stony Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Stony Brook Rugby Club and Stony Brook Athletic Training Education Program. I also had the opportunity to spend a summer at the University of Nebraska Medical Center for the Summer Medical Dental Education Program with an extremely diverse group of aspiring medical professionals.

After graduating from Stony Brook as a Certified Athletic Trainer, I went to the University of Miami to refine my skills as a sports medicine professional. I studied exercise physiology and began development of a strength and conditioning web application. With the help of a teammate from Miami Men’s Rugby Club, we put together a basic application to provide strength and conditioning programs. This first business venture showed me how much there is to learn in the technology field and how much power learning the craft holds. However after moving to Seattle to pursue my athletic career with the Seattle Saracens Rugby Club, I struggled to teach myself and learn from my technology professional teammate across the country.

I went to work at Valley Medical Center as an Ergonomic Educator and began learning the importance of preventing work hardening. I looked at the daily stress of all the professionals in the hospital, from the medical staff to technology professionals to custodians. After suffering a concussion in a car accident, I was unable to return to work and eventually vacated my position at the hospital. I took some time off and after a few months began a cryptocurrency company with some friends. We were successful for a few months, but weren’t able to maintain sales and profitability. I eventually ended up going into an electrical apprenticeship where I was working towards a limited energy technician license. While building servers and doing telecommunication wiring of offices, I felt I was selling myself short of my potential.

Coding Dojo came into my feed and I couldn’t shake my coding urges. I found a better income potential driving my car as a Lyft independent Transportation Network Company contractor. I started paying debt off and refining my coding skills with the free online Coding Dojo offerings.

Now is the time to finish the strength and conditioning application I started and see what it’s potential may be to provide others a smart training application. Beyond that, I can provide a different type of analytical mind to solve complex problems in the technology industry. My experiences cultivating in diverse environments from my education and work to research and playing rugby are here to send a ripple through the technology field opening the door for people willing to work for their dreams and goals. That is what got me here.

As an aside in my essay, I am of Puerto Rican descent. My father was born and raised in Puerto Rico and much of my family is still living on the island. I believe that there are technological solutions to alleviate the devastation that has been inflicted by recent storms and lack of aid provided. I’m not sure how coding will help me contribute, but I feel Coding Dojo may help me on the path to those solutions.