



PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas A&M University System

November 17, 2008

OFFICE OF BUSINESS AFFAIRS MEMORANDUM No. FY09-23

Delivered via Campus Email

TO: All Faculty and Staff

FROM: Mary Lee Hodge,
Vice President for Business Affairs

RE: University-wide Phishing Scam

The Information Security office is issuing a campus wide warning due to a rash of scam email messages targeting Prairie View A&M University e-mail users. The e-mails purported that their webmail account has been compromised by spammers and is faked to appear as if they had been sent from PVAMU HelpDesk. The Office of Information Technology has traced the origin of the emails through a long set of hoops in places like Botswana to a root IP address in the Czech Republic and blocked them coming into the University. However they may try alternate routes.

Information Security is warning students, faculty and staff members to avoid the phishing scam designed to retrieve users' personal information. **There is no office or organization on campus that will send you an email asking you for your password or alternate email address.**

The email bears the heading "Verify Subject: Warning" and appears as follows:

-----Original Message-----

From: Prairie View A&M University [mailto:helpdsk@pvamu.edu]

Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2008 1:01 PM

Subject: Warning

Attn: Students/Staff,

We notice that your webmail account has been compromised by spammers. They have gained access to your webmail account and have been using it for illegal internet activities. You are to send us your account information immediately to enable us reset your account. A new password will be sent to you once this is done. Send the information as follows

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*User Name:
*Password:
*Alternate email:

You are advised to send this information immediately or we will delete your account from our network.

Prairie View A&M University

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This message has been scanned for viruses and dangerous content by MailScanner, and is believed to be clean.
MailScanner thanks transtec Computers for their support.

The e-mails began appearing in Prairie View A&M University inboxes on Thursday, November 13, 2008. Note the e-mail address to reply to have the word HelpDesk misspelled [<mailto:helpdsk@pvamu.edu>].

Information Security warns all faculty, staff and student e-mail users who had been asked to reveal their password send a message to cmmolloy@pvamu.edu or call 936/261-9350.

If you have responded to the email, then you should immediately change your password by logging onto <https://mypassword.pvamu.edu/>. If your account is blocked or you need further assistance you can contact the University HelpDesk at 936/261-2525 or 1-877-241-1742.

Additional information about how to protect yourself from a phishing scam is available through the Federal Trade Commission at <http://www.onguardonline.gov/topics/phishing.aspx>.

MLH/cpc

xc: Dr. George C. Wright