**EDUCATION SPEECH**

**FOR**

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Hello everyone and thank you all for being here... and thank you for putting aside your laptops, tablets, phones, and other gizmos in order to share in this discussion today.... isn’t it ironic... for the past several years we have grown... full blown... into an extremely tech-centric society, yet you, our students.... our great hope for the future, tend to resist studying for, and majoring in, a field that has truly become the center of our collective and individual existence.... I can ask Siri.... I can ask my Google Assistant.... but honestly, I want to invite each one of you to answer the question.... What is your resistance to majoring in computer sciences and technology? The trend is clear... we can all see where the future is headed.... and that would mean that potential for employment opportunities are also growing. Today I want to do a little exploration with all of you.... let’s get familiar with tech.

I once saw a little joke in an article on computer science. “There are 10 kinds of people in this world. Those who understand binary. And those who don’t.” (**Stand there deadpan and say**) ...**SEE!?!? I KNEW** you wouldn’t get it.... that’s because you THINK you don’t want to get to know the inner workings of the world of tech!!! (**And wait for the laugh**). The simple fact is that we ALL want to be in on the joke or the buzz or be part of trends that take hold and literally change our lives. As technology majors, you would be building on the crest of a wave that shows no sign of going away any time soon.... you would be positioned to have a great and lasting impact on so many aspects of society, and while it’s admirable to want to dedicate your time and efforts to the humanities.... arts.... education.... social sciences... having a passionate, diverse, inventive, intuitive, and well trained and informed professional base in Computer Science will probably do more for the advancement of the humanities and all of those other sectors than we can fathom.

Believe me, I can understand the resistance and hesitation when it comes to considering technology and computer sciences as an area of concentration during your education careers, but didn’t you ever wonder.... “How’d they **DO THAT**?” It’s possible for **ANYONE** in this room to know that.... to crack the code... and to learn how to make a contribution in this infinitely interesting and challenging field. Consider this as well, by encouraging diversity in the professional world of computer science and its affiliated sub-concentrations, that sector also learns. Partnering and working with a “melting pot” of professionals promotes knowledge, collaboration, and a more well-rounded information and experience base. In this day and age, we are all citizens of the world. Every day, if we’re concerned members of society, we find less tolerance for narrow mindedness. It’s critical that we all learn to keep **OUR** minds open to new experiences, opportunities, and challenges. It will serve to make you... and you... and all of us, stronger.

I don’t know how many of you know what the term “contrarian” means, so I’ll tell you. It’s a person that takes an opposing view.... one who goes against the crowd.... who takes the “road less travelled...” the less popular route. While some people may be deeply rooted in following the crowd, it’s the contrarian that stands out and that has the challenge and opportunity to find distinction. I invite you to be contrarians.... in this case.

According to an article published by the Economic Policy Institute, based on research done by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, by the year 2032... just **FIFTEEN** years from now, the prediction is being made that the majority of the work force in this country will be comprised of people of color. That means that as well as we want to support diversity in the workforce... as long as we want to do what we can to make sure all of you get a well rounded, quality education and foundation in order to be employable **AND** employed, the time has come for today’s students to take a stand and to represent.... and plan to be a part of each critical field that comprises every aspect of contemporary and future life. As I said earlier, we are all deeply involved in tech already. It’s time for us to work together to explore the challenges and fascination of learning and **EARNING** in the world of Computer Science.

As you are learning, you are also being prepared and trained to lead. The future will be in your hands. Just as our communities will need civil servants, doctors, lawyers, teachers, mechanics, plumbers.... you name it, professional sectors involving tech are other areas we want to encourage you to consider. Studies have shown that some of the most popular majors for African American students are.... can you guess? The top three have been... Business Administration, Psychology, and Nursing. Engineering or Sciences don’t even show up in studies published in an article on the website of the Cleveland Federal Reserve.

So what’s the hesitation? Think about it... what are some of the hesitations **YOU** might be having when it comes to considering majoring in Computer Science and Technology? (**Do you want the students to offer some of their considerations? It might keep them more engaged**) By the way, if you have hesitations, you’re not alone. In an article analyzing national trends in testing, Education Week points out that in 2015, **TWENTY-FOUR** states each had fewer than ten African American students take the AP Computer Science exam. **NINE** states had **NO** African American test takers that year. While some might see that as a sad statistic or as validation to **NOT** consider Computer Science, I see it as **OPPORTUNITY**! ... and while I am sure we all understand that the curriculum is challenging, you are capable of learning what is needed to find your place in this rapidly growing field. Think of all of the different areas a degree in Computer Science can take you... besides the more obvious IT consultant, there’s Cloud architect and all of the support sectors required by cloud technology. Do you know anyone or have you read anything about the various data breaches and hacks going on? Imagine working on saving and preserving precious private individual details as a computer forensics investigator. You can be a web developer or an app designer, a health IT specialist, a cyber security analyst, a software engineer.... the possibilities are endless... and as we rely more heavily on our devices, specialties and sub specialties will be created.... every generation has its revolutions and evolutions... this is **YOURS**.

You’ve already shown your passion for education and your desire for knowledge. As you go through and complete your college education, you will continue to learn... about history and math...sociology and literature.... and with each lesson you will discover a little more of yourself and where you will choose to make your mark on our world. While some studies may point out that one of the reasons minority students don’t pursue Computer Science education has to do with a lack of encouragement, that is **NOT** the case here at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ College. I know I speak for the faculty when I tell you we are behind you 100 percent. We are here to bring out the best in you.... to encourage your curiosity and to guide you when you hit road blocks to success. There is **NOTHING** you can’t do.... all you need is determination, patience, the willing press to really learn, and the intention to inspire future young people who are looking up to **YOU** as their guide.

Martin Luther King Jr. said, “Our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant, and to face the challenge of change.” All of us that understand what it takes to make a life worthwhile would agree with that statement. The world is changing and it is critical that all of you understand that **YOU** are an integral part of the shaping of the future of our communities and our world, and you do that by sharing your resources... your talents, your dedication, your willingness to face fear.... of **MATH**... (**Wait for the laugh**) in order to make your unique contribution. I encourage you to really embrace technology.... the truth is, you already ARE... it’s an integral part of our lives.... and I don’t think that any of you are “living off the grid”...**YET**... Think about the great and fascinating sectors to explore... cyber security, drone technology, and other developing sectors.... artificial intelligence... augmented reality, 3-D printing, robotics.... the possibilities are endless and in a constant state of evolution.

I encourage all of you to keep an open mind, explore, and welcome the world of technology as part of your own. Embrace the notion that with hard work and determination, you too, will inspire others to learn and grow and lead us all into the future! Thank you all!