Student Organization Spotlight:

Cyber Security and Forensics Student Organization

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When he founded the Cyber Security and Forensics Student Organization (CSFSO) in early 2015, Matthew Weikert wanted to provide Metropolitan State University's students with three things: A positive atmosphere for learning, a tight-knit community for students, and a place to gain exposure and explore real life issues. Before the creation of CSFSO, Metro lacked a social and academic gathering place where students could meet up to share information about today's cyber security and forensics.

"The security and forensics community … is very tight-knit, and everyone knows almost everyone," Weikert said when asked why he founded the CSFSO. "That's the atmosphere I wanted for this organization: a community that is close together, has a positive attitude, and fosters an environment for everyone to learn new things."

This atmosphere of community is important for students who are majoring in cyber security and forensics, as well as for those interested in pursuing it as a hobby or possible future career. The CSFSO offers students a network of like-minded individuals, complete with fun, informative events and presentations given by students who currently work in the field of cyber security and forensics.

The best part about the CSFSO is that its members work hard to prepare each other for post-graduation success. "Our primary focus is to get students exposed to how it would be to work in cyber security or forensics in the real world," Weikert said. "There's only so much an academic institution can do … so we try to be [the] gap that gives students soft skills, hands-on experience and networking opportunities."

The Cyber Security and Forensics Student Organization holds regular monthly meetings and encourages interested students to attend, even students with no prior knowledge of cyber security and forensics. The culture of CSFSO is very laid-back and welcoming. Its members come together to discuss upcoming plans and events, listen to guest speakers, and present information discovered both inside and outside the classroom.

“[The CSFSO] is all about what you make it and the time and effort that is put into learning a new skill; you get out of it what you put into it,” Weikert said. The CSFSO gives its members real opportunities to apply their knowledge to the technology field. “Every single member that we sent to the cyber defense competition,” Weikert added, “now works in cyber security, forensics or IT in some capacity, and that’s even before graduating.”

Members of the CSFSO attended the Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition in 2015 to represent Metro and took second place for Minnesota. “The objective of the competition is to measure a team’s ability to maintain secure computer network operations in a simulated business environment. This is not just a technical competition, but also one built upon the foundation of business operations, policy and procedures,” Weikert said. Next year’s competition is coming up in March of 2016. Students who would like to learn more can contact Dr. Faisal Kaleem at faisal.kaleem@metrostate.edu.

The CSFSO throws one big event per semester. This past Halloween the organization held a Cyber Security Awareness event. Events like these are great times for Metro students to drop by and see what the CSFSO is all about. “The organization is open to anybody and everyone, so you don’t have to be technically savvy to enjoy yourself with other students.”

Photo:

File: Anna-csfso\_awareness.jpg

Credit: Matt Weikert

Caption: The Cyber Security and Forensics Student Organization holds several events every year.