

Annual Activity Report
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Abstract

This report examines my progress over the past year in pursuing my long term goals. This year has been one of the most important for developing professional skills in Information Technology. I will carry my experiences from this year with me for the rest of my life. My year began with switching from the Computer Engineering program to the Information Science and Technology (IST) program. Since then, I have continued to obtain new skills and enhance old ones. As a sophomore in my fourth semester of college I feel more responsible, mature, and motivated than ever before.

Personal Professional Goals

My own professional goal this year was to continue to excel in the Information Technology field and gain as much experience as possible. My long-term goal is to graduate from The Pennsylvania State University with a bachelor's degree and immediately obtain an interesting and satisfying job in the Information Technology field. I would also like to continue pursuing higher education by working toward a Master's degree soon after graduating and finding a job.

Entering the IST Program

In the beginning of 2006 I decided to change majors after a semester in the Computer Engineering program. I decided to enter the Information Sciences and Technology (IST) program after speaking with an IST advisor as well as an IST student. I believe the decision to enter this program was something that has changed the course of my life forever.

I excelled in my first semester as an IST student. I quickly obtained new skills related to the Information Technology field. In IST 210 I learned how to design, develop, and maintain databases. For my final project I created a basic content management system for students and teachers. This project further enhanced my skills in programming languages as well. IST 220 helped me enhance my computer networking and communication skills. In this class I learned about various networking protocols and hardware that allow devices such as computers and phones to communicate. I also had to give a presentation in this class on the future of Internet Protocol Television. The project increased my public speaking skills and research skills.

I also made a lot of progress toward my goals outside of class. In February I developed and began maintaining two business websites for my father's boss. This experience has helped me work toward my career goals by learning to effectively communicate with customers in order to understand their needs. I designed the websites and set up web software that allows both businesses to send out newsletters to customers. There are currently over 1,200 customers subscribed to these newsletters.

Completing a Summer Internship

During the summer I was given the opportunity to work in the Information Technology Services (ITS) department at Penn State Mont Alto. I completed several different projects during the summer and learned many specialized skills that will help me in my career. One of the largest projects was installing wireless access across the entire campus. I learned a lot about running networking cable above ceilings and configuring wireless access points. I was also responsible for designing an online event registration form for faculty and staff to use. This taught me a lot about successfully meeting functionality requirements, deadlines, and creating services that were reliable and easy to use.

Working with the ITS staff over the summer also taught increased my teamwork skills. I realized just how important it is to communicate effectively with colleagues and coworkers. I had the opportunity to work with great people that taught me more about working in Information Technology than any textbook has to offer.

Continued Learning

At the end of the summer I was asked to work as a part time staff member during the academic year. This has enhanced my time management skills since I was a staff member in addition to a full time student. I worked very hard over the fall semester to keep good grades in classes while completing my duties as the ResCom Student Technician Supervisor. I also had several projects and responsibilities in the IT department during the first semester. One of my projects was to create a report describing issues with ResCom. The report was presented to the campus chancellor, faculty senate, and several people from Housing and Food Services (HFS) as well as Auxilliary and Business Services (ABS). The report was an excellent way for me to improve my professional writing skills. I also achieved campus recognition for writing the report.

During the end of the fall semester I began to investigate a network management system called OpenNMS for the campus network. This system continuously monitors computers, printers, and other networked devices in order to track their availability and performance on the network. OpenNMS was designed to be run on a Linux operating system. This gave me much more experience with Linux which is very different from the Windows operative system. Linux is also used for a variety of advanced computing functions in many businesses.

Looking to the Future

I continue to work in the IT Department and attend class. I'm even busier now than I was during the fall semester. I'm still working on my professional writing skills through a technical writing course. Additionally, I am writing another report documenting issues with student printers and printing on campus.

In the fall I will be attending classes at Penn State University Park. I've been offered a job working within the Cooperative Lab Management (CLM) project. Hopefully this job will help me further my career through experience as well as make personal connections with others in this field. This year has certainly been a successful one for my career goals. I'm going to continue to pursue those goals this year as well.

Attachment: Pennsylvania New Economy Technology Scholarship (NETS)

The Pennsylvania New Economy Technology Scholarship program gives students money in exchange for committing time after their education to work in the state of Pennsylvania. Students in four year programs may receive up to \$3,000 per year for school. Once a student graduates, they must work in Pennsylvania for at least one year for each year that they received the scholarship. The scholarship is provided through the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA). To be eligible for the scholarship, applicants must be enrolled in a PHEAA-approved school in Pennsylvania, maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater, and apply for federal student aid.