##### Why did you decide to change career and/or educational paths? What was your prior path and how did you end up down that road initially?

I initially believed that I would attend medical school and pursue a career as a physician. I had spent my undergraduate and graduate experience taking as many biology and biochemistry classes as I could, and medical school seemed to be the next logical progression in my education. During the application process, however, I noticed a distinct disparity between myself and the other medical school applicants. While others were excited to be physicians but lamenting the upcoming academic rigor of medical school, I felt the complete opposite. My path towards medicine was primarily driven by the opportunity to learn a vast wealth of knowledge. I had put little thought towards actually being a physician. I realized that I should look into new careers that would satisfy my craving for knowledge. I settled upon web development after conferring with colleagues who worked in the field and witnessing their passion for their work. After just a few months of coding, I now fully understand their feelings. Web development has the capacity to engage the mind both creatively and logically, and with new technologies being released every year I truly believe that a career in the field will always be able to provide me with the opportunity to learn something new.

##### Where have you been involved in the tech community (events attended, volunteer activities, etc.)?

I have attended meetups hosted by the Boston Ruby Group and Boston Python User Group during which we presented on variuos topics relevant to the web development community, such as Scrum Software Development and Logic Programming. Additionally, I’ve begun participating in events hosted by Boston ReactJS in order to improve my Redux skills.

##### What has been the most fulfilling aspect of your journey towards becoming a web developer? What's been your biggest challenge and how have you overcome it?

The most fulfilling aspect of becoming a web developer has been discovering my ability to create whatever project pops into my head. I started my coding adventure by creating progressively more complicated games on the command line, beginning with tic-tac-toe and moving on to Blackjack and Battleship. I found that making games was one of the best ways to expose myself to complex logical problems that I had to solve with the languages I was learning. At Launch, I graduated from the command line and I now find myself able to create web applications that I can use in daily life, such as note taking applications, web apps that display data from APIs, and simple board game tools like point trackers, board randomizers, and dice roll simulators.

The most difficult part of my web development journey was determining which programming language and framework I should start with, and configuring the appropriate development environment on my computer with only Stack Overflow as a guide prior to joining Launch. There are so many distinct programming languages and associated libraries out there, and determining where to start can be a huge undertaking. Ultimately, I settled on Python due to its active use and the internet’s consensus that it was a relatively easy to read high-level language and excellent starting point. . As for setting up my development environment, overcoming the many configuration issues proved to be a matter of simple perseverance, developing my Google-Fu to a point where I could quickly determine where or not an article was relevant to my problems, and a willingness to delete everything and start from scratch when necessary. After developing a far more intricate knowledge of my computer systems than I ever initially thought I would need to know, I finally was able to begin coding, and I was pleasantly surprised to discover how much easier learning the actual language was compared to the hurdle of setting it up.

##### If you had an unlimited budget and resources, what would you build?

I have noticed that both beginner and experienced web developers can find CSS to be exceedingly frustrating due to its unintuitive nature and many quirks. This is evidenced by the rise in popularity of CSS frameworks such as Bootstrap or Foundation that allow developers to avoid having to write much of their CSS themselves. I believe that the difficulty of understanding the quirks of CSS is a major challenge that burgeoning front-end web developers face since it makes it difficult to make web pages look exactly how you want. Given unlimited budget and resources, I would like to develop a new CSS tool to help developers organize the structure and look of their web application pages. The application would have a user interface similar to Adobe Creative Suite that would allow developers to design a webpage simply by drawing out HTML divs on the page and organizing them using a drag and drop interface. Furthermore, the application would have a collection of color palettes, fonts, button designs, and page templates similar to what Microsoft PowerPoint currently provides for slide presentations. When the user is done designing their page, the application would calculate and output all of the HTML and CSS code required to achieve the design that they’ve created. The user would then have the option to change the default class names applied to the HTML code before copying the code into their own application. While I do not believe such a tool should be used at a professional level since it could be used as a crutch for not knowing CSS at all, I think that this application would be a great help to developers who are just starting out on their web development journey and have a large body of knowledge to learn.