Cumulative Reflection

When I first moved to Ames from India for college at ISU, I was not sure where college life would take me. I had a keen interest in programming and knew a thing or two about Java. I had chosen Computer Engineering solely based on my primary knowledge of Java. I found out that there was more to the field of Computer Engineering when I attended several different classes. I had come a long way from home in a completely new country to study a subject that I was not completely aware of. At such an important turn in my life, ISU turned out to be a perfect place for me to learn and grow both as a human being and as a professional in the field of technology. I see myself as a completely evolved individual compared to the time I first set my foot in Ames. I have grown in terms of knowledge as well as experience. I attribute my growth to three things that ISU had to offer to me: First, the wide array of courses ranging from the General Electives, core Computer Engineering courses, Senior Design as well as the Tech electives which all together got me thinking about critical topics in todays world and got me working towards solving problems with the knowledge I acquired. Second, my professional experience while I was studying at ISU including my jobs as a tutor, an undergraduate research assistant, a teaching assistant, an app developer, a software development intern as well as the internships I did over the summers of my Junior and Senior years. Third, my involvement in student organization on campus from the first semester which included being an event coordinator in the International Student Council, being the president of Indian Students' Association and being an active member of IEEE on campus.

All my experience has helped me become an efficient team-member as well as an effective leader when faced with a challenge. Classes such as ComS 311(Algorithms and design), ComS 228(Data structures), CprE 310(Discreet Math), CprE 308(Operating Systems) have boosted my capability of logical thinking and solving real-life problems in a systematic manner. My experience in senior design along with the classes I mentioned above has given me an insight into design process and systems that has, in many ways, shaped my approach towards solving problems. My jobs at ISU, namely, undergraduate research assistant, teaching assistant and software developer have given me experience with dealing with challenges without any direct help. These experiences have lifted my confidence of tackling situations in real-life work environment. Moreover, my jobs also helped me understand the direct application of knowledge I acquired in classes. The professors that I either took classes with or worked under have change my perspective about technology and have always inspired me to excel at whichever field I take up in future.

Courses such as ComS 309 (Software Development practices) and other team projects in other courses including senior design has contributed a lot towards my becoming a team player. I have experienced what it is to work in several kinds of teams including a team of all individuals more experienced than I am as well as a team where I am the most experienced person. Working in team environments taught me a lot about dealing with co-workers which helped me during my internships. Teaching less-experienced people also helped me strengthen my understanding of the subject whereas, learning from more experienced individuals has given me an insight into topics that I would otherwise not learn on my own. Classes such as Leadership Studies (LDST 322) taught me how to deal with conflicts in a team which was a very valuable lesson. In other scenarios, group discussions have triggered my thought processes about certain issues and have made me study some topics in detail. Listening to a counter perspective has made me a good listener and has made me open to ideas and thoughts. In my time as the president of the second largest student organization on campus, the Indian Students' Association, I learned how to deal with events of massive scale. My affiliation with the organization has also helped me establish

connections with professors and students who would not have met me had I not been the president of the organization. I also learned about my ethical responsibilities while I was the president and was raising money for victims of a natural calamity.

Through out my time at ISU I had to refer external resources to better understand a topic or simply to solve a problem I was faced with. At the end of my undergraduate life, I have become a more learned person for sure, but more than that I have learned to research and dig up required information from various sources way better than I was able to before college. My projects, internships and other technical tasks would not have been a success without online resources such as Stack Overflow, Tutorial Point, Lynda.com, W3schools.com, Khan Academy and YouTube. In addition to that, the ISU Library has been of a great help whenever I wanted a resource that was not available through the channels I mentioned above. Because of my undergraduate research, I have also become familiar with journal and research papers and have gotten an exposure to scientific literature.

My co-curricular and extracurricular activities including Indian Students' Association, IEEE, Hackathons, musical performances, undergraduate research, tutoring and other campus jobs have shaped me as a person with a world view. My exposure to different type of people and experience in dealing with a wide array of situations is certainly something that gives me an edge over other students in my graduating class. These activities have enabled me to balance between school and personal development in a way that will be useful in my professional life. I have learned to balance two jobs (of technical nature), full-credit load of classes, senior design and involvement in student organizations in a single semester. I have become an efficient planner and have started adhering more to a planned schedule as I kept getting busier in my semester. At the same time, I have made it a point to help and guide other individuals who are in their initial years of college I have spoken at several seminars and lectures about my experience and hope to continue to guide individuals seeking for help. I have also been an advocate of mental health and its importance in a student's life and have clearly voiced my opinions about mental health and ISU's role in catering to the needs of individuals seeking help through an interview I gave with Iowa State Daily.

If I were to redo my undergraduate work, I would do a couple f things differently. I would make more friends in my initial classes as a freshman so that I am never left behind in a class and I know someone who can help me. I would master the skill of researching and using online resources to my advantage so that I could get help outside class. I would also lay more emphasis on my grades in Sophomore year so that my cumulative Grade Point Average towards the end of my degree would be higher. Apart from that, I would follow advices of my seniors and professors that I might have neglected at a certain level. I would however not change my attitude towards grabbing any opportunity to learn something new.