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### Ethics Discussion

Ethics is involved in every aspect of our lives: work, school, extra curriculars, and personal relationships. We face decisions every single day. Ethics is discipline in dealing with these necessary decisions that have a right or wrong choice. Being “ethical” is not what is always popular, although it can be. Being ethical is making the appropriate choices based on what has been deemed acceptable in the past. To be in line with ethics, especially in a professional environment, companies and organizations often create their own “Code of Ethics” that employees or members can refer to when they may be stuck on what the right decision to make is. Making ethical decisions requires thought, analysis, and patience, and is crucial for success in any professional environment.

Ethical decisions are not always easy to make. When I am faced with a complex situation in which the answer may not always be definitive, I like to step back from the task and look at the “big picture.” I ask myself questions like “What is the ultimate goal of what I am doing? If I make this decision, will it get me closer to the ultimate goal? Regardless of reaching this goal, if I make this decision, will I disappoint anyone or violate any rules?” If after some thought in quiet I still cannot come to a conclusion, I reach out to other people for help. When faced with ethical decisions, I always look to talk to someone older (and probably wiser) than I am. It is likely that

someone more senior than I has been involved in at least a similar situation and can provide beneficial advice as to which path to take and which decision is ethically sound versus ethically corrupt. In a work environment, this older person is likely a supervisor, manager, or boss.

I was at the 2017 Argonne National Laboratory's 2nd Annual Cyber Defense Competition in early April representing Iowa State University. After the Competition was over, I had time to catch up with Ben Blakely, a former Iowa State University student who now works at Argonne. We discussed ethics related to a career in cyber security. In a cyber-security related job, employees often have elevated privilege or access to information on servers and computers because security requires access to setup services and monitor for attempted intrusions, among the other various tasks that security professionals partake in. Because security experts have access to possibly everyone's information in an organization, they are faced with ethical decisions everyday. It would be easy for some security workers to look at people's personal information, snooping into what other employees thought was private. Security professionals may be able to gain access to trade secrets, company blueprints, and unpublished press reports. It is up to workers in the security field to possess and act with ethical and moral decision-making skills. Crucial is it that these professionals make the right decision to not snoop around, to disclose any vulnerabilities or bugs they find, and to complete only the tasks that are asked of them.

Mr. Blakely, a colleague of his, and I discussed a time where Blakely's colleague worked as a system administrator in charge of an email server. One day, the colleague was following an order to repair the server when he came across an email that had his name on it: the email, addressed to his boss, had said that he were to be promoted. The colleague did his best to ignore

that email. He did not hear anything from his boss for a few weeks, but the colleague never brought it up to him - he could not, he had an obligation to do his duties as the administrator of the mail server, and in order to remain ethical, had to pretend as though he never saw that email.

Ethics is extremely important in a professional career. However, I feel that because of elevated access, that having a sound sense of moral ethics is more important in a security career than some other career paths available to students like myself. Knowing this now, I will continue to work on my ethical decision-making skills by referring to IEEE's Code of Ethics and consulting with professors and leadership from the work experiences I partake in before graduating.