

## **Individual Reflection**

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As my time in this internship ends, within this experience I have been challenged academically, professionally and personally, and have grown in each of these categories to where I can reflect on my experiences alongside see what I could have done differently.

First, I believe there were many positive things I have gained from it, such as improving my cybersecurity knowledge as before this internship I would consider myself to have a decent general understanding of cybersecurity, but not enough as someone who is getting their undergrad degree in the spring. But, as every week had passed in the cyber clinic, I was able to learn and understand a new concept that would vastly improve my understanding of cybersecurity. As some of these topics include, System management, Confidentiality, CIS standards, and Tenable. Alongside working with everyone in Team Suffolk, as for the most part, we all worked/learned together and alongside Carla who really helped us when it came to working with Suffolk and their expectations, as it made the presentation feel less overwhelming.

Next, I do believe there are some things I've taken away from this program that I could improve on. As within my time in this program, I've noticed that I can be a perfectionist, especially when it comes to things I am passionate about such as cybersecurity. While I don't think it makes my work any worse, I do believe it comes at the cost of me overworking myself and causing me to burn out alongside overthinking which would lead to me overcomplicating things for myself. Once I realized this, at first truthfully, I was upset at myself since it was already after the presentation but then I realized that it was me just being a perfectionist, as this program was about challenging myself outside of the coursework as a person. The biggest takeaway I've gotten from this program is to trust my skills in cybersecurity and that perfection isn't the goal; it's just putting my best effort into my work regardless of if it's correct or not as that is the best way to learn.

Upon reflecting upon the Memorandum of Agreement, I was able to achieve every one of my goals, starting with challenging myself and my understanding and knowledge of cybersecurity. A lot of stuff I already had a decent understanding of such as NIST, but within this course I was able to learn policy such as consulting with clients, but since I worked with the City of Suffolk, I learned more regarding technology/software from working with them, such as Tenable or Exchange servers, but the most useful being from meeting with the Networking team, to understand more about Active Directory. As I struggled with Windows system management, the most out of anything cybersecurity related, but seeing learning about AD and its impact on systems such as Roles and Users via the Group Policy finally made the connection for me. The next challenge being able to work within groups, as my group was very successful and I believe it was due to us trusting but also communicating with each other in regard to our project. One thing I noticed I could work at when working in groups, is that due to me being a perfectionist, communication would get confusing as I would constantly change my part especially late at night, while this did not cause any issues, I could see how it impact me working with other groups in the future.

Working with the City of Suffolk taught me how to communicate with businesses in regards of cybersecurity as communication is more than just emails, as it involves meetings alongside learning how to listen and understand the needs of the client. The final portion of my agreement was trying to balance between my classes, work, and the clinic. As I struggled at first working full time (20 hours), causing me to fail an 8-week class alongside that was failing my only other class, and this was around the same time where I felt myself slipping when it comes to the cyber clinic as well, just due to poor time management. Halfway through the semester I

realized this and started to improve by managing my time better by making time for each of my obligations, improving as time had passed.

I would say the most motivating aspects of the program were applying cybersecurity techniques and working with other people. As beforehand I had no prior cybersecurity experience besides basic classes, so I had never really had an opportunity to apply my knowledge. But within this program I was able to apply both policy and technical skills, allowing me to demonstrate and progress my understanding. Working with Suffolk team B alongside everyone else in the clinic, was very enjoyable as a lot of cybersecurity courses are online, so having a class with my peers, made me enjoy the class more as I felt everyone was able to learn from another alongside connecting which is very important for this field.

There were a lot of challenging aspects of the Cyber Clinic, but I would say the most challenging aspect for me was understanding what the City of Suffolk needed from our group. As, unlike other groups, ours was a government IT department, so they already had secure systems in place. They provided us with Basic tenable knowledge, but I had struggled to see how our recommendations would play a part alongside the server our group was provided with. Upon meeting with the networking team, alongside the feedback from the dry run, I was able to better understand the task we were assigned with. Looking back, I would recommend the Cyber Clinic focus on providing a more technical baseline before working with clients.

If I was going to provide recommendations for further interns, I would start by telling them not to think of the Cyber Clinic as a class that happens to also be an internship, but more of an internship provided through the school. As so, future interns are not constricted by thinking about this clinic as just a course but also so that future interns aren't stuck thinking of the presentations as schoolwork but more actual recommendations. Alongside that, I would also

recommend future interns to review and study cybersecurity topics in terms of policy and technical usage.

In conclusion, my time within the Cyber Clinic was an amazing opportunity, and I am so grateful to be a part of this program. The reason I applied for this program was that I realized that I had wasted my time in college just getting by and time was dwindling for me to take advantage of any of the resources I had provided here, so I told myself I would apply thinking I wouldn't get in but it would at least be the first step I was taking to applying myself. Looking back from then to now I am proud of myself for the steps I've taken as since then I was able to get a IT job at the school alongside this clinic and even applying myself to get my masters, all this wouldn't be possible unless I decided that it was time for me to finally apply myself for my career. The impact of this experience will reflect on the rest of my time here at ODU as I have gained confidence in myself, alongside learning more about my carrer and myself, as I will continue to challenge myself and continue to learn more about cybersecurity in addition to my carrer as I realized that my dream job is to work to help ensure AI is used ethically, as I believe that AI is if not already the biggest threat to secure systems.

I would recommend would include splitting the course into two versions, one for city governments and the other being for business clients, alongside preparing the future interns with more of a technical background, and better communication with the schedule alongside keeping a guideline on how to prepare the reports but awarding outside of the box thinking. I would highly recommend keeping the foundations of the course and not making too many major changes, as I believe the group picking process prepares students for the real world but maybe giving future interns a place to handle teammate disputes. All together this cyber clinic has provided me with a amazing opportunity that has set me up for success within my career.





