Rocio Garcia

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Blog Post No. 26

Posted on July 22, 2016 by garcrociJuly 22, 2016

Two weeks left, this is unbelievable. The days have started to feel too short, there isn't enough time in a day to get all the stuff we need to get done, done. It kind of sucks that these last weeks when we need to get more stuff done in the lab, is when we have more courses and speakers. The courses are great and the speakers are helpful, but the timing is kind of terrible. *yawn* Okay, goodbye.

Blog Post No. 25

Posted on July 20, 2016 by garcrociJuly 20, 2016

Today is a wonderful day! I woke up and found out that one of my favorite artists had released a new song this year that I hadn't heard; I am very much in love. I think if my life had a theme song, this song would be it. It just puts me in a great mood. Another thing that might contribute to my great mood today might be that I actually slept 8ish hours. I've always known that sleep is important but I'm one of those people that just feels like life is being wasted away when you sleep. I used to easily be able to run on 3-4 hours of sleep but that's definitely not the case anymore. Those nights of little sleep [probably] heavily contributed to why I feel like an 80 year old woman stuck in a 20 year old's body. Life's good though, I'm happy and that's always my priority. *rock on hand symbol*

Blog Post No. 24

Posted on July 15, 2016 by garcrociJuly 15, 2016

Another week has passed. Our lab time has increased exponentially in the past week, I feel like I am ending this week on a very productive note. 15 more minutes of lab time on Monday and we'll hopefully be able to move into our next step in our research. I'm excited for the weekend, I haven't decided if I want to work out tonight or tomorrow morning before Ada Hayden. I kind of hurt my back so letting it rest for an extra night would be the smart thing to do but that would also require me sleeping early and waking up early which is something I'm not very good at. I ordered some hair dye on amazon that's supposed to arrive today, hopefully it does and I get a chance to dye my hair. I was very close to crashing during the HCI course but then we did a fun exercise which helped me wake back up. Okay seriously though, this is the weekend when I begin a regular sleeping schedule, nothing less than 8 hours a night! FOR THE GAINS!

Blog Post No. 23

Posted on July 14, 2016 by garcrociJuly 14, 2016

I don't know if I liked today's luncheon lecture more than others because I was actually awake (with the help of caffeine) or if I just genuinely enjoyed the topic more than the others. I think it's a mixture of both. User experience and HCI is something that really captures my attention, it could quite possibly be my concentration in grad school.

I went to the gym earlier than usual yesterday which was good because the preworkout so I would have been able to

sleep at a reasonable hour (if the people upstairs weren't rude AS HECK) but there were also a lot more people than I am used to so I didn't like that aspect. But I guess a somewhat packed gym is better than not getting enough sleep.

I'm almost done with my first book, I have like 50 pages left. I could have finished it last night but I got slightly distracted by solitaire (by slightly I mean extremely). I haven't been watching DB as much as I would like to but I know that if I watch it more I'm going to get sucked into it and never want to leave my room so I guess it's for the best.

Blog Post No. 22

Posted on July 13, 2016 by garcrociJuly 13, 2016

I am half way through *Paulina & Fran*, I think it's taken the place of my love for netflix. It's a pretty interesting book, except for the fact that the main characters are kind of annoying sometimes. I went home yesterday and read some of my book and then fell asleep for three hours, very productive. I was supposed to limit my nap to only an hour and a half so I could go to the gym but when I woke up I felt ridiculously weak and had a horrible headache so I decided it would be better to just rest. I haven't called my mom in over a week which I'm pretty sure she's pissed about but I hate talking on the phone. *sigh* I'll consider sucking it up and calling her tonight. I was finally able to drink coffee today so I've been feeling pretty good, and not at all tired. I'm starting to think I have a sleeping disorder or something because I swear, regardless of how much I sleep, I have a difficult time staying awake. But then again, I might have a slight case of hypochondria. -ends rant-

Blog Post No. 21

Posted on July 12, 2016 by garcrociJuly 12, 2016

I found three books at the library that I am excited to read. What I didn't realize is that I have about three weeks to read all three books. It seems fairly doable, that is, if I don't get distracted by netflix. The books I found are *Paulina & Fran* by Rachel B. Glaser, *Twin of Blackness* by Clifford Thompson, and *Inventology* by Pagan Kennedy. Hopefully I will have time to write a blog post review on each book once I am done with them.

I have been watching a lot of Criminal Minds which has started to affect my dreams. Most of them end up being about killers or running away from bad guys. I love crime solving shows but I especially love Criminal Minds because instead of looking at the forensic side of crime scenes, this FBI team focuses on the psychology of the killer/kidnapper. It's a great show, 10/10, would recommend. Also, it's on netflix so access to the episodes shouldn't be difficult to the common person.

Blog Post No. 20

Posted on July 11, 2016 by garcrociJuly 11, 2016

The etiquette lunch today was pretty interesting. I never realized that there were so many rules. Like having to keep your feet flat on the floor was so difficult for me because I kept wanting to cross my legs but I couldn't. Or the assumption that if you cut your food a certain way it means that you're saying the food is "tough like shoe leather." I liked it though because a lot of these rules are things that can be used in the future, specifically on job interviews.

This weekend I found a small bike trail like 2 minutes away from the apartments. It was cute and peaceful, possibly a place that I will go to, to read a book or something in the future. I also may have had a caffeine overdose from drinking too much preworkout on Saturday which wasn't fun but it kept me active throughout the whole day so I guess it helped.

Blog Post No. 18

Posted on [July 8, 2016](#) by [garcroci](#)July 8, 2016

I think if I could have any talent of my choosing I would choose to have the ability to sing. Now, I'm not talking about just being able to sing in your average church choir, I'm talking about being able to sing so beautifully that I'd give people chills. Being able to sing so amazing that my lyrics would have a physical impact on the person listening.

Music is something that has always played an important role in my life. I can think of any time in my life and there's always a song I can tie specifically to that memory. Music has taught me to appreciate the small things in life; that simple beat in the background of a song that makes it so much better. It's weird, you can alter a song slightly and it gives off a completely different vibe or feeling. Music is an aspect of my life that I can't see myself ever giving up.

Blog Post No. 17

Posted on [July 6, 2016](#) by [garcroci](#)July 6, 2016

The world is a sad place, especially for those of color.
I am officially exhausted. I'm tired of constantly seeing people of color, specifically Black people, being murdered by police officers. When a white man who raped a woman gets 6 months in jail and a black man that was selling CDs outside of a store gets murdered by the police you know that there is something deeply wrong with society.
#AltonSterling

When a white male who went into a Black church and murdered 9 people gets taken into police custody safely but a Black woman who gets pulled over for a minor traffic violation is found dead in police custody you realize that this has got to stop.
#SandraBland

It pains me deeply that there is so much injustice and havoc in the Black and Latino community but nothing is being done. I am tired. To quote Malcom X, "…and then the criminal who attacked the victim, accuses the victim of attacking him, this is American justice, this is American democracy…" Black lives matter.

Blog Post No. 16

Posted on [June 30, 2016](#) by [garcroci](#)June 30, 2016

Yesterday my deeper dive group and I decided what our final project was going to be. It sounds like it's going to be challenging mostly due to the lack of time we have to work on it but if we pull it off it's going to be really cool.

Today's luncheon lecture was very interesting, despite my hanger. Originally whenever I'd think about fashion or design I'd picture sewing machines in a "Project Runway" type of setting; it was interesting to see how high tech it actually is. The idea of growing fabric from bacteria is innovative and I love that it'd significantly help the environment.

Blog Post No. 15

Posted on [June 28, 2016](#) by [garcroci](#)June 28, 2016

Today my group met with Qing in the lab and she helped guide us towards the next steps in our process. From what I understand, our main focus right now is going to be to figure out the optimal design and then from there figuring out the maximum holding capacity the channels will have. Ultimately we are going to try to create a computer simulation of our design.

Today's luncheon lecture was my favorite so far. Our guest speaker was Senior Lecturer Sherry Berghefer. She showed us how human computer interaction can relate to journalism. She talked about her study where she tried to figure out whether people can accurately tell the difference between real images, digitally altered images, and digitally created images, she also tracked the participants eyes to add her own spin on the experiment. It always excites me how many fields hci can venture into.

Blog Post No. 14

Posted on June 23, 2016 by garcrociJune 23, 2016

This morning consisted of being productive and finalizing our microfluidic designs. It also made me realize how much work I'm going to be swamped with this week, which is good because it means there's going to be some progress with our research but at the same time, reading articles nonstop is not how I like to spend my spare time. This afternoon we are going to meet up with our student mentor to try and print out our designs and run some tests on them. Hopefully not being here Friday and Monday won't make me feel completely lost in terms of my research project.

I am almost done with my Kame House which is bittersweet. I am happy to almost be done because it's satisfying seeing the progress but I don't want to be done because that means I won't have anything fun to work on when I need to decompress. I'll find something else to create once I'm done though, so I'm not too worried.

Blog Post No. 13

Posted on June 22, 2016 by garcrociJune 22, 2016

Today we went more in depth with Unity. We learned how to enable and disable objects. I was able to do all of the activities but sometimes there were problems that seemed to have no solution. We're going to be able to vote on what topic we want to take a deeper dive into, hopefully Maya is one of the options because it was my favorite course.

Things to get done are slowly piling up in terms of research work. But my team and I work well together so we are getting everything done. We finished the "homework" for craft of research this morning and have started working on a task that our professor asked us to do. Tomorrow we're supposed to meet up in the morning and plan things out for next week. Hopefully by then we will begin experimenting or at least finishing up some designs.

Blog Post No. 12

Posted on June 21, 2016 by garcrociJune 21, 2016

This morning my group and I worked on some microfluidic channel designs using Solidworks. It was kind of frustrating because of the Solidworks interface and how technical you have to be, but the technicality of it will help us create a working design. So far, we have 2 designs and are currently working on the third. It is exciting to be making some progress even if it is minimal.

Our luncheon lecture speaker this morning was Dr. Jonathan Kelly, another professor that found a way to incorporate psychology into the HCI world. When he was explaining his studies I realized how frustrating an experiment can be because often times there are a variety of variables that can affect the results and sometimes those variables are things that are uncontrollable.

Blog Post No. 11

Posted on June 17, 2016 by garcrociJune 17, 2016

TGIF. It was Monday and I blinked and now it's Friday, at least that's how it felt. I predict a lot of sweat and reading this weekend. Sweat mostly because of the ropes course tomorrow, although I'm not too thrilled about having to be up at 7AM.

Today is our second course of Solidworks which has been kind of annoying. The Solidworks interface doesn't have a logical flow to me, some buttons are completely hidden or just not where you'd expect them. I definitely like Maya more, probably because it's less technical and it allows you to be more creative. But, I have to learn to love Solidworks because it's a program that is going to be very important in my research. *insert sarcastic smiley face*

Yesterday my research group sent our Professor our problem paragraph. I've noticed that we have really good communication and although sometimes while writing the paragraph we'd have contradicting perspectives, we'd easily find a way to find a middle ground.

Alright, time to get this work day over with. Until next time.

Blog Post No. 10

Posted on June 16, 2016 by garcrociJune 16, 2016

This morning I met with my research group and our mentor showed us how to work with the printer we are going to use to design our paper microfluidic. His advice to us was to read the articles that are posted on cybox and try to learn how to use Solidworks to the best of our abilities because it's going to be vital to our research project. There's a little more pressure on us now but it's exciting that we have started to form a solid plan.

Today's luncheon lecture was with Dr. Veronica Dark, a Cognitive Psychology professor. It was interesting to hear from someone that wasn't an engineer. Psychology has always been a topic that interested me, it was actually what I thought I was going to major in when I initially went to college. We talked about the difference between sensation and perception and we also did various activities. One thing that I have always loved about technology and computer science was how so many fields it can be connected to and today was proof of that.

Blog Post No. 9

Posted on June 15, 2016 by garcrociJune 15, 2016

Last night I walked to lied gym at around 7:30 and I got caught in the middle of the rain storm. I stood under a huge tree in the middle of a parking lot for about 10 minutes and contemplated just walking back to the apartment. I was already half way to the gym though, so I just jogged it there. Thank goodness I decided to bring my jacket, otherwise I would have been completely soaked.

We learned a bit more advanced features of Maya today, one of which included making objects different colors and textures. My little house is coming along very nicely. There's something so satisfying about creating something from nothing. At a simple glance, my house/yard look very simple and easy to do but they actually took quite a while (partially because I was completely new to Maya).

Blog Post No. 8

Posted on June 14, 2016 by garcrociJune 14, 2016

Today's luncheon lecture was with Dr. Ming-Chen Hsu. He showed us the basic concepts of two of his research projects, one that relates to jets landing and another that relates to heart valve surgery/replacement. Although I understood the majority of his project while he was presenting, I would not be able to summarize it.

Afterwards, we got to ask him questions which led to the discussion of grad school. One piece of advice that he gave us was that if we do go to grad school, to always try and remember the reasons why we wanted to go, especially when we're stressed and frustrated. I think that's a piece of advice that we should carry with us not just throughout grad school but throughout life in general. Life gets tough and stressful, but we have to always remember why we are doing what we are doing. Sometimes, you have to go out of your way to remind yourself that the hard work you're putting in will pay off.

Blog Post No. 7

Posted on June 13, 2016 by garcrociJune 13, 2016

After a weekend of nothingness, coming back to the work routine was refreshing. Today we started our first session of Maya. It started off kind of slow, but after the basic tools of Maya were explained to us we were given more freedom. It has felt a lot like math class when the professor shows you an extremely long and tedious way of doing something and then in the next class you find out that there's a super simple short cut. It makes sense though because there's so much you can do with Maya that if they showed us everything all at once it would make our brains turn into jello.

We finally got news back from our mentor saying that him and our professor have come up with a solid plan for our research which is really exciting. I have a feeling that this week is going to fly by, there's a lot of exciting things coming up this week including going more in depth with Maya.

Blog Post No. 6

Posted on June 10, 2016 by garcrociJune 10, 2016

Individually, the days are going by kind of slow but overall the time here is flying by. It is my second Friday here and I am looking forward to being able to relax this weekend. Although some part of my weekend will be devoted to reading and doing work, it will be nice to not be sitting in the office for the majority of my day.

Today is our last session of C++ which has gotten kind of confusing but thankfully the instructors are kind and patient. It is kind of discouraging not to be at the same pace as everyone else but like James Oliver said yesterday, we can't let the success of others distract us from our own success. I'm looking forward to finishing the C++ course and moving on to the Maya course.

In journal club we discussed how to properly skim through an article which I think will help me significantly since the majority of the articles I have to read for my research team are very dense and lengthy. I've realized that in order for me to focus and understand an article better I need a physical copy of the article so I'm not exactly looking forward to all the paper I'm going to use this summer.

It is our second week here and my research team is still unsure of what exactly we're going to be doing which is increasingly alarming since we need to turn in our milestones this weekend and we have a portion of our research paper due next weekend. SOS. Regardless, I am still holding onto a thread of hope.

Until next week.

Blog Post No. 5

Posted on June 9, 2016 by garcrociJune 9, 2016

This morning my research team was finally scheduled to have a meeting. After some issues due to poor communication we finally met at the lab in Gilman Hall. We were supposed to observe some experiments in order to get a more solid idea of what our research was going to consist of but instead we were informed that our research project is moving towards a different goal. Originally, we were going to work on an affordable potentiostat to aid the actual wearable biosensor, as of now that is no longer the case.

It is kind of frustrating to not have a clear path in terms of our research project. The time we have here is limited already so I feel like this only limits our time even more. Hopefully it doesn't become an issue especially since we will have more time to spend with our research groups as the weeks go on.

Today's luncheon lecture with James Oliver was really interesting. Getting more in depth information about graduate school and learning about the different things we can do to help financially makes the whole idea of grad school a lot less stressful. I liked how he incorporated details about his own life and experience into the lecture rather than just spitting out facts about grad school. Googling information about grad school would be easy, especially with all the technology we have today but nothing beats hearing about it from someone who has personally gone to grad school and is also the director of a graduate program.

I am staying close to home for undergraduate school so the idea of going somewhere out of state for graduate school is something that really appeals to me. Oliver made a good point when he said that getting out of your comfort zone and going to different places helps especially in terms of networking. Also, I think it helps you grow as a person when you've experienced different places and interacted with people that don't necessarily have the same background as you.

From what it's looking like at the moment, my future is going to consist of a lot of hard work that will probably be frustrating but I couldn't be any more excited for it.

Blog Post No. 4

Posted on June 8, 2016 by garcrociJune 8, 2016

Going more in depth in our C++ course was neat. It feels like we have managed to condense a few weeks of coding into just three sessions. I enjoy the pace of it though, it is paced just right that we are able to learn easily but it also keeps us from getting bored. Other than that it has been a pretty uneventful morning. I spent my free time reading articles and writing my Craft of Research reflection.

Today is the day I noticed that my daily routine now is more of second nature rather than something I have to remind myself to do. Routine doesn't necessarily correlate to monotonous or boring, in this case, it is more closely related to comfortableness. I have become comfortable with my daily responsibilities and activities.

I've realized that it is important to focus on my own activities outside of the group. I mean, like how we have some random group activities but I am also a person that loves their solitude so finding time to just be by myself has helped keep me focused and levelheaded. Group work is so important in this program but its important for to not forget about myself and take care of myself.

I'm not antisocial, I just really love being alone. Sometimes you meet some people and realize that they don't even know who they are. Getting to know yourself is a long and sometimes frustrating process but it's also something that should be prioritized, in my opinion. How is it that you're not going to take the time and effort to try and get to know the person you spend the most time with (i.e. yourself)? Of course, having connections and healthy relationships with others is crucial but the strongest relationship you have should be with yourself.

std::cout << "Rocio out." << std::endl;

Blog Post No. 3

Posted on June 7, 2016 by garcrociJune 7, 2016

Sometimes it feels like Tuesday mornings are worse than Monday mornings. We've been programmed to hate Mondays so much that the expectations are already set low for Mondays so any inconvenience is just expected. Although, the most difficult part is just getting out of my comfy bed in the morning, once I've accomplished that everything that follows is easy.

Time in our office space began casually and was unusually quiet since one of the teams was missing. I used the two hours prior to the Luncheon Lecture to catch up on any reading I needed to do for Craft of Research, Journal Club, and my research team. I had to take breaks every 20-25 minutes so I wouldn't run the risk of frying my brain, although some of the articles for Craft of Research were pretty interesting.

I really enjoyed our first Luncheon Lecture. One thing I took out of it was how many different fields you can incorporate into your research. I have never seen myself as a person who would work a monotonous office job. The idea of being able to have a career where I can deal with different things everyday is very appealing.

I love hearing about people's experiences and hearing about how often times they started off somewhere completely different to where they are at this moment. Hearing about these experiences has really helped solidify the idea that the hardships you encounter now will seem almost insignificant in 10 years. It kind of goes back to the idea of being okay with failure. Beating yourself up because you failed at something takes more energy and is less productive than just getting back up and trying again.

Blog Post No. 2

Posted on June 6, 2016 by garcrociJune 6, 2016

Today began our first course in C++. My background in coding has dealt with mostly Java and C# so I am new to C++ but these languages share many of the same principles and concepts. The idea of taking a variety of different courses during this summer is an aspect of the REU program that excites me the most. Not only are we going to be able to become more well-rounded individuals through our research project but we're also going to learn about different subjects and technologies that will aid that process.

For me, when learning a new programming language I have to see a variety of examples of actual code in order to get more familiar with the specific terminology used. Once I get the hang of things though, I become a lot more efficient and comfortable with it. Since we do have two, two hour sessions of C++ Monday, Wednesday, and Friday I am hopeful that I will become comfortable using C++ quite easily.

I appreciate the fact that the people teaching us are kind and helpful, it makes it easier to ask questions and it helps not to worry about whether they're going to think you're an idiot or not. The variety of small activities that we do while learning, although tedious, help solidify the learning. I am a person that learns better through practice and visuals so overall it has been working out pretty well. I'm excited to see how much more I will be able to learn.

Blog Post No. 1

Posted on June 3, 2016 by garcrociJune 3, 2016

Coming to Iowa, I thought I had a pretty good idea of what it was going to be like since I had grown up in the Midwest but I was actually pleasantly surprised by some of the difference between my Chicago suburban life and the Ames life. The place I have grown up in has much more of a city-like feel to it which is completely different from the small town feeling Ames has.

I live about 5 hours from Ames and it's has been interesting seeing how much the environment and the people change in those 5 hours. The people in Ames are more polite and are more willing to help others, even if they are complete strangers. Also, the farm land is obviously a lot different than anything in Chicago suburbs.

Being around people from completely different backgrounds has shown me how much there is that I have little to no knowledge on. What has been an especially humbling experience was taking the pre-test today. It made it clear to me that there was a lot in my field that I was not too brushed up on but that only makes me more excited because it shows how much I'm going to learn this summer.

Being in a quiet and small town that's completely different from what I've lived with my whole life only makes this experience more exciting because I'm completely out of my comfort zone.I prefer struggling a bit but learning from the experience than getting everything handed to me and not learning anything; because after all, what doesn't challenge you, doesn't help you grow.