NEWS RELEASE

August 25, 2020

College Works to Counter Weekend Malware Attack That Brought Down Email and Web Services

College of the Desert was the victim of a malware event on Sunday, August 23. Dr. Joel Kinnamon, Superintendent/President notified the Board of Trustees immediately and authorized the Executive Director of Educational Technology to retain a third-party forensic team. Information Technology staff and third-party cybersecurity experts took immediate action to combat the threat, begin recovery efforts, and investigate the cause and scope of the incident.

The internal team and third-party cybersecurity experts have been working around the clock to bring all systems back online as quickly and securely as possible. The cybersecurity experts have also assisted the College in filing a report with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"The restoration process requires extensive system and data testing. We will not risk resuming operations before testing the stability and reliability of the system," said Dr. Kinnamon. "While we cannot provide an exact timeframe for the complete remediation of College systems, we are working diligently to ensure systems and operations are restored as soon as possible."

While our systems are down, students will not be dropped from classes due to nonpayment of fees and staff are continuing to serve our students. With the Fall semester starting next week, students can still reach the Counseling Office by utilizing our "Cranium Café", with the link https://collegeofthedesert.craniumcafe.com/login.

Additionally, we will continue to use the college's emergency text alert system to provide updates and information to all faculty, staff and students as it becomes available.

"We appreciate everyone's patience as we work to restore the system and I am thankful for the round the clock efforts of our IT and cybersecurity team," said Dr. Kinnamon.

Although the attack has affected faculty, staff and students, there is no evidence that any personally identifiable information has been compromised.
Once the investigation is complete and all facts are known, we will provide an update.

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