Enhanced Biography and Career Goals Essay - Tericia Ricketts



My name is Tericia Ricketts, and I am a student at the University of South Florida pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Information Science with a concentration in Data Science and Analytics. I am originally from Jamaica and moved to Florida when I was younger. My interest in technology has grown throughout college as I have learned how information, data, and computer systems can be used to solve real world problems. Although I have explored several areas within information science, I am especially interested in data analysis, computer systems analysis, data visualization, and information security. I enjoy working with data and technology, but I also enjoy communicating with people and explaining information in ways that are easier to understand. Because of this combination, I believe a career that connects technology, problem solving, data, and people would be a strong fit for me.

Through my BSIS courses at USF, I have developed knowledge in several areas of information science and technology. My coursework has introduced me to programming, databases, statistics, data mining, predictive analytics, and data visualization. I have worked with programming languages and tools such as Python, Java, R, SQL, Excel, and Tableau. I have also learned about both supervised and unsupervised learning, statistical analysis, regression, classification, and other methods used to understand and analyze data. One of the areas I have enjoyed most is taking a large amount of information and finding patterns or trends that can be used to answer a question. My coursework has also taught me that technology is not only about writing code. It is also about understanding a problem, determining what information is needed, communicating with others, and developing a solution that is useful.

My academic projects have allowed me to apply these skills to real situations. For example, I have worked on data analysis projects involving Netflix data and the Mapping Police Violence dataset. These projects required me to clean and analyze data, perform statistical analysis, create visualizations, and interpret the results. I have also worked with SQL databases and Tableau and have completed additional training in areas such as SQL for Data Science, Python for Data Analysis, Spark, and Tableau. These experiences have helped me become more comfortable working with data and have shown me how important it is to communicate results clearly. In addition to my technical experience, my work experience has helped me develop communication, organization, teamwork, and problem solving skills. I currently work in education, which requires me to communicate with students, families, and coworkers, manage multiple responsibilities, and adjust when something does not work as expected. Although teaching is different from an information technology career, I believe the communication and problem solving skills I have gained will be valuable in a technology career.

As I think about my career after graduation, I am interested in several occupations. One career that stands out to me is becoming a computer systems analyst. Computer systems analysts study an organization's current computer systems and develop ways to improve their efficiency. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, computer systems analysts typically need a bachelor's degree, and studying computer science or information systems is a common educational path. The occupation had a median annual wage of $105,850 in May 2025, and employment is projected to grow 8 percent from 2025 to 2035, which is faster than the average for all occupations. There are also approximately 32,900 projected openings each year during that period. This career interests me because it combines technology with problem solving and communication. I would be able to analyze how an organization uses technology, identify problems, work with users to understand their needs, and help develop better systems.

I am also interested in data science because of my concentration in Data Science and Analytics. Data scientists use analytical tools and techniques to find meaningful information in data. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that data scientists had a median annual wage of $120,230 in May 2025, and employment is projected to grow 35 percent from 2025 to 2035. This makes data science one of the fastest growing occupations listed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. A career in data science would allow me to continue developing my skills in statistics, programming, data visualization, and predictive modeling. However, I understand that some data science positions may require stronger mathematical, programming, and machine learning skills, and some employers prefer candidates with graduate degrees. Because of this, I plan to continue strengthening my technical skills as I gain professional experience.

Another area I am considering is information security. Information security analysts are responsible for planning and carrying out security measures to protect an organization's

computer networks and systems. This field interests me because organizations increasingly depend on technology and need to protect their information. The BLS reports that information security analysts had a median annual wage of $129,180 in May 2025, with employment projected to grow 21 percent between 2025 and 2035. A bachelor's degree is typically required, and employers may prefer candidates with professional certifications and related experience. If I decide to pursue this area, I would need to build more knowledge in cybersecurity, networking, security practices, and possibly pursue a certification.

My overall career goal is to find a position where I can use technology and data to solve problems and improve the way organizations work. At this point, I am particularly interested in computer systems analysis because it allows me to combine several of my strengths instead of focusing on only one area. I would like to continue improving my SQL, Python, statistics, data visualization, and database skills while also developing stronger communication and systems analysis skills. I also want to continue building my professional experience and eventually pursue certifications or additional education that can help me advance in the technology field.

Overall, my BSIS education has given me a foundation in both technology and information management, while my work experience has helped me develop communication, organization, and problem solving skills. I am still exploring the exact career path I want to take, but I know that I want my career to involve technology, data, and solving problems. Whether I pursue computer systems analysis, data science, or information security, I want to continue learning and developing my skills so that I can contribute meaningful solutions to the organizations and people I work with. My goal is to use the knowledge I have gained through my education and experiences to build a successful career in the information technology field.

References

U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS. (2018, April 13). *Computer and Information Research Scientists*. Bls.Gov; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/computer-and-information-research-scientists.htm

U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS. (2024, August 29). *Information Security Analysts: Occupational Outlook Handbook: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*. Bls.Gov; U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS. https://www.bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/information-security-analysts.htm

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019, June 12). *Computer Systems Analysts*. Bls.Gov. https://www.bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/computer-systems-analysts.htm