Nia Blake – Professional Statement

I am a senior attending Winston-Salem State University (WSSU), majoring in computer science. I have always enjoyed engaging in technology-related activities such as creating HTML webpages for a class or creating a Java simulation program. I also enjoy learning about what technology does for society in the future. I first became interested in this field when I was in 8th grade. I had a computer-related course that completely grabbed my attention. My interest continued throughout high school, and I became absolutely sure I wanted to major in computer science when I attended college. I love the strategizing and problem solving that comes with computer science. In this field you are constantly looking for ways to improve the task. Being in college has increased my understanding of HTML, and allowed me to learn new material such as java, both of which are crucial in helping me to decide the exact path I want to take in the computer science field. Research, in addition to networking with the right people, has also been beneficial in guiding my career choice.

I have been doing research since I was a freshman in college. I worked with the "finch robot" to simulate how robots can help civilians in the future. I have also conducted research on how vulnerable certain chemical facilities are to cyberattacks. Research really helps me better comprehend certain aspects of graduate school, such as how projects are conducted and what approaches to use. Recently, I became a participant of the RISE program here at WSSU. As a RISE scholar, I participate in hands-on research with a mentor, attend weekly seminar meetings, and receive crucial information from professionals in STEM, as well as current graduate students.This exposure is allowing me to gain insight on steps I should take while applying for graduate school.

Last academic year, I have been working with my research mentor Dr. Rebecca Caldwell, creating and developing a concept about how to decrease fraud on social media. With this study I am investigating what age group is more vulnerable. When I am not in class or doing research, I enjoy creating different databases and java programs that can be used in real-life applications. Recently, I created an athletic database, along with frequently used queries, that would retrieve certain information based on the code. I also participate in professional organizations. I am a member of the Association for Computing Machinery's Council on Women in Computing

(ACM-W), an organization that supports women in the computer science field. In addition, I help organize and plan events such as volunteering in local schools during afterschool activities, and teaching kids about coding.

After I obtain my undergraduate degree, I plan on matriculating into a graduate program to continue to grow as a scholar. Recently, I have enjoyed learning about structured query language (SQL) development, which is used to communicate with databases. SQL statements form different tasks based on the code one uses. For example, one could update the system or retrieve information based on the language that is communicated. I enjoy this topic because I find it interesting that you can simply write a few lines of code and change a database system for an entire network. My goal is to become proficient in SQL development, and possibly pursue a career in database management.