Finding My Path: A Personal Narrative

Hussein Al Saffar

Electronic Portfolio (IDS 493), Old Dominion University

Professor Carin Andrews

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My journey to Choosing My Major: A Personal Narrative

Choosing a career path can sometime feel like navigating a maze without a map. For me, this journey has been challenging and without a doubt shaped by a series of defining moments and experiences, leading me to major in Cybercrime and Criminal Justice at Old Dominion University. Every career path begins with a spark, a moment or a series of experiences that ignites a passion and set one on a course toward a future goal. For me, the decision to pursue Cybersecurity and choosing Old Dominion University (ODU) as my academic home is deeply rooted in a lifelong fascination with how things work and commitment to solving real-world problems Here's a look at how my path unfolded throughout the years at Old Dominion University.

Early Curiosity and Academic Foundations

Growing up, I was always captivated by how things worked in the world. From the gears of an old clock to the intricate designs of everyday projects, I found myself fascinated by the blend of creativity and precision required to make everything function in a timely manner. This deep-seated curiosity laid the foundation for my decision to pursue a career in cybersecurity as well as criminal justice. (Graham 2018) had me on onne memorable project I had to do for my Cyberwar class involved creating a presentation about criminals using technology to target the FBI, ATF, and State Police . I used visual concepts and graphs that led to applause from the class for my hard work and dedication. These early experiences in cybersecurity sparked a deeper interest in engineering and showcased the exciting possibilities within the field. They

demonstrated how creativity and technical skills could converge to address real-world challenges, further solidifying my decision to pursue a career in cybersecurity.

Choosing Cybersecurity as A Profession

As I prepared for college, I knew I wanted to study criminal justice and be in the realms of the technological world, but I needed to narrow down my focus. Cybersecurity stood out to me due to its versatility and broad applications. Unlike more specialized fields like data analyst or software engineering, cybersecurity encompasses a wide range of topics, from data hacking to defending our country against cyber-criminals, which appealed to my varied interests. Cybersecurity also offers the opportunity to work on tangible, real-world complex technological problems. Whether it's developing energy-efficient systems, improving transportation infrastructure, or designing applications for clients to use in the Cyber-tech world, the fields provide a platform to make meaningful contributions. This broad applicability and potential for impact made cybersecurity an ideal choice for me. Furthermore, cybersecurity is a field deeply rooted in solving real-world problems. Whether it's addressing environmental concerns through sustainable technologies or improving everyday products, cybersecurity analysts play a critical role in enhancing defensive mechanisms for life. (Homeland Security 2024) problem-solving aspect of the field aligns with my personal values and goals, making it a compelling choice for my career

Why Old Dominion University?

When selecting a university, I sought an institution that not only provided strong academic programs but also fostered a supportive and engaging environment. Old Dominion University (ODU) in Norfolk, Virginia, emerged as the perfect fit. ODU's Department of

Cybersecurity is renowned for its emphasis on research and hands-on learning, which aligns with my educational goals. ODU's Commitment to integrating practical experience with academic study is particularly appealing. The university offers numerous opportunities for students to engage in research projects and internships, which are crucial for applying theoretical knowledge in real-world settings. Additionally, ODU's Location in Norfolk provides access to vibrant community and numerous industries, enhancing opportunities for professional development create an environment where students can thrive both academically and personally. The opportunity to engage in extracurricular activities, such as cybersecurity clubs and community service projects, further enhances the overall college experience.

The Importance of Cybersecurity

For me, Cybersecurity represents more than just a career choice; it embodies a commitment to solving real-world problems and improving lives. Cybersecurity is a field that requires both creativity and analytical skills and offers the chance to work on projects that can have a significant impact on society. One area that particularly excites me is sustainable technology. As global challenges such as climate change and resource depletion become increasingly urgent, the role of Cybersecurity analysts in developing complex solutions is more critical than ever. From designing application systems to advancing energy efficiency technology, analysts have the potential to drive positive change and contribute to a more sustainable future. Additionally, ODU's location in Norfolk, Virginia, is advantageous. Norfolk is a vibrant city with a strong techy-like base, offering ample opportunities for internships and collaborations with local businesses and organizations. The proximity to various industries

provides a practical advantage for gaining real-world experience and building professional connections.

Safeguarding Personal Information

One of the most immediate cybersecurity is the essential protection of personal information. In an era where individuals share an extensive amount of personal data online through social media, online banking, shopping sites, and more. The risks associated with data breaches are significant. Cybercriminals target this personal information for various malicious purposes, including identity theft, financial fraud, and unauthorized access to private accounts.

Exploring Opportunities at ODU

I plan to participate in internships and co-op programs to gain practical experience and apply my academic knowledge in real-world settings. This experience will be crucial for developing my skills, building professional connections, and gaining insights into potential career paths. ODU's strong ties with local law enforcement and organizations offer excellent opportunities for securing internships and gaining hands-on experience.

Aspirations

Looking ahead, I am eager to immerse myself in the opportunities that ODU offers and to make the most of my time as a cybersecurity student. I plan to actively participate in research projects, internships, and other hands-on experiences that will allow me to apply my knowledge and skills in practical settings. My goal is to gain a deep understanding of networking and developing defensive software that addresses real-world problems. In addition to academic and research pursuits, I am excited to engage with the broader ODU community and take advantage of the various resources available. Whether through joining cybersecurity clubs, participating in

professional development workshops, or contributing to community service initiative, I am committed to making a positive impact both within and outside the university.

Reflections on My Journey

Reflecting on my journey towards a career in Cybersecurity has been shaped by a combination of early experiences, academic interests, and commitment to solving real-world problems. I was once a police officer and saw many things that taught me how to solve scenes that were beyond imaginable. It taught me how to be disciplined and it shaped me to be the person I am today. Choosing to study Cybersecurity at Old Dominion University reflects my passion for the field and my desire to contribute to meaningful technological advancements. As I embark on this next chapter of my education, I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and am eager to continue exploring the possibilities within engineering. This path is not just a career choice but a dedication to innovation, problem-solving, and making a positive difference in the world.

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