EXPLORING COMPUTING CAREERS THROUGH A VIRTUAL CAREER EXPLORATION FAIR USING EMBODIED CONVERSATIONAL AGENTS

presented by

Kinnis Gosha
Morehouse College

Abstract:
Dr. Kinnis Gosha has been conducting a research project to uncover new insights regarding the effect of culturally relevant career exploration resources on high school students’ career interests. The research utilizes a mixed-methods research design using quantitative and qualitative data to examine the effects of using embodied conversational agents (ECAs) in virtual career exploration fairs with rural and urban high school students. Building on previous research that shows that ECAs are as effective as humans when used to mentor undergraduate students interested in pursuing graduate school, the researchers will explore whether the research extends to high school students considering computing careers. Guided by the “possible selves” and “social cognitive career theory (SCCT)” frameworks, Gosha examines students’ perceptions of computing and computing careers before and after each career exploration fair, noting the effect and impact of questions and answers (Q&A), storytelling, and culturally relevant storytelling. The ECAs will represent minority individuals in authentic computing professions. The specific research questions are: 1) In what ways do students’ career interests and perceptions change following virtual career exploration fairs using ECAs? 2) How do culturally relevant ECAs differ based on student perceptions and identities? and 3) What roles do gender, race, ethnicity, grade level, and location (rural/urban) play in students’ career identities? The project presents a potentially sustainable solution for motivating urban and rural high-need school districts to explore computing careers. Data collected on student attitudes, interests, and self-efficacy will help guide improvements to the ECAs and ensure they are broadly applicable for future uses.

Bio:
Dr. Kinnis Gosha (Go-Shay) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Computer Science and Director of the Culturally Relevant Computer Lab at Morehouse College. Dr. Gosha’s research interests include computer science education, broadening participation in computing and culturally relevant computing. More specifically, Gosha’s passion lies in his research in virtual mentoring where he has several peer-reviewed research publications. Gosha’s Culturally Relevant Computing Lab is comprised of approximately 30 top undergraduate researchers from Morehouse College, Spelman College and Clark Atlanta University. The lab investigates research problems centered on creating innovative computing technologies to solve cultural problems and issues. To date, Dr. Gosha has nearly $3 million dollars in sponsored research funding and over 35 peer reviewed research publications.

Friday, April 14, 2017 @ 2:30 pm       McAdams Hall, Room 119

For more information on all upcoming School of Computing Spring 2017 Seminars, please visit www.cs.clemson.edu/socseminar/s2017/