

THOMAS P. DINAPOLI
COMPTROLLER



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ALBANY, NEW YORK 12236

STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER

April 25, 2013

Alain E. Kaloyeros, Ph.D
Senior Vice President and Chief Executive Officer
State University of New York at Albany
College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering
257 Fuller Road
Albany, NY 12203

Re: Network Security Controls
Report 2012-S-28

Dear Dr. Kaloyeros:

According to the State Comptroller's authority as set forth in Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and Article II, Section 8 of the State Finance Law, we audited selected aspects of the security controls over the computer network at the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering. Our audit covered the period April 18, 2012 through December 19, 2012.

Background

The College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (College) is a global education, research, development and technology operation resource dedicated to preparing the next generation of scientists and researchers in nanotechnology. The College is a unit of the University at Albany (University), one of the four University Centers of the State University of New York (SUNY).

The College has a number of business relationships with both public and private organizations. As part of these relationships, the College facilitates the management and processing of financial, legal, research, and numerous other types of data. The security of this data and its supporting systems is critical. To secure such data, the New York Office of Cyber Security's Information Security Policy defines a set of minimum requirements that are considered best practices for all State entities, including all SUNY campuses.

Results of Audit

In addition to the security measures established by the University, the College has implemented its own controls that protect the security of systems and data. Our audit identified further enhancements for implementation.

Detailed results of our tests were provided to College officials during our audit. To ensure that College network security remains strong, the details of our findings and recommendations are not included in this report. College officials stated they continue to further enhance network security.

Recommendation

1. Implement enhancements to the College's network security that were identified during the audit.

Audit Scope, Objective and Methodology

We audited selected aspects of the security controls in place to determine whether the network security controls at the College are sufficient to minimize the various risks associated with unauthorized access to, or attacks on, College systems and data. Our audit period was April 18, 2012 through December 19, 2012.

To accomplish our objective, we interviewed members of the College's Information Technology department and other University staff responsible for network security and operations, and examined records and reports pertinent to our audit scope. We also assessed security controls to determine whether there is a risk that someone could gain unauthorized access to, or attack, College systems or data.

In performing these assessments, we used various tools and techniques to identify weaknesses and to determine how these weaknesses could be exploited. Our audit steps reflect a risk-based approach and, as a result, these tests were performed on some, but not all, College systems.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

In addition to being the State Auditor, the Comptroller performs certain other constitutionally and statutorily mandated duties as the chief fiscal officer of New York State. These include operating the State's accounting system; preparing the State's financial statements; and approving State contracts, refunds and other payments. In addition, the Comptroller appoints members to certain boards, commissions and public authorities, some of whom have minority voting rights. These duties may be considered management functions for purposes of evaluating organizational independence under generally accepted government auditing standards. In our opinion, these functions do not affect our ability to conduct independent audits of program performance.

Reporting Requirements

A draft copy of this report was provided to College officials for their review and comment. Their comments were considered in preparing this report and are attached at the end of this report. The College accepts the recommendations, recognizing that the findings will result in additional improvements to its security systems.

Within 90 days of the final release of this report, as required by Section 170 of the Executive Law, the Senior Vice-President and Chief Executive Officer of the College on Nanoscale Science and Engineering shall report to the Governor, the State Comptroller, and the leaders of the Legislature and fiscal committees, advising what steps were taken to implement the recommendation contained herein, and where the recommendation was not implemented, the reasons why.

Major contributors to this report include Brian Reilly, Nadine Morrell, Jared Hoffman and Jennifer Van Tassel.

We wish to thank the management and staff of the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering for their courtesy and cooperation extended to our auditors during this audit.

Yours truly,

John F. Buyce, CPA
Audit Director

cc: Thomas Lukacs, Division of the Budget
John Loonan, College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering
Michael Tittnich, College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering
Michael Abbott, University Auditor

Agency Comments



College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering

Alain E. Kaloyeros, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President and Chief Executive Officer

April 15, 2013

John F. Buyce, CPA
Audit Director
Office of the State Comptroller
Division of State Government Accountability
110 State Street
Albany, NY 12236

Re: Report 2012-S-28
Network Security Controls

Dear Mr. Buyce:

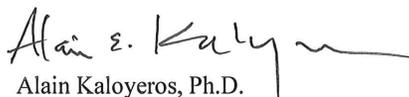
On behalf of the State University of New York College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering, I am extremely appreciative of the professional and thorough audit of our internal security controls over the computer network used at CNSE. The work of the Office of State Comptroller, including in performing internal security audits that allows critical enhancements in security and operations, is invaluable.

The public recognition by OSC that CNSE has “implemented its own controls that protect the security systems and data” will benefit our unique research and development activities and assure our research partners that our systems and information are safe. CNSE accepts the OSC recommendations, recognizing that your findings will result in additional improvements to the CNSE security systems.

Please let us know if you have any additional questions and we look forward to continuing to call upon your office for expertise and guidance.

Thank you.

Yours truly,


Alain Kaloyeros, Ph.D.

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