

International Organization of Black Security Executives 2025 Conference

Early Career Professionals Sponsorship Application

Prompt 1: Personal Experience and Motivation

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My journey into cybersecurity began with a single podcast episode in 2019. Darknet Diaries' "Stuxnet" episode revealed a cyberweapon—attributed to the United States yet unclaimed—that disrupted Iran's nuclear program, only to spread unpredictably across global systems. As a college freshman exploring technology, I was captivated by the implications: the power and volatility of offensive security tools demanded expertise to wield responsibly. This realization propelled me to pursue an advanced cybersecurity minor during undergrad, tailor my coursework, and commit to a career safeguarding organizations in a dynamic field.

That commitment intersected with the International Organization of Black Security Executives (IOBSE) when my university's Assistant Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion—connected to IOBSE officer Bert Williams—referred me to their annual conference. As a student attendee, I gained invaluable insights from sessions on imposter syndrome, FAANG job readiness led by AWS recruiters, and a keynote by federal agents on proactive crisis response during school shootings. Networking with Salesforce's Chief Security Officer – Keith White - left a lasting impression. Now, as a Cyber Technical Associate at a Capital One, I seek sponsorship to return to the IOBSE conference at Meta in Chicago, April 7-9, 2025, to further my development among a community dedicated to advancing Black security professionals.

Transitioning from a cybersecurity internship automating controls at a defense contractor to my current role on the cyber controls monitoring team presented a significant challenge: balancing core responsibilities with ambitious initiatives. Early in my tenure, I overcommitted—taking on stretch projects while underestimating their complexity. Deadlines slipped, and I struggled to align my output with leadership's expectations. Recognizing the need for structure, I

turned to an informal mentor whose online resources had long guided me. His advice was actionable: decline non-essential tasks, employ time-blocking to prioritize deliverables, and assess potential obstacles before setting timelines. Implementing these strategies, I recalibrated my approach—communicating realistic turnaround times and focusing on high-impact priorities. This shift restored my productivity and deepened my interest in Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) engineering. The experience taught me resilience, the necessity of strategic planning, and the critical role of guidance from seasoned professionals—particularly those who share my background.

Overcoming this obstacle reinforced my appreciation for IOBSE's emphasis on community and mentorship. At the conference I attended, officer Khristopher Hamlin's candid discussion of navigating imposter syndrome as a successful executive resonated deeply. His adaptability in the face of challenges mirrored my own efforts and highlighted the power of seeing Black leaders thrive. For minority professionals, such examples provide both motivation and a blueprint for success. IOBSE's network offers a unique platform for engagement and growth, unavailable in broader industry spaces.

As I look to the future, I aspire to specialize in AI governance within GRC—leveraging automation to enhance security controls. The IOBSE conference promises exposure to cutting-edge innovations and peers driving these advancements. Sponsorship would enable me to build on my foundation, refine my skills, and contribute to IOBSE's mission. Having mentored younger students to job offers, I am eager to give back to this community. From Stuxnet's lessons to mastering professional challenges, my early career underscores the importance of adaptability and

support—qualities IOBSE champions. I am committed to growing within this network and advancing its vision for Black security leadership.