

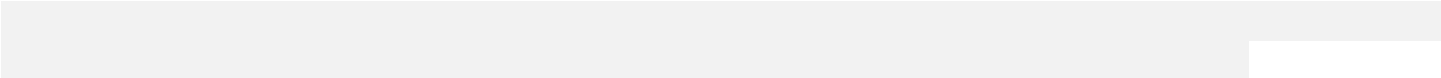
Individual Reflection Document

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CYSE 368: Cybersecurity Clinic

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In terms of what went right, many of the days in our class went well. First, most of the lectures from the guest speakers were phenomenal and very informative. I thoroughly enjoyed all three of Dr. Baaki's sessions. I was initially anxious about working with my peers, knowing that we were completely fresh to the Cyber Clinic. They were very high-pace, constructive days, but I slowly understood the purpose of the "design thinking" sessions, which all culminated in the music/jazz session. We were taught to be present and to always support our peers' ideas by adding onto them rather than dismissing them. Additionally, I think the initial meeting with our client (Virginia Beach Tiki Tours) was highly beneficial, as it set the tone for the rest of our meetings, including the final briefing. Lastly, the dry runs were perfect for practice and raising my overall confidence. I do not think I would struggle if they were removed, but they are an excellent addition.

Now, I would not say there were things that turned out wrong, but there were aspects of the Cyber Clinic I did not enjoy as much. The "out on the streets" days are my strongest complaints. I understand that this serves as a way for us to reach into the community, build our soft skills, and for Greg Tomchik to gain potential new clients. However, it feels like a gamble to have a manager accept one of our risk assessments. My team and I targeted the Virginia Beach Town Center, and I realized that may have been a mistake. We asked around at lunchtime, and we walked up to corporations. Often, we were rejected and told to "ask the corporation." One of the lectures I do not remember as much was our meeting with Luke Scrivanich. To be honest, I do not remember anything particularly noteworthy besides getting a tour.

In terms of personal lessons I learned, always be persistent and work early before the deadline. The incident at Constant Hall pushed the introduction of the Cybersecurity Clinic Report to the week after spring break, so my team and I had one whole week to catch up. I usually complete assignments at least one week prior to the due date to provide myself leeway for changes or updates. I was also caught off guard by the due date of the draft presentations, and I had to draft a whole presentation by myself. Fortunately, my team was not called on the first day of presentations; I was barely prepared.

If I could redo this project, I would definitely work on the report and presentation as early as possible. I felt highly pressured having to work on the presentation by myself. I would also do the “out on the streets” days differently by approaching actual small, local businesses. I also would consider approaching them at a rather “dead” or not-so-busy time.

I had five primary learning objectives in my Memorandum of Agreement, and for the most part, they were fulfilled. My first primary learning objective was “Practical application of classroom knowledge.” This was easily achieved since what we learned in our lectures (e.g., Valor’s Top Ten Security Checklist, CISA CPGs) was used for our final report to Virginia Beach Tiki Tours. The second objective was “Exposure to common real-world scenarios.” Again, this was easily fulfilled since we acted as salespeople on our “out on the streets” days, and we had a formal meeting with our client. The third objective was “Understanding industry best practices.” As I mentioned, we learned about NIST’s Cybersecurity Framework and CISA CPGs; I have them fairly ingrained in my head. The fourth objective was “Collaborating with peers in a team environment to assess client needs.” I do not think this was the fault of the internship, but I did not really collaborate with my team as much as I wanted to. It felt independent since we delegated different sections of the report to certain team members. The final objective was

“Improving current cybersecurity skill set.” The internship, once again, fulfilled this objective since I learned many new topics, such as the CPGs, and used them in a practical fashion.

Although my technical, hard skills were not quite developed, my soft skills were improved.

For me, the most exciting/motivating parts of the internship were the meetings with our client, Tory Hegrenes. I felt very motivated seeing how we successfully handled his concerns, and we asked questions in return. I have always wanted to use my skills in a practical way, and Tory was my avenue. Now, the most challenging aspect of the internship was everything that came after the initial meeting with Tory. This includes designing, drafting, and reviewing both the report and presentation; additionally, presenting our work to Tory and the members of the Cyber Clinic felt pressuring.

For future interns, I strongly recommend they do their work early and plan when to tackle coursework from other classes since deadlines in the Cyber Clinic can rapidly encroach. Part of the struggle of this course was simply balancing coursework, jobs, and our lives. Remove jobs and other coursework, and completing the Cyber Clinic would not be so much of a challenge. Additionally, they should tailor their expectations; this is mostly a hands-off class that prioritizes soft skills rather than hard skills. No matter how good you are with hard skills, at some point, you will interact with employees, customers, and managers. Good communication skills will carry you a long way to success.

Conclusion

For my main takeaway, this internship experience was very eye-opening. I had not considered working as a cybersecurity consultant; I always imagined myself as a “technical” person, so this experience was very fulfilling, seeing how diverse cybersecurity really is. Now,

considering I will be graduating in a week from now, this internship does not have much bearing on the rest of my time at ODU. However, as for my future professional path or planning, this is a very valuable addition to my resume, considering this internship honed my soft skills. It is also an excellent topic to discuss with hiring managers should the opportunity rise. As for recommended changes to the internship, I do not actually have many personal complaints. I think it is best to keep it as is, though with some slight tweaks to the schedule, such as introducing the clients earlier to the cohort.