National Student Clearinghouse Data Breach

Q: What is the National Student Clearinghouse?

A: The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) is vendor organization that U.S. schools and universities use to communicate student enrollment and program information to the U.S. Department of Education in support of financial aid.

Q: What happened?

A: GVSU, along with thousands of other schools nationwide, was informed by NSC that a software used by the clearinghouse to transfer files had a vulnerability that was exploited by a malicious third-party, possibly exposing student data. NSC provided GVSU with a list of students whose data may have been exposed.

Q. What data was exposed?

A: For GVSU students, the potentially exposed data appears to have been limited to name and permanent address. It is important to note that Social Security Number, date of birth, and transcript information was not exposed.

Q: How do students know if their data was exposed?

A: Due to the nature of the exposure, the limited information provided by NSC, and the uncertainty around exactly what data was exposed, it is not possible for us to know for certain if a particular student's data was exposed. The list provided by NSC included only names, which made matching the individuals with GVSU students inexact. The email notification was necessarily broad and included some individuals whose data was not exposed out of an abundance of caution.

Q: I have not attended GVSU for a long time. Why does NSC still have my information?

A: NSC maintains information on students who attended in the past as a service for employers verifying degrees for employment purposes, as well as for institutions and organizations engaged in education-based business and research.

Q: What should students do?

A: Although the risk from this exposure is thought to be small, we recommend watching credit reports for unusual activity that would indicate misuse of the data. Information about credit monitoring can be found at https://www.annualcreditreport.com/index.action