



**Homeland
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To: Director Ellery Sanders, National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center;
Griffin Townsend, Office of the Secretary of Homeland Security

From: Olivia Worley

Date: April 15, 2020

Re: First Live Lecture, Office Hours, and Student Interaction

Dear Ellery,

I'm so sorry that I didn't get this report to you sooner. I was managing a personal crisis and needed to step away, but I am back now and this won't happen again.

This report concerns the following:

- Performance of course technology
- Course lectures
- Office Hours and puzzle solving
- Student interaction
- Current evaluation of the course instructors

I've combined notes from both the YouTube Live lecture and the last two days to give you a better sense of the current project activities. As a whole, the project is going well and does not require closer FBI monitoring.

Performance of Course Technology

Both the Discord and the Google Classroom are working as intended. There were some issues streaming directly from Zoom to YouTube for the first course lecture, but it was a simple fix.

One technological problem is establishing a permanent and accessible Zoom link for office hours. Several students have had trouble finding the correct Zoom ID and have entered office hours late or not at all. Additionally, the Zoom account issued to me by Oberlin is attached to the name of a graduated senior. Students do not always see my name when they enter a call.



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Course Lectures

The first YouTube Live lecture covered the course syllabus. Students had several questions about the grading system as well as bonus content not listed in the homework. I am confident that this system of instruction will work going forward, provided we don't make the links accessible to potential Crypto-Collegium infiltrants.

The second two lectures have also been posted. So far, the response to these lectures has been positive. Students are eager to use the skills learned in the lectures on their puzzle sets, which is a good indicator of future progress. Benjamin Lang delivered a competent and well-informed lecture on cryptic crosswords, which was matched by an equally competent lecture from Julian Rhodes. The view counts on these videos are not as high as they should be, but, as we've discussed before, not every student is needed in the final push for infiltration.

Office Hours and Puzzle-Solving

Most students have used Office Hours to discuss the first puzzle set. I am not sure if they are trying to fish for answers or if they are genuinely stuck on how to solve the puzzles. Regardless, the amount of hints that the students ask for is a concerning sign. If students continue to struggle with basic ciphers, they will not survive a single stage of Crypto-Collegium infiltration.

The current curriculum is still reasonable preparation, but I have asked professors to step up their efforts in both office hours and in their course lectures. We've also added a review session at the end of each week where we go over the problem sets. My hope is that once students get into the rhythm of solving puzzles, they won't need so many hints.

Student Interaction

Student interaction has been limited somewhat by the dominance of one group of students from the first module. I've gotten several complaints about this group of students, particularly when it comes to displays of academic arrogance and toxic productivity culture in the Discord chat. I created a new school-only channel to isolate this behavior but lost precious momentum building student trust.

Recently, student relations have been better. Several people have warmed to one of the group members and the two main offenders have been neutralized by private channels. Julian Rhodes



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raised concern about the popularization of conspiracy theories raising suspicion among the students, but so far this has not presented an issue.

On that note, I have found no evidence of Crypto-Collegium infiltrants. Students are mostly focused on completing homework and doing well on puzzle sets. They have not been interested in interrogating the course instructors for information or demanding opposition from students.

Current Evaluation of Course Instructors

Julian Rhodes → On top of course administrative duties, dedicated to overall goal, and extremely competent. Attitude is the only issue.

Amos Bronstein → Openly rude, disrespectful, and contrarian. Does not see the Crypto-Collegium as an issue, and has not read his briefing file. Mentions his “parole” and how he is working “for free.” I am worried that he is delusional. No background check indicated anything about “parole”; just some minor civil disobedience at state parks. Additionally, his complaint about working for free raises the question about what currency he uses in his fantasy world, because it isn’t the American dollar.

Benjamin Lang → Still has not shown up to anything or communicated beyond recorded lectures, yet shares a surprising wealth of knowledge in his lectures. Useful because of his good rapport with students.

Final Notes

The attitude of the decryption consultants has been the biggest obstacle in running this project. The students as a whole and the actual potential of the course material makes me optimistic for a successful infiltration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Olivia Worley".

Olivia Worley
Policy Officer for the Department of Homeland Security