



STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER

July 16, 2009

Dr. Matthew Goldstein
Chancellor
The City University of New York
535 East 80th Street
New York, New York 10021

Re: Report 2008-S-69

Dear Chancellor Goldstein:

According to the State Comptroller's authority under Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution, and Article II, Section 8 of the State Finance Law, we audited City University of New York (CUNY) managers' oversight of computer resources. Additionally, we examined physical access and wireless controls at selected colleges. Our audit covered the period January 1, 2008 through November 12, 2008.

A. Background

The City University of New York (CUNY) is the nation's third largest public university system, consisting of 11 senior colleges, 6 community colleges and other specialty schools. The University serves more than 231,000 degree-credit students and 230,000 adult, continuing and professional education students. CUNY's operating budget for fiscal 2007-2008 was approximately \$2.2 billion.

The Office of Computing and Information Services (Office) is CUNY's central technology provider. It performs major computer application data processing and provides Internet services for CUNY's colleges. Each CUNY college has an Information Technology department which is responsible for the college's network and maintaining the college's data center. Data centers contain expensive computer equipment and store e-mail, network login and financial data, and other sensitive and confidential information.

The Office is responsible for providing guidance and tools to college staffs to ensure that physical access to data centers and the colleges' use of wireless networks are appropriate, as well as ensuring that environmental conditions in the data centers are adequate. In recent years, CUNY has increased its commitment to information technology security. For example, recent initiatives include upgrading the network and infrastructure, and creating the Information Technology Steering Committee as the University's main information technology advisory entity.

B. Audit Scope, Objective, and Methodology

Our audit focused on whether CUNY managers provided adequate oversight to protect their computer resources and if CUNY colleges established physical access and wireless controls. Our audit period was January 1, 2008 through November 12, 2008.

To meet our objective, we met with Office and Internal Audit officials and interviewed college information technology management and staff. We reviewed relevant standards, policies, internal control questionnaire and self-assessment responses and other evidence of compliance with proper control requirements. We selected three colleges with varying degrees of wireless network coverage. We also toured the data centers and the three sampled colleges and walked and/or drove around the campuses using wireless access point detection tools.

We did our performance audit according to 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 objectives.

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.

C. Results of Audit

Our audit identified findings and made recommendations for corrective actions on matters pertaining to technology related issues. These findings and recommendations were presented in detail to CUNY officials during the audit. To further assure the security of CUNY's data processing operations these findings and recommendations are not included in the report. A follow-up audit will be made on the detailed findings and recommendations. Comments of CUNY officials have been considered in preparing this report and are included on pages 4-5. CUNY officials agreed with many of our recommendations and indicated that they will take action to implement the recommendations.

Recommendation

CUNY should implement the recommendations detailed in the audit for improving physical access and wireless controls at its data centers.

Within 90 days after final release of this report, as required by Section 170 of the Executive Law, the Chancellor of the City University of New York 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 recommendations contained in this report, and where recommendations were not implemented, the reasons why.

Major contributors to the report include David R. Hancox, Abe Fish, Keith Dickter, Michael D'Amico and Sue Gold.

We wish to thank the management and staff of the City University of New York for the courtesies extended to our auditors during this audit.

Yours truly,

Brian Reilly
Audit Manager

cc: Mr. Gordon Taylor, CUNY Internal Audit and Management Services
Mr. Thomas Lukacs, Division of the Budget



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New York, NY 10036
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July 6, 2009

Mr. Brian Reilly
Office of the State Comptroller
Division of State Government Accountability
110 State Street, 11th Floor
Albany, NY 12236

Re: Report 2008-S-69

Dear Mr. Reilly:

The following responds to the above-captioned draft audit report on physical access and wireless controls at CUNY colleges:

Recommendation

CUNY should implement the recommendations detailed in the audit for improving physical access and wireless controls at its data centers.

Response

The City University of New York has in the past, and continues to hold the importance of information technology and related systems access matters in the highest regard. This fact is proven, in part, by the significant investment the University has made in information technology and by the serious nature in which issues of information technology and related access controls are treated by the executive and senior leadership at both the University's Central Administration and the colleges.

The University has reviewed OSC's detailed recommendations and has embarked on a plan of implementation with respect to those recommendations we agree will lead to improvements in physical access and wireless controls at our colleges.

If you have questions or comments, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Taylor', written over the typed name.

Gordon Taylor
Director

INVEST IN 

cc: Chancellor Matthew Goldstein
Executive Vice Chancellor and COO Allan H. Dobrin
Vice Chancellor Ernesto Malave
Associate Vice Chancellor and CIO Brian Cohen
Mr. Carl Cammarata
Mr. William I. Fox
Mr. Richard Metz, City College
Mr. Naveed Hussein, Queens College
Mr. Varun Sehgal, Hostos Community College

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