Old Dominion University

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1. Introduction

I decided to apply for an internship with Old Dominion University. This internship offered me to mentor cybersecurity students. While seeking an opportunity to intern for a company, I am trying to expand my knowledge within communicating to others. I also want to assist while helping people with computers and the problems they face on them. Being able to learn new things through an internship will help me in the future to seek jobs that may need help on tasks that I have learned already. I just want to intake as much new information as I can and be able to put it to work in the future.

I was wondering what I was going to do without having an internship, but I had already chosen it on my class schedule for the Spring 20 semester. I did not have any clue what I would be getting myself into. When I told my advisor, I was looking for an internship, she told me to do not worry she will figure something out. She thought about other seniors that needed an internship opportunity also. This is when she decided to create a mentoring opportunity for us to do. I knew I wanted to do this because I have spent the last 3 years at Old Dominion University as a Cybersecurity major. I already knew I had the experience to help others, but I also was a people’s person and also knew I can communicate to find out any problems that needed to be resolved.

1. Description of the beginning of internship

Old Dominion University was created to be an extension of William and Mary in Williamsburg. They were so small that they only educated teachers and engineers. It was first made to be a two-year college but became a four-year institution instead. They were granted independence in 1962 and became Old Dominion College. The enrollment numbers began to increase vastly, and they expanded into educational programs. These programs consisted of Arts and Letters, Business and Public Administration, Education, Engineering and Technology, Health Sciences, and Sciences. Students literally come from all over the United States and different countries attend. The population that attends Old Dominion is 47.7%, 27.4% Black or African American, 7.91% Hispanic or Latino, 6.16% Two or More Races, 4.36% Asian, 0.299% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders, and 0.275% American Indian or Alaska Native. There are 24,176 students enrolled. The schools gender ratio is 56% women and 44% men indicating more women attend then men. This institution tuition for in-state is $10,560 while out-of-state is $29,460. “Since 2000, the percentage of students who indicate that ODU was their first choice continues to increase”. (“Fast Facts”) ODU attracts a lot of eyes which makes people want to attend this University. “More than 80% of first year students are committed to being successful academically.” (“Fast Facts”) When students attend ODU, they come focused and ready to learn. “Eighty-one percent of graduate students would choose ODU if they had it to do over again.” (“Fast Facts”) Once students enter the grad program and graduate, they often want to do it again and even persuade people to also attend.

My initial orientation was located in the library. My advisor set up a meet in greet for other mentors and me. She briefly went over what was asked of us during this internship opportunity. She told us that we will be helping cyber students and also doing tasks or projects during this internship. I thought this would be a cool internship because of the experience I have from Cybersecurity and what I had to do. I knew I liked helping people and could not wait to start. I was able to help Cybersecurity students that lacked knowledge in that major or just needed a little help. We also gave advice for students that needed it for registration purposes when choosing classes for the upcoming semester. The tasks that we created were to help impact future students’ decision when selecting college programs and seek what they offer.

1. Management

The management was great at Old Dominion University. My academic advisor was my manager and she kept great communication skills with us throughout this mentoring internship. Nearly every other day, she would email us to do a task, or check up on us, and also give us advice. At first the internship was in person and then Covid-19 came. This cancelled our physical help that we provided on campus but, she then helps create an alternative way to still help students. She emailed us and told us to create a Discord account. This This helped me stay on track and kept me focused on what I am supposed to do for the internship. When she would assign us tasks, they were emailed and the details about what to do was nicely explained. This made me eager to do my work and also help others. She was very professional and easy to work with. I knew that how she communicated to us was the same way I was going to be when mentoring these students. I was able to be effective and help out as best I could during this internship.

1. Major work duties

As I was a part of Old Dominion mentoring, I had numerous work duties like assistance if anyone scheduled an appointment and also providing advice. I had an appointment with a student in the library to assist him for one of his classes. The student’s problem was that he did not know how to log onto different virtual machines. I had seen this task before, so I was able to break it down so that he understood. I had shown him how to log on to the different virtual machines. This made me feel great because I used my skills that I learned while in school and was able to help someone. I was also tasked with creating an annotated bibliography that required me to collect and compile a resource/tip list related to financial management in college. Since been in college I have learned an important lesson when it comes to using money wisely. It is not good to spend all your money at once because things can change at any second. That is why I liked this task very much so that I could provide brief information for future college students. In “Managing Your Money While in College” Miriam Caldwell suggests five habits that will help shape your financial future. The first area she focuses on is budgeting. Creating a budget and monitoring what you spend is important because it will help you develop good spending habits. The second area she focuses on is saving money. This is something that’s important to start doing early, whether that's setting aside some of your check from your part time job or working in the summer. She recommends using that saved money to start paying off student loans so when you graduate the burden isn't as heavy. This point leads into her next area of focus are student loans. It is important to choose a school wisely because of how much student loan debt a student can be in because of student loan payment and interest. Credit cards are the authors next area of focus. She warns that students should be informed when signing up for credit cards and understand what they're getting themselves into because if you neglect your bills from the card it could ruin your credit. The last topic she covers is working in college. She states that working can offer many benefits to a college student including financial stability and work experience, which looks good on resumes. This document is well informative for future students to read. I think it covers the key topics that students can use can consider when making a decision on their future college decision. assistance hands on for a student while also creating a document that gives advice on financial management.

For the next duty, I then watched another video on Cybersecurity careers. In the video it stated that, “With technology changing so fast it can be har to know what’s going to happen next”. The video defines cybersecurity as the use of techniques or skills to protect data, networks, and systems from attacks. This is why it is important to have exports in this field. They help create preventative methods so that as hackers can not attack. In the United States there is a shortage in cybersecurity workers. This video had great content that influences people from the beginning to the end that there is a cybersecurity career for everyone. It established essential knowledge that can educate students on what kind of career they would want to select. I would implement more careers and give a brief job description of each.

The Covid-19 pandemic began to spread and cancelled school. This ended all in person meet ups for mentoring. My instructor then improvised and created us accounts on Discord. Discord is an app that allows you to connect to other people and interact with them in different ways. My instructor created our Discord to interact with students that wanted to ask general questions, questions about registration, peer-chat that allowed for positivity to be spread. If student need to chat virtually, they can set up a 1v1 on Discord. Typically, some would ask questions about how to sign up for classes and what classes to take. I essentially would ask them what classes they were choosing from and helped them make a final decision amongst that. In the peer chat, I posted ways college students can study and also ways to stay motivated. As the Covid-19 being to spread, a lot of students became distraught about not physically being on campus for classes. These posts I made, allowed for people to seek advice on how to stay focus and still do their schoolwork to finish the semester. This internship taught me a lot because I had to adjust to each circumstance that we were put through this semester, while also still being able to help students as much as possible. I feel like I guided a lot of them to success while being a mentor and that is the best feeling. I am thankful for my instructor who believed in me and knew I be knowledgeable in this major. She put me to use and I made the most out of this opportunity.

These duties were necessary because in all students learned from each situation. During the appointment with the student, I was able to teach him how to do a specific lesson that he learned in class. His class was online, so meeting with the teacher to seek help was out of the question. When I met up with the student in the library, I had explained it in simpler form and demonstrated it. This allowed for the student to understand what he needed to learn. When I was watching the different videos, each was filled with important information future students can use to impact their future college decisions. Once the physical appointments got cancelled, we moved to virtual communication and also different chats on an app called Discord. This allowed us to still connect to students and help as best we could. We had several chats that displayed different information.

1. Skills

The skills I have that I used during this internship were using virtual machines, communication, and confidence. The virtual machine practice was simple because of my previous classes that I have taken taught me how to use them. I was then able to use my communication skills throughout this internship. I first met up with a student and had to explain to him how to work the virtual machines. Each step I took, I carefully showed him and told him how to do it. He listened to my instructions and effectively did it himself. Each time a task was created by my advisor, I would email her back to indicate when I would finish it. This is important so that it kept my work for the internship on track. I also had confidence throughout my internship and in college. This was created from doing so much work every year that I felt my abilities enhance. I always felt that I can be right or at least find a way to figure something out. While interning I believe in myself that I can be the difference in someone else’s life if I install confidence within whoever I help. My internship really did not show me something different, it just allowed me to put my knowledge that I gained throughout the years to use.

1. ODU preparation

During my time at ODU I have taken numerous courses throughout my 4 years of attendance. Some classes that I took, lead me to take other classes. This help indicate that each class had corresponded to the next and the previous class was preparing me for the next one. I had taken a cybersecurity applications class that taught me numerous lessons using several virtual machines. I also had taken classes that allowed me to talk in front of classes which gave me confidence when talking in front of students. In some classes I had to complete group work that gave us specific tasks to complete within. For this internship, my advisor gave me tasks to complete while mentoring students. I did not know that I would be using what I had just learned for an internship. Since I had the knowledge, it made this internship easy once it had begun. I did not experience problems in which I would have not known how to solve the problem. I feel like ODU gave me the opportunity to be prepared for this internship and the future.

1. Goal

I think this internship that Old Dominion University has given me fulfilled the goals that were set. Initially entering this mentoring position, my advisor explained to mainly ensure that I will be able to help cybersecurity students while getting the tasks or little projects done. The internship definitely had me focusing on these two and I felt that I did well on both aspects. When working with students, I was able to physically help and also virtually help students. The help I was supposed to give the students at first, were by appointments but Covid-19 ended that. So once school resumed, I was able to virtually assist students mainly through a app that created different chats. These chats helped in numerous ways like one chat had all questions concerning registration, and another chat allowed for us to implement positivity with the sudden change to virtual learning for all students.

1. Motivation

Throughout the internship I was motivated to do this due to graduation and also because I actually like helping people. This internship was exciting because it gave me the opportunity to help people and also help me earn credits towards graduation. This allowed me to start the internship with a positive attitude. Unlike other classes that I have taken, I was motivated the everyday to help someone. The more I help people the better I feel and ready to help the next person. Once I finished helping a person, I tell them do not be scared to ask questions because it is better to learn new things then to keep quiet and question it mentally without a solidified answer. I think that any problem that a student may have there can be solved. Each day that was going my, I would be excited because it brought me closer to graduating. Not only am I graduating but I am able to make a difference and help other students before I finish. This thought stuck with me daily and had me ready to start everyday gracefully. I knew this was my last semester and I wanted to be able to leave knowing that I was able to help people due to the fact I went through the whole process of learning each year in school.

1. Most discouraging

During the internship, I ran into a couple of altering situations. When I first began the internship, I was working my job and also truing to create time to do this. It felt very complicated because I worked, went to class, had to do my own schoolwork, and also help mentor. I was stressing over how I would make time for this. As days went past, I got ahead on my school work and reduced my working hours. This allowed me to focus on the internship and spend more time helping others. That was not the only discouraging thing to happen, we also had a pandemic caused by Covid-19. School had shut down an extra week after spring break and I did now know if we were going to be able to finish the mentoring internship. ODU indicated that the remainder of the semester will be online. I then thought it was over for this internship. My advisor emails us and updates us about the internship. She had chosen an app for us to use and created each of us accounts. This adjustment was hard at first because I think people can learn from a physical meeting rather than a virtual one. This was a setback that did not stop me once we were able to help these students through the Discord app.

1. Most Challenging

The most challenging aspect of the internship was the difference from physical meetings to virtually helping the students. As the internship first started, we were able to interact with students in the library after they scheduled an appointment. This was good for them because I was able to help better. I think that meeting up for appointments to assist students is easier than virtual. When talking to someone in person about anything, you can often determine by body language if the student is paying attention and actually understanding what is being said. I can also ask the student to demonstrate what I may have shown him in person. When the virtual help occurs, you will not know if the student can understand what you have typed for them in order to help them. This can cause a communication error and make the student not have a complete answer for their question. This could have led to many cyber students being frustrated and lose confidence to complete that work. I did not want to feel as if the student did not get the best assistance and help I could.

1. Recommendations

For future students looking forward to intern in this internship, learning and getting educated is important. When picking classes, make sure they are important, and you can learn from them. The more you know the more you can help someone else in the long run. While learning new things do not be afraid to ask questions. In class be sure to engage in group discussions because they will allow you to learn new things also. Be attentive when the teacher is teaching in class because some teachers will make the class easy, but it may seem hard if you are not paying attention. Some questions you ask now, you may see later when helping another student if you do mentor. The most important factor is staying focus on the goal for the internship. The supervisor will keep you in contact and update you on what is to be done weekly. This will allow you to stay focused and complete what she has asked of you. I think that keeping a planner of what you need to do will also make for a better organization for what you have to do throughout the day. Once you know what you have to do, that can allow for more time for you or helping fellow students.

1. Conclusion

I am grateful for this opportunity to have this internship. I have learned numerous things but the main take away from this internship is to always be knowledgeable and mindful. Throughout college I was able to learn a lot of new things every semester as college students should. Mentoring put this knowledge to work because I had to help other students that lacked the classes or knowledge that I had gained over time. Being able to fix a student’s problem was a great feeling because they were able to get to the bottom line answer they were looking for. I wondered how it would have been if I was able to seek a mentor while I was going through each year of college. I think would have been focused even more than before because I would know what to look forward too. This opportunity gave me a chance to help students and give them advice they may have not known before. This internship was the last thing I had to do for the remainder of my college. I feel great now that it is over. During this experience, I felt like I have grown as a person. This opportunity influenced me to push myself and other people. I was able to figure out students’ problems which made want to figure out and complete the rest of courses. As this time comes to an end, I am happy that I helped other students before I graduated. It feels like my education paid off and now I can become a leader. As my future begins, I plan on helping people but in different ways then just mentoring. I plan on helping people from cyber-attacks. This will allow me to communicate people’s problems and help tell them how to fix this problem. I want people to be able to learn from me and be able to rely on me for help at all times. This encouraged me to want to be the biggest difference when assisting people. I also want to be known for being reliable and accountable when others need me no matter what situation they may be in.

“Fast Facts.” *Old Dominion University*, [www.odu.edu/about/planning/assessment/facts](http://www.odu.edu/about/planning/assessment/facts).