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By Harrison Fernandez, Computer Science and Information Security major at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY)

My name is Harrison Fernandez, and my family is from the Dominican Republic. I am a first generation college student in my senior year and after graduation, I aim to be accepted into a PhD program in computer science. And I am the president of the Computer Science Society, a student-run CS focused club on campus.

Growing up in and around Queens, New York, I didn't know of many Hispanic role models in the tech industry. I come from a decently sized family, where many of my younger relatives look up to me as a role model. I went to college in hopes to be someone they look up to, someone my elders would be proud of, and to make something of myself with an end goal of supporting my family financially.

Technology is something that can be seen as very challenging to get accustomed to, so it was important to me to either be the one to help my family adjust, or to set the example for them that it's not difficult and if you set your mind to it, you can accomplish anything you like. Computer literacy is becoming more of a vital skill as time goes on, and it is what motivates me to educate, motivate, and lead others in the tech field. I had always been the tech savvy one in my family, but I didn't really begin doing work in computer science until freshman year of college.

I chose John Jay because of its emphasis on information security, as its an increasingly important and relevant topic and the compromising of our personal data is something that threatens us everyday.

> *CUNY John Jay College is an HSI (Hispanic serving institution), and has provided me with a great community and support system of faculty, staff, student mentors, mentees, and friends.*

Through John Jay, I was connected to an organization, CodeAdvantage, where I was hired as a lead instructor of coding and robotics classes for students grades 1 through 5. This was where I realized I wanted to pursue graduate school after undergrad, and that there are so many diverse youth in NYC eager to learn more about technology and computer science.

One of my most important jobs on campus is being president of the Computer Science Society, where we do our best to prepare our

members for technology related careers or jobs, by organizing networking events such as tours of tech companies like Google, and providing opportunities to expand their knowledge of computer science through technical workshops, hackathons, security competitions like Capture the Flag, and more.

Even though the CS major is small, we are comprised of intelligent and innovative minds. Since being part of Computer Science Society, I've achieved a better appreciation of the diversity in the STEM field. Being able to collaborate with hispanic, black, white, asian, undergraduates, graduate students, alumni, fathers, mothers, and veterans, who are just a small sample of diversity in technology, is a huge privilege and I'm proud to be a facilitator and organizer in the community.