WHAT'S INSIDE

What's Happening

Discover Your Passions and You Will Make It There!

Turning Comparison into Personal Growth

WHAT'S HAPPENING

BY VIVIAN TANG

Last month we welcomed three new First Year Representatives to CSS Council:

- Anika Khan
- Hiba Rehman
- Rafael Diaz

As we wrap up 2022, the Computer Science Society has a few more events before the end of the semester to help you unwind!

- Bob Ross Paint-Along Event (Wed Nov 30th 3-6PM)
- CSS Christmas Party (Fri Dec 9th, tentatively)

We hope to see you there! On behalf of the Computer Science Society, have a safe and happy holiday season!

DISCOVER YOUR PASSIONS AND YOU WILL MAKE IT THERE!

BY JUSTIN BORNAIS

Computer science can take you in multiple directions and paths; whether it be web development (frontend, backend or full stack), mobile app development, systems programming, operating systems development, security, networks, database administration, robotics, IT technician and many more. Each direction also has its own set of languages and frameworks. Take frontend web development as an example: you have AngularJS, Node JS, Svelte, Vue JS, Bootstrap, React, Ember, jQuery, etc. It's easy to get lost and be unsure of what you want to do with computer science. It happened to me, and it surely halted my skills as a programmer.

Let me take you back to the beginning of my adventures. My first exposure to computer science was in grade school when I downloaded Quest, a text-adventure maker. I didn't understand anything about programming, and I was lost.

Later on, I took a computer science course in high school and it sparked a passion inside me. I was finding myself able to understand code and create simple programs. My course requirements guided me into a direction to explore. My FIRST robotics team tasked me with developing a web application for scouting other teams during competitions. This involved creating a backend server and creating basic queries. I fell in love with web development and database administration, even though I had to code in PHP. This led to rapid skills development and ultimately led me to make the decision to go into computer science as a career.

However, during my first year and the majority of my second year, most of my direction was lost. I was exposed to various other fields in computer science apart from web development both from my university classes and from conversations with my fellow classmates. Everyone had their own passions, and it was exciting to see! However, it caused me to reexamine my passions and forced me to question what I really enjoy. Ultimately, this halted my development as I had less of an idea of what I wanted to explore in computer science and what kinds of programs I wanted to make. I also was not pushed to develop any specific application, so there was nothing to provide me with a concrete direction.

This started to change during the latter half of my second year, when my research in the Outstanding Scholars program gave me a task in machine learning. Now, I am less passionate about artificial intelligence than I am in web development, but I still enjoyed it very much. At the very least, a direction was handed to me, and I eagerly took it. This experience propelled my development and helped me get my internship at the City of Windsor.

This internship re-exposed me to database administration and allowed me to dive deeper in this topic than previously. Eventually this reignited my joy in web development, and ideas for new applications came flooding back to me. Now, I'm eagerly creating new programs and have never been more excited and passionate about computer science since then

My point is, it is imperative that you as a computer scientist discover what it is that excites you. It should hopefully be easy to discover what that is, as it was for me in the beginning. My mistake was getting lost in the other directions where I didn't belong, rather than sticking to the path outlined to me since the beginning. And if you are not sure which direction excites you, then do not be afraid to be handed a task by an extracurricular program, or school, or even research. Having a direction will allow you to develop incredibly fast, get ahead in the job market, and you will have a fun time doing it.

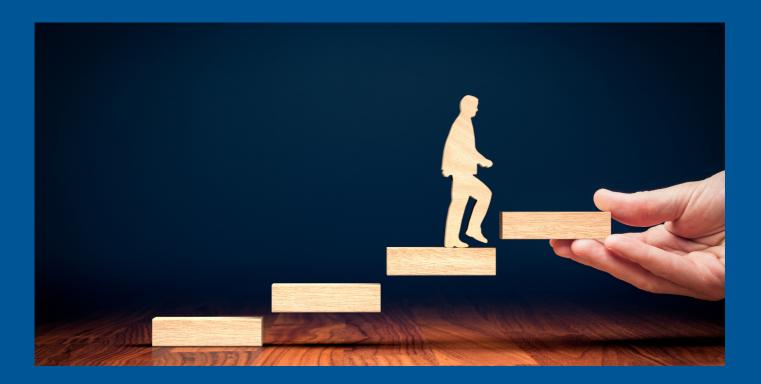Happy coding!

TURNING COMPARISON INTO PERSONAL GROWTH

BY HIBA REHMAN

If there's anything that I brought over to university from my high school years, it would be my horrible mental health. But other than that, I also brought over the habit of constantly comparing myself to those around me. For me, grade twelve was a very tough year. My classmates were getting accepted at top universities one by one, and their grades were unmatched. It was incredibly suffocating.

As I start my first year in computer science at the University of Windsor, I find myself always feeling inferior. It feels as though everyone else already knows everything there is to CS, whereas I'm struggling to complete even the simplest of labs or assignments. The midterms that my friends thought were easy went terrible for me. As I venture through my first semester of university, I constantly find myself asking whether I'm good enough to be standing here with everyone else.

Taking a step back and looking at the bigger picture, I realize that everyone went through the exact same thing. We all started learning how to read by sounding out the letters, and the same goes for any path of study. Nobody got to where they are today without putting in the hard work and hours of effort. You wouldn't compare a toddler's vocabulary to an adult's vocabulary. But that absolutely doesn't mean that the toddler can never use advanced language. With time and growth, that toddler will also become an adult, possibly one with even better vocabulary.

If I'm being honest, it's not easy to stop comparing myself to those around me. But instead of using that comparison as a means to demean myself, I try to use it as a reason to better myself. It's become a motivation for me. I want to be as good at coding as my seniors and peers are, and I believe I can also get there someday. It won't be easy, and it'll probably require a lot of tears along the way, but I believe I can reach that goal I set for myself. I just have to start with the basics and do things one step at a time.

For anyone else struggling with that constant comparison, know that some types of comparison can be good. Make it a stepping stone for you to reach your goals. Remember, just because you may lack experience in some places, doesn't mean that you are inferior in any way to someone else. Your strengths may as well be someone else's weaknesses and vice versa. Working past that is what personal growth means to me.