

# Scott Tilley interview with Tauhida Parveen

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*(Photo: Provided)*



**Tauhida Parveen** *(Photo: Provided)*

The past two columns have dealt with some of the challenges and opportunities for women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) careers. Tonight, the Center for Technology & Society presents the final “Tech Talk” of the 2016-2017 season at 8:00pm in the Henegar Center. The topic is “How Women Can Succeed in STEM.” The guest speaker is Dr. Tauhida Parveen, who will relate her experiences working in technical and leadership positions in academia and industry.

Dr. Parveen is University Department Chair of Software Engineering at Keiser University. She is also Lead Instructor at Thinkful, a NYC-based startup focused on the online education experience for tomorrow’s developers. She holds a PhD in Computer Science from the Florida Institute of Technology and an MBA from the University of Central Florida.

In preparation for tonight’s presentation, I sat down and spoke with Dr. Parveen about some of the key points she’ll cover in her talk.

**Tilley:** What do you think are important personal characteristics women should develop to succeed in STEM?

**Parveen:** I think it's very important for women to learn to be self-reliant. Just be confident that you can succeed. You don't need to be an 'A' student either; persistence is more important.

I also think women should stop thinking of themselves as women first. Instead, think of yourself as a person first. I rarely enter a room full of engineers worrying that I'm one of the few females present; I just don't think that way.

Lastly, don't be afraid to fail. You'll never get anywhere without trying new things, and worrying about what others may think of you is a waste of time. When you see success in others, you don't see all the failures they also experienced.

**Tilley:** As a woman of color working in a STEM field, have you experienced discrimination in the workplace, and if so, how have you dealt with it?

**Parveen:** Yes, occasionally. There is still an "old boys" network in many STEM fields, including computing. I generally ignore it. You can't sweat the small stuff in your life. I can't control what other people say or do – I can only control my reaction to them. Thankfully, most of my younger colleagues don't act like that; they value abilities and contributions to the team, not gender or background.

**Tilley:** What advice do you have for young girls thinking about a career in STEM?

**Parveen:** Go for it! My choice of STEM for a career was one of the best decisions of my life. You have a chance to make a difference in the world. What more could you want?

*Scott Tilley is a professor at the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne. Contact him at [Technology Today@sttilley.com](mailto:TechnologyToday@sttilley.com).*