Sara Wescott

CS 172

Essay Assignment

My name is Sara Wescott. I am a physics major adding a mathematics minor. Although I am taking Computer Science 172 for the credits, I am also taking it for three other reasons. The first being that my boyfriend is a computer science major and I want to have a language and skill in common with him so I can understand his career goals and interests better. Secondly, I got a chance to talk to Physicists at PNNL who said that knowing C++ will make physicists heads and shoulders above others in the field. As a side, I got an internship at PNNL that involves nuclear physics and electrical engineering; C++ and basic are key components in the field. Third, as an all-encompassing reason for taking this course, I want to build my problem solving abilities. Although the abilities I learn in other math and physics course are important, I need strong computer skills to solve complex problems. That is why I am taking Computer Science 172. As for transformation, I am want to make the world safer and more efficient as an engineer’s want. More precisely, I am interested in nuclear physics and working on projects that make the world energy efficient and safe for consumers. I do not want to be a scientist forever, and want to be a teacher afterwards; but the scientist portion starts with a firm basis on computer science.

I grew up in a Christian family. My dad is a computer scientist at PNNL and works with super computers. He taught me computer skills when I was young and fell in love with using technology. I was so much in love I learned HTML when I was eight. I knew from then on that I wanted to spend my life using technology to improve lives the same way the computer had for me. I put my faith in what I can see and experience. My faith is in technology and not in a God. I do not value the Christian God the same as my family. I am closer to an agnostic and an atheist than a Christian. I still take the values of the Christians seriously; one of the values I see highest above others is serving the community and caring for others. That is why, when I take computer science, I see it as a step towards my career where I plan to help the community. If I can create a part of a reactor, sensors, or even create fuel that is safer for communities, then I have completed my transformation.

This summer, I have an internship at PNNL where I hope that my transformation will take place. I will be implementing what I have learned in electronics, physics, and computer science courses to create an apparatus that senses pressure in canisters of radioactive gases. The apparatus will have some software that reads the sensors and outputs it to the users. Although it will not be traditionally what I have done in computer science classes, it will make a difference to the scientists who are studying the effects of radioactive gases with electricity – which act like capacitors. Without the apparatus, if electricity was activated in the gas without pressure, the gas could explode and destroy the canister. This safety measure could save lives. As of now, I am not sure why the scientists are electrifying the radioactive gas, but I put my faith in technology and know that it could improve the world for tomorrow.