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Reflection 1

My time at the Fall 2025 COVA CCIA cybersecurity clinic, though brief, has been enlightening, transformative, and highly motivational. After having completed the initial 50 hours of the internship, I find myself eager to continue engaging and learning within the clinic environment alongside my peers. Within this reflection, I will document and describe my experience so far, along with my goals for future class sessions.

Unlike a traditional course, this program has encouraged open discussion and collaborative learning rather than textbook or lecture material. The classroom environment creates a welcoming atmosphere, encouraging participation from all students, no matter how great or small. Before beginning the program, I had worries that I would be unable to contribute to conversations and debates, as I typically do not enjoy public speaking and greatly prefer writing. I am pleased to say that I have slowly improved my ability to contribute and collaborate, and I aim to substantially improve my skills in this sector. My advisor, Lenora Thorbjornsen, recommended that I apply for a spot in the COVA CCIA clinic program in order to build confidence and become more familiar with different facets of cybersecurity. So far, the program has been beneficial in regard to both and I hope to continue improving in these areas. Overall, the learning environment fostered by every individual involved with the program promotes collaboration and meaningful dialogue.

Along with my personal goals for this internship, I hope to gain crucial insight and knowledge in the areas of cybersecurity, risk management, and team synergy. The class sessions instructed by Dr. John Baaki were notable for a myriad of reasons, chiefly because of the brainstorming and creative design techniques that he instilled in us. The quickfire cybersecurity plan development activity was challenging, but a good indicator of future work. Due to the success of that in-class activity, I believe that the rest of the course functions will be just as rewarding. Also, unlike traditional cyber courses at ODU, there is an emphasis on the applied aspects of risk management. Exploring various cybersecurity frameworks, such as NIST 2.0, in such applied detail will no doubt be quite beneficial to my future career and provide a long-lasting hands-on experience that cannot be recreated within a traditional classroom.

As the clinic takes its course, I plan to continue improving upon my collaborative skills, contributing to the conversation, and gaining valuable real-world experience while also assisting the local Hampton Roads community.