

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security Homeland
Security Academic Partnership Council Virtual
Zoom Meeting
Wednesday, September 6, 2023
4:30 – 5:30 p.m. EST**

The Homeland Security Academic Partnership Council (HSAPC) convened on September 6, 2023 from 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. EST. The virtual meeting was open to members of the public under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), P.L. 92-463 and 5 U.S.C. § 552b.

ZOOM MEETING DETAILS:

- Meeting Owner: John C. Williams
- Topic: Inaugural Homeland Security Academic Partnership Council
- Date: Sep 6, 2023 3:59 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
- Meeting Recording: [Inaugural Homeland Security Academic Partnership Council - Zoom \(zoomgov.com\)](#) Passcode: 7P.WMQ%^s

ATTENDEES:

The following individuals attended the meeting:

HSAPC Members:

- Elisa Villanueva Beard (Chair)
- Dr. Walter Bumphus (Vice Chair)
- Alberto M. Carvalho
- Dr. Adela de la Torre
- Dr. Miriam Feldblum
- Dr. Antonio Flores
- Dr. Mark Everett Keenum
- Dr. Cynthia Kelley
- Dr. Alex Marrero
- Chief John Ojeisekhoba
- Assistant Chief Rudy Perez
- Dr. Tamarah Pfeiffer
- Michael H. Schill
- Dr. Cynthia D. Shapira
- Barbara Snyder
- Suzanne Elise Walsh
- Randi Weingarten

DHS:

- Alejandro N. Mayorkas, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security
- Brenda F. Abdelall, Assistant Secretary, Office of Partnership and Engagement

- Rebecca K. Sternhell, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Partnership and Engagement
- Traci Ballard-Silas, Designated Federal Officer of the Homeland Security Academic Partnership Council and Executive Director, Office of Academic Engagement
- Lisa MacDonald, Detailee, Office of Academic Engagement
- Vania Lockett, Associate Director, Office of Academic Engagement
- Anne-Cecilia Byrne, Analyst, Office of Academic Engagement
- Mike Miron, Committee Management Office, Department of Homeland Security
- Julia Hanson-Takyi, Associate Director, Committee Management Office
- Sarahjane Call, Management and Program Analyst, Committee Management Office
- Alexa McMillan, Special Assistant, Office of the Secretary
- John C. Williams, Executive Leadership Support Team, Special Missions Branch, Management Office, Office of the Chief Information Officer
- Arthur Lutz, Special Programs Branch, Management Office, Office of the Chief Information Officer
- Hayley LeCourt, Contractor, Homeland Security Academic Partnership Council
- Grace Chisholm, Contractor, Homeland Security Academic Partnership Council

Members of the Public:

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- 17712016364
- Alexander Perez
- Alexander Siedschlag
- Ana Deros
- Ariel Solis
- Benjamin Wheart
- Bich Ngoc Cao
- Brianna Corrie
- Cori Dawson
- Karin Fischer
- Katie Ross
- Kim Anderson
- MacGregor Obergfell
- Matt Owens
- Matt Walker
- President's Conference Room
- Rachel Kaufman
- Samuel DiSesa
- Sharon Eshelman
- Sharon Wong

***** ZOOM RECORDING STARTS*****

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: We've lost your audio.

J.C., are you able to —

DHS HOST: Yes. We're working on it.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Okay.

DHS HOST: Just give us a few minutes, please. We are working on the S1's audio.

SECRETARY ALEJANDRO N. MAYORKAS: How about now?

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Yep! Now we can hear you.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: There's a Homeland Security technological achievement.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Things are a few minutes after the hour, I am going to take the liberty of gaveling us in here. Hello, everyone! My name is Rebecca Kagan Sternhell. I am the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Office of Partnership and Engagement here at the DHS Headquarters. I am joined today with the Secretary, who you see is masquerading as Alexa McMillan, but is in fact Secretary Mayorkas and a number of other DHS staff.

So, we have a packed agenda today. I want to run through it briefly. I want to also acknowledge all the public and press who are on the line with us as well and give some quick special thanks. So, following this, we'll hear from the Secretary. We will do some quick introductions, and by quick, I mean there are many of you, and we'd love to just hear, you know, your affiliation, your name — very, very brief. We will swear everyone in, we'll hear from our co-chairs, and then we'll have a discussion. So do want to leave time at the end for that. So, I'm going to impress upon everyone — brevity, brevity.

So, with that, I did want to take time to acknowledge the Academic Engagement team here at the Department, led by Traci Silas. They've done an immense amount of work and due credit to them for getting this lifted and off the ground. And so credit to Traci, who will be taking the helm of this following this meeting. I also wanted to acknowledge Anne-Cecilia Byrne, Vania Lockett, and then extra special thanks to Lisa MacDonald, who jumped into this and has just been an immense help, and Tamara Molina, who has really just done extraordinary work and had to leave us to go back to the Policy office. But her contributions are all over this. And really, I just wanted to make sure that went acknowledged. Are we in the public session now? And if not, can we switch over to that.

DR. MARK EVERETT KEENUM: [inaudible]

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: J.C.?

DHS HOST: Yes ma'am, we're good to go.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Okay, great.

*******PUBLIC ZOOM SESSION BEGINS*******

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Excellent. Okay. So, I'm going to rewind again to welcome everybody to the Homeland Security Academic Partnership Council meeting. My name is Rebecca Kagan Sternhell. I'll be our moderator today. And with that, I would like to turn things over to Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Rebecca, thank you so much. I just want to make a brief comment, which is really an expression of gratitude to all of you for your willingness to take the time to serve on this advisory council. You know, over the past twenty years, the threat landscape has evolved significantly. When our department was first formed in the wake of the tragedy of 9/11, our primary mission was to address the threat of the foreign terrorists that sought to enter the United States and do us harm.

While that threat persists, other threats have arisen on the landscape and take a great deal of our energy and attention to address. Whether it's the threat of the cyber-attack from adverse nation states or cyber criminals, whether it's the threat of what we call the domestic violent extremist, the individual already resident here in the United States radicalized to violence because of an ideology of hate, anti-government sentiment, personal grievance, false narratives, whether it's adverse nation states that seek to spread disinformation, steal our intellectual property, the threat landscape has evolved significantly.

And all of you who have so generously agreed to devote your time to the work of this department and the work of the education arena, all of you are best equipped and will be empowered to really address the intersection between the mission of homeland security and the mission of our education system. We need to keep our schools, whether they be primary or graduate, public or private, safe and secure. And we need to ensure that the people who work there, who study — students, teachers, everyone in the entire academic ecosystem — make sure they are safe and secure as well. And I am immensely grateful for your volunteerism in making sure that the academic environment is a safe and secure one for everyone.

I want to especially thank Elisa Villanueva Beard for agreeing to serve as Chair and Dr. Walter Bumphus for agreeing to serve as our Vice Chair. And I must at the very outset express a bias that I have, and that is, I grew up in a home where the profession of teaching was the noblest of professions. It's a bias I carry with me, instilled in me by both parents, but especially by the example of my mother, who was a teacher. And I am incredibly grateful and eager to work with you. And Rebecca, with that, I'll turn it back over to you.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Excellent! So, in true school fashion, we will sort of do a roll call of introductions here. And Randi, I know you've always gone last as I've gone late, being at the end of the alphabet, so we're going to go in reverse order. Randi, would you mind introducing yourself?

RANDI WEINGARTEN: Oh wow! You know, who would have thought? Anyway, Randi, Weingarten. Eleventh and twelfth grade AP History and Social Studies teacher at Clara Barton High School on leave to be the president of the AFT. And thank you, Mr. Secretary, for what you just said. All we are about is trying to have a safe and welcoming environment where all our kids thrive and where all of our members can do the best they can do to help raise a nation. Thank you.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Great. Suzanne Walsh.

SUZANNE ELISE WALSH: Hello, Suzanne Walsh, president of Bennett College, one of two HBCU's for women in the United States, and we're located in Greensboro, North Carolina. Always great to see you, Secretary.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Suzanne, you know the last time we were on an engagement together, regrettably on the subject of the peril to a safe and secure school environment, I promised you that I would visit Bennett, and we are in the midst of making those plans.

SUZANNE ELISE WALSH: So excited about that. Thank you.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Great. Barbara Snyder.

BARBARA SNYDER: Secretary, I'm Barbara Snyder, president of the Association of American Universities and grateful for your leadership in keeping our campuses safe this year and every year.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Dr. Shapira.

DR. CYNTHIA D. SHAPIRA: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I so appreciate this opportunity. I'm Cindy Shapira. I chair the Board of Governors of Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education. I'm also the Vice Chair of the Brandeis University Board of Trustees and a proud Pittsburgher, where, almost five years ago, we experienced the worst terrorist attack on a Jewish community in the history of the United States. So, for all the reasons in our charter, I'm really thrilled to be part of this.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: I promised that I would not interrupt, and it's a promise I have now breached. But Dr. Shapira, I will actually be in Pittsburgh in late September for the Eradicate Hate Summit.

DR. CYNTHIA D. SHAPIRA: Nice! Yes, my husband's on that board, too! Wonderful.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: And if there is something that I can do to advance the work of this advisory council while there, I would welcome the opportunity.

DR. CYNTHIA D. SHAPIRA: I so appreciate it, and I'll take that up with Traci or whomever. Thank you.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Traci is exactly who you should. All right, Michael Schill.

MICHAEL H. SCHILL: Mike Schill, I am President of Northwestern University, and I am delighted to be part of this.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Dr. Pfeiffer.

DR. TAMARAH PFEIFFER: [Foreign language] Tamarah Pfeiffer [foreign language], and I'm coming to you from the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Thank you, Secretary.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Assistant Chief Perez.

ASSISTANT CHIEF RUDY PEREZ: Hi! My name is a Rudy Perez. I am from Los Angeles, actually. Born in Guatemala, an immigrant to this awesome country, and I am also the president of the National Association of School Resource Officers, and I get to serve as Assistant Chief in Golden Valley, Minnesota — Minneapolis.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Chief — I'm going to say Chief O, because I don't want to butcher that.

CHIEF JOHN OJEISEKHOBBA: Thank you.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Ojeisekhoba.

CHIEF JOHN OJEISEKHOBBA: Oh! Mr. Secretary got it right! Good!

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Okay [laughter].

CHIEF JOHN OJEISEKHOBBA: Thank you. Thank you! John Ojeisekhoba. I serve as the immediate past president of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators and all of campus in law enforcement. Full time, I serve as an associate Vice President and Chief of Campus Safety at Biola University, here in California. And originally, I'm from Nigeria. Glad to be here.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Thank you. Dr. Marrero.

DR. ALEX MARRERO: Greetings all. Alex Marrero, proud superintendent of Denver Public Schools, the largest school district in the state of Colorado serving around 90,000 students, 18,000 employees. I also serve as the President-elect for ALAS, the Association for Latino Administrators and Superintendents. I believe I am one of two K-12 reps on this board, so excited to be a part of this group, and I'm looking forward to taking as much as I can. There's a lot riding in the K-12 space. We've really persevered through violent attacks, cyber-attacks, we've responded well. And if you're sensing an accent, you're correct. I'm from the Bronx — the Bronx, New York.

ASSISTANT CHIEF RUDY PEREZ: [Laughter].

DR. ALEX MARRERO: Pleasure to be here.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Well, greetings from Brooklyn at the FEMA NOC Headquarters! Dr. Kelley.

DR. CYNTHIA KELLEY: Yes, hello. My name is Cindy Kelley. I serve as president of Madisonville Community College in the western part of Kentucky. I'm very honored to be a part of this group.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Right. Dr. Keenum?

Dr. Flores.

DR. ANTONIO FLORES: Thank you. My name is Antonio Flores. I'm the President and CEO of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, based in San Antonio, Texas. We represent nearly 600 institutions across the country that collectively serve more than 5.3 million students, and 67 percent of all the Hispanics in higher education, which is 3.8 million. I'm also an immigrant from Mexico. I'm honored to be part of this great group of leaders from across the country. Thank you.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Great. Dr. Feldblum.

DR. MIRIAM FELDBLUM: Thank you, Secretary Mayorkas, for your remarks and all your work. My name is Miriam Feldblum. I am the executive director of the President's Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, an alliance of over 550 presidents and chancellors of public and private colleges and universities in 43 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico. And we have come together around the immigration issues that impact our students, campuses, communities, and nation. And I'm honored and delighted to serve on this council and look forward to the work. Thank you.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Great. Dr. de la Torre.

DR. ADELA DE LA TORRE: Yes, hello. I'm president Adela de la Torre, president of San Diego State University, a very proud transborder HSI and AANAPISI institution and look forward to working with everyone. Thank you so much.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Great. All right. Superintendent Carvalho, I understand you may be on the public side of this.

Okay, we think Superintendent Carvalho joined with a different link, but he's joined us today, and he is the superintendent of Los Angeles Unified School District, my alma mater, and so hopefully, he can join us in this panel where we can see one another. All right. Carrie Billy.

Carrie, are you here?

All right, and with that I will move to our two co-chairs.

Ms. Elisa Villanueva Beard.

ELISA VILLANUEVA BEARD: Good afternoon. My name is Elisa Villanueva Beard, and I'm the CEO for Teach for America. I am proudly from the Rio Grande Valley. My family is from Mexico, and it is such an honor and a pleasure to have the opportunity to serve, and thank you so much for your leadership, Mr. Secretary.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Great. And Dr. Bumphus

DR. WALTER BUMPHUS: Good afternoon, colleagues. Oh, I'm on mute, I think. Aren't I? Or am I? [inaudible] Okay.

Good afternoon, colleagues. I'm Walter Bumphus, president and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges, and I've been in this role for about 14 years now. And prior to that, I was a professor and chairman of the Department of Education Administration at the University of Texas at Austin. In my role as CEO, we represent 1,100 colleges and 12 million students and about 49 percent of all the students in higher education.

I'm going to make this really brief, but I want to agree with the Secretary and what he said about teaching being one of the noblest professions. And I'd be remiss if I didn't mention it, especially since she's listening on today. My wife was an elementary school teacher, elementary school principal, and is now a professor of practice at the University of Texas at Austin in their Higher Education Administration Office. And so, it's a great pleasure to be with all of you. Look forward to working with you in this role and especially in a number of the areas that community colleges have specialized and done well with for the past few decades.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Thank you. All right, Secretary. We'll turn it back to you to swear everyone in.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: [Inaudible] For those who can stand, I know that some are in transition from one location to another, but for those of you who could stand, I would ask that you do stand and raise your right hand. For those who need to remain seated, to just raise your right hand and you'll repeat after me. And when I say the word — I'll start with the word "I," I would ask that each of you after I state the word, "I," just express your name. I'm going to stand as well, just as a matter of formality, and so you'll lose at least a sight of me. But if you would raise your right hand and repeat after me:

COUNCIL MEMBERS: I, [First and Last Name] —

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Do solemnly swear —

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Do solemnly swear —

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: That I will support and defend—

COUNCIL MEMBERS: That I will support and defend—

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: The Constitution of the United States—

COUNCIL MEMBERS: The Constitution of the United States—

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Against all enemies, foreign and domestic—

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Against all enemies, foreign and domestic—

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: That I will bear true faith and allegiance—

COUNCIL MEMBERS: That I will bear true faith and allegiance—

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: To the same—

COUNCIL MEMBERS: To the same—

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: That I take this obligation freely—

COUNCIL MEMBERS: That I take this obligation freely—

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Without any mental reservation—

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Without any mental reservation—

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Or purpose of evasion—

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Or purpose of evasion—

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: That I will well and faithfully—

COUNCIL MEMBERS: That I will well and faithfully—

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Discharge the duties of the office—

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Discharge the duties of the office—

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: On which I am about to enter.

COUNCIL MEMBERS: On which I am about to enter.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Congratulations and thank you.

DR. MARK EVERETT KEENUM: Absolutely.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Thank you so very much, all of you.

DR. MARK EVERETT KEENUM: Thank you.

ASSISTANT CHIEF RUDY PEREZ: Thank you.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Great. At this point—

DR. MARK EVERETT KEENUM: And Rebecca? Becca, this is Mark.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Yes?

DR. MARK EVERETT KEENUM: I'm sorry. I've been on the call with all my colleagues the whole time, and I've had some technical issues, so I just wanted you to know I'm with the group now. I'm having to navigate a different way and means by using my cell phone other than my computer.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: We're glad to have you with us, Dr. Keenum.

DR. MARK EVERETT KEENUM: Absolutely. My pleasure.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: All right. Now with that, Elisa, we will turn it over to you.

ELISA VILLANUEVA BEARD: Great. Thank you again, Mr. Secretary, for your leadership. And thank you also for your team, particularly Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Rebecca Sternhell, Traci Ballard-Silas, and Tamara Molina, and for really all of the Department that is providing support for this group. We really appreciate it.

It is a true honor to be chosen to serve on this Council along such esteemed colleagues, and in this role, and really just a pleasure to be with all of you today to kick off our very first meeting together at the Homeland Security Academic Partnership Council.

For those of you that I have not had the opportunity to work with closely, I'm very much looking forward to that as we get into the work.

Just to say a bit about Teach for America, where I have spent the last 25 years of my career starting in the classroom. Teach for America exists to end educational inequities, and our contribution to that effort is exceptional and diverse leadership. We find, we select, and we develop leaders who teach in urban and rural America and who commit their entire lives to work toward the day where every child will have an equal chance in life.

We now, today, 33 years into this work, have a network that's almost 70,000 strong, working across 37 states and Washington, DC., working towards uncommon results — working across, alongside many others.

To this council, I bring a national perspective as an educator serving the most marginalized communities across our country. I'm a mother of four school-age sons, and I'm a leader in the effort to ensure that every child in our country has access to an excellent education.

I'm especially excited to dig into the council priority of developing career opportunities to support [a] 21st-century DHS workforce. We can't have a strong, 21st-century DHS workforce without a strong, 21st-century education system. And as we all know, right now, our education system is in crisis. We've lost decades of ground on academic achievement, and our children are just not well overall. And this moment really requires an all-hands-on-deck approach because everything is at stake for this generation and really for our country. Young people are yearning for a relevant, engaging, rigorous education where the conditions are supportive and joyful. And so, to build the workforce of tomorrow, we need to develop this kind of education rooted in academic and personal skills. And the good news about all of it is that we know a lot about what works. We know more than ever about brain science. We know about the science of reading. We know about high dosage tutoring, and so much more. And we just must make room for innovation and radical creativity in this moment.

I recognize that we're a diverse group who will bring equally diverse perspectives to the table, and I see that as a real strength that will enable us to arrive at better recommendations.

My goal as the chair is to ensure that we deliver timely, actionable recommendations to the Department, and that in doing so, every member of this body feels that they have a voice in and transparency about the process. So, I look forward to working closely with my vice chair, Dr. Bumphus, and each one of you. Mr. Secretary, thank you again for the opportunity to serve.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Thank you.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Thank you. Dr. Bumphus.

DR. WALTER BUMPHUS: I'm going to be very brief here. I already mentioned that I was CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges. But in addition to that, I've also worked in community colleges for about thirty years. I've been a Chancellor twice. I've been a President twice. And I also led the state of Louisiana's community colleges for seven years. And in that role, I've had a chance to address a number of topics. But one of the things that I think we've done well with community colleges is we've addressed the needs of — and I think the Chair said it very well — a number of marginalized students is what I'll call it. And I think most of you are familiar with the work we do.

I have really enjoyed my role in community colleges during my tenure. And I want to echo the chair's comments in that it is truly an honor to serve in this role. And, Mr. Secretary, I thank you greatly, and members of his staff, I thank you. And I want to especially recognize Tamara for the work she did with us getting us ready for this meeting. She did an outstanding job, even though we had to basically abort our meeting about fifty percent through it last time, but I think everybody really appreciated the work she did with us.

I bring a national perspective to this council, and, more importantly, I think I bring an ability to listen. And I know many of the people who serve on this Council, and I know the talent you bring, and so I look toward to doing a couple of things. One, supporting my Chair. And then secondly, working with all of you to make sure your voices are heard and that we are able to prepare students and employees for this 21st-century DHS workforce.

So, it's an honor to be with you again and thank you very much again, Mr. Secretary.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Thank you.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Thank you. So, I did want to acknowledge, I see, Superintendent Carvalho, you've joined us, so thank you for joining us and welcome.

ALBERTO M. CARVALHO: Thank you very much, if I may, just very quickly, I've actually been on from the very beginning, not as a panelist, to begin with, but I was able to be sworn in. I actually took video of it right next to Secretary Mayorkas. Secretary Mayorkas, thank you so much for your and national leadership, and I certainly appreciate, and I feel it is an honor to have Los Angeles Unified represented on this important council. Thank you very much.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Thank you. All right. So, thank you for the brief introductions. Thank you, everyone, for the remarks. Secretary, I'll turn it to you to discuss taskings.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Thank you very much, Rebecca. Thanks again to all of you. So, we really, Rebecca and I, all of us want to defer to your expertise and judgment as to the work

that you would like to undertake, that you feel needs to be undertaken to advance the safety and security of the education ecosystem, the academic life of individuals at different ages in our country.

There are two very discrete challenges that we face that I did want to mention as ideas that may not necessarily be the ones that come initially to mind, but they are challenges that we see all too often. And one targets older students, the academic institutions, the college and university systems, and the other is one that it addresses youth, a much younger constituency.

With respect to the colleges and universities, we are seeing an increase in foreign malign influence and an attendant theft of intellectual property on our college and university campuses. And it is a persistent and increasing problem. And we are very interested in understanding how we can combat it more effectively. It's a very discrete threat vector but one with a very significant homeland and natural security impact.

The second goes to the safety of youth, and it is something about which I met with experts earlier today, and that is the extraordinarily pernicious and prevalent threat of online child sexual exploitation and abuse. And I don't think the American public understands how depraved the exploitation can be and how prevalent it is. And we are very focused on raising public awareness and most importantly, raising the awareness amongst the targeted student body and their support systems, so that we can respond to and protect from more effectively.

Those are two very discrete threats that I would ask the Council to consider undertaking. And then, and really, while I intended to, and I think Rebecca most likely expected me to task to the Council, I would actually like to take a step back and ask you to consider them in the context of so many other challenges our campuses face and how you think you can be most impactful in addressing the safety and security of the ecosystem of which you are such an integral part.

And so, what perhaps I might ask is for the Council to confer. The threat landscape is so diverse. The safety and security needs are so acute and varied, I would actually ask you to engage amongst yourselves, and perhaps we would circle back to finalize taskings. You know, I have been on too many calls over the past several weeks with educators about what they are confronting, whether it is an extreme weather event and securing students in the midst of an extreme weather event, to a lack of gun safety and speaking with the college president in Jacksonville, Florida, whether it's Chapel Hill, and you know, a shooting incident there. It is too prevalent, and so given the myriad threats, the diverse range of threats and needs, I would ask that the Council consider the two discrete issues that I raise, as well as the many, many others that meet at the intersection of our Department's mission and your mission. And let's come up with some taskings where we can really have a significant impact together, because we have tremendous resources, you have tremendous expertise, and the needs are varied and significant. And I'll leave it at that, Rebecca.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Great. So, with that, I mean, I think we can open the floor up here. I would ask that people use that little yellow raise hand, so we can hear one another. Ms. Walsh.

SUZANNE ELISE WALSH: I apologize [inaudible] over in the corner, but, Secretary Mayorkas, will we be able to get a little more detail to give us the context for the increased foreign maligned influence — I think I wrote all the words in the right order — but I think it

would be helpful just to get a little bit more of what you're seeing in terms of that threat to help contextualize that, because my initial reaction is really more on the physical side, at least for HBCU's. We're very concerned first and foremost about physical safety, but I'd like to know more about what the threat is that you are privy to.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Sure. And by the way, Ms. Walsh, on the physical safety, the key here is to deliver that safety while maintaining an open and welcoming environment. And that is a very difficult needle to thread, because what we do not want is a campus to be a lockdown environment, to be in any way foreboding and the like and so managing physical security with an open and embracing environment is a key, and maybe that's something that we can actually tackle together. But I think what would be most effective, certainly from a time, efficiency, and management perspective is for us to circulate, perhaps, a brief paper identifying the threat of which I speak.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: We'll get that out. Randi Weingarten, you're next.

RANDI WEINGARTEN: Thank you, and thank you, Mr. Secretary, for raising these things. I think that some of the hardest things from the perspective of the employees that work for school systems — and we are the largest higher ed union, and we are the second largest K-12 union, and we have 1.72 million members, and we represent the school systems in Connecticut — Newtown — and in Parkland, and in several others, including higher ed institutions, where we have seen these kind of horrible shootings.

I think that the issues that you just raised are really important. The balance of safe and welcoming and understanding the threats — the swatting that has gone on, all of these kind of threats have gone on using social media and things like that, I think if you help us learn enough, I think all of us collectively can then help give some advice [inaudible] how to do the balance.

So, for example, the balance is not right when we have just had a respiratory illness, and we need to open windows, and we are told that we have to close windows, and we don't have air conditioning in those schools. So, we need to find ways to get the balance right, have transparent, important information at the ready, so that we can reduce disinformation and things like that.

But I'm very honored to be part of this, and to really focus on these things, and to bring that intelligence from the field to you and the experience from the field to you.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Thank you so much.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Alright. Dr. Feldblum.

DR. MIRIAM FELDBLUM: Thank you. And Secretary Mayorkas, thank you so much for raising the issue of the foreign influences, and I'd like to kind of also go with your language of being open and welcoming, because we know that our international students are vital to our national security, bolster our national innovation, our economy, and that we have to at once address directly and intentionally the issues that you are raising, as well as ensuring that we are opening and welcoming to our international students and populations. And that there is work to be done. With all the work that has already been, I think, accomplished by the administration, there is much more work to be done on that account. So, I'd love us to think about it within that context, that for colleges and universities, we have to be at once opening and welcoming. International student mobility, the ability to recruit and retain international students and scholars

are vital to our national security, economy, and communities. So, thank you, and I hope this council can address both sides of that.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Great. Dr. Shapira.

DR. CYNTHIA D. SHAPIRA: Thank you very much. I just wanted to pick up really on Suzanne's point, which is, with regard to these are two critically important issues, I thoroughly disagree. That the day-to-day in higher education, the fact that the vast preponderance of students are attending less selective public institutions where the threat of the foreign intervention probably isn't as acute as is just the basic security issues. And it's not just the balance between welcoming and security, there are two other major issues.

One has to do with freedom of speech and academic freedom and this notion of, 'Who's going to incite?' Right? And 'Who's allowed to speak on campus, and what are the potential impacts?' But also, the really raw issue of, I know my schools, for example — my comprehensive regional public universities in Pennsylvania — we cannot pay for the kind of security we really need. I hate that things get back to a fundamental like that, but I think for public institutions, where, again, this is the sort of crushing, real day-to-day problem and where most of our students actually go. These are the sort of the critical, nitty-gritty issues we have to try to get our arms around.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Thank you. Chief.

CHIEF JOHN OJEISEKHOB: Thank you so much again, Mr. Secretary. I'm glad to be here. So, when it comes to campus and campus safety or campus the law enforcement, we spend virtually twenty-four hours with the students, three hundred sixty-five days a year in some cases, right? Because our patrons are never closed. We are concerned because students pick a college or university for various reasons, including seeking an education, trying to develop themselves personally or professionally, building a future, and for many other reasons.

So, our stance is, 'Why should these students have to worry every day about their safety and security? To worry if someone's going to come and shoot up their classroom or dorm room or administrative building?' So, from a clear standpoint in campus public safety, campus law enforcement, I think all the topics or issues that have been brought forth are valid and very impactful to these students who are the future of our nation and beyond.

So, I would like to contribute in any way to two areas and beyond. One is student mental health. We deal with that every day on college campuses. For us, we deem that as a crisis now. The second one is the physical security standpoint, specifically the subject of active shooter. It is our mindset that no campus or college or university is immune from such a heinous act anymore. Gone are those days. So, I'm very much looking forward to working with this unique set of colleagues here on those areas and beyond.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Thank you. Dr. de la Torre.

DR. ADELA DE LA TORRE: Thank you. One of the things I wanted to focus on is really the risk right now in terms of cyber security on university campuses. We're a large regional, close to 38,000 students. One of the problems that we see daily are attacks on our infrastructure. We

work closely with the FBI, which has been very important, but nonetheless, I think when we look at the future and we look at augmented artificial intelligence, we are really — I would say public universities but also private universities — are running behind in our ability to really protect ourselves from the challenges.

As you know, many of the ransomware attacks occur on college campuses through a portal that is open. In other words, we have open access for many of our students, but I would say we need to have a better map, a better strategy in order to address the real threat of cybersecurity, particularly now with augmented artificial intelligence which, again, is speeding up.

I also think we need to have a strong map for regional universities of how we work to collaborate with local law enforcement, particularly the FBI, in order to enhance that. Because I do think the threat — there are physical threats — but the threat right now, I would say on college campuses, on preparedness for these intellectual threats, as well as threats of obtaining personal information, are very real. Thank you.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Thank you. Superintendent Carvalho.

ALBERTO M. CARVALHO: Thank you very much. My remarks will be reasonably brief. Number one, I want to thank Secretary Mayorkas once again for what I believe was a first of its kind, unprecedented opportunity at the White House to discuss some of the very same issues we're discussing here today, specific to cybersecurity issues and foreign entities who prey upon K-12 institutions, as well as colleges and universities. I think the synergy of private sector, philanthropy, as well as governmental institutions, particularly universities and school systems, represented at that conversation was incredibly powerful.

As a superintendent of over 17 years in some of the largest districts in America, I can attest to the fact that the threats are real, and they're imminent. And this is the first national conversation I find myself in with individuals who can actually, from a policy but also resource perspective, do something about it.

I want to qualify very quickly what I perceive from a K-12 perspective as being the most important threats. I lived these in Miami. I've lived them in L.A. Cybersecurity threats, particularly those whose origin is from beyond the borders of our country, with reluctant partners in vigorously investigating and apprehending beyond what's done in our country.

We were lucky enough to have at our fingertips contacts such as Deputy Secretary Cindy Martin, and Secretary Cardona and Secretary Mayorkas, the NSA, the FBI, who descended upon L.A. to help us manage through that set of conditions.

Secondly, as some of my colleagues spoke about — imminent threats to the safety, security, the well-being of our students and faculties. That's well known. I dealt with them in South Florida. I have dealt with those threats here in in Los Angeles. And we're not going to turn K-12 institutions into prisons. President Randi Weingarten said it's a fine balance that we need — additional investments but also the know-how, right?

The third one goes to the words that I actually took pride in reciting as part of my swearing in. “Not all of the threats come from the outside.” There are threats that are carried out without guns

or knives in our schools — those threats that come from powerful voices that are perceived as being antisemitic, anti-LGBTQ, anti-minority, anti-immigrant, because they do have not only a threatening effect, but in terms of the mental well-being, the state of mind of students and staffs and families in our communities, that disproportionately represent those individuals — those are real threats that impact students' ability to learn. Cybersecurity threats impacting our infrastructure. Certainly, threats of violence, particularly through the wild abuse of the ease with which people access firearms. And, thirdly, the subtle and not-so-subtle threats to people just on the basis of who they are. I appreciate this venue, this forum, and the intellect at the table or on Zoom to decipher through a better plan for America.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Thank you. I do want to just pause here very quickly, as the Secretary does have a hard stop 5:30, so we'll take these next three comments, and then I'm going to take the privilege of also being Executive Director of the HSAC to give you some thoughts about how to frame these to report them back to us. So, Assistant Chief. Briefly, if you will.

ASSISTANT CHIEF RUDY PEREZ: Well, thank you again, Secretary Mayorkas. I think I want to say, 'Hi,' to Mr. Carvalho, and where I was for 22 years serving — he's absolutely correct — under those investigations in our agencies in Los Angeles were very troubling, but it's nice to see the conversation happening.

At the same time, I want to echo what you said, Secretary Mayorkas, especially on the ecosystem. This is not a law enforcement problem. This is a partnership challenge that we all have to keep our schools safe. The early intervention, the early prevention process, but having properly selected, properly trained, and properly equipped law enforcement officers that understand the education process of how to mentor, lead, and protect kids safely through graduation. And not as an enforcement process, but as a holistic approach as we look at this together.

So, I thank you for the conversations of what the ecosystem is, but we always have to have something to address. Anything that's evasive in our ecosystem, whether it's a cyberattack, whether it's a physical attack, or any other attack that stops the process of the education. And I think collectively, especially with law enforcement together and the minds of our academics, we can accomplish everything we can. So, I really truly appreciate you having this conversation and law enforcement at the table. Thank you, sir.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Chair.

ELISA VILLANUEVA BEARD: Thank you so much. I know we're running out of time here, so I will be brief. I want to echo — a lot resonates from what people have shared — so I don't want to go through the same topics. The only thing I would add, as we consider there are so many topics and the diversity of the ecosystem and things we need to tend to that are very urgent. I think it's important for us to ensure that we're also getting data and information that centers us on students — young people in the K-12 system, kids in college — and what's most on their mind.

We've been talking about the mental health crisis that exists in our country, and our kids cannot be functioning adults, really cannot be learning, unless we start to ensure that we are creating the

conditions for safety for them to be able to learn, to lead, and to thrive. And so, I'd like to make sure as we consider all the data and all the topics that we're really centering students voice in our consideration and what's on their mind, what they're most worried about, as we are working to attend to the issues that we believe are going to make the greatest impact and focus our energy there as we consider where our priorities will sit. So, thank you.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Alright. Ms. Snyder.

BARBARA SNYDER: Mr. Secretary. I want to speak to the issue you raised at the beginning about research security and intellectual property theft on campuses by maligned foreign actors. The AAU is 69 of America's leading research universities, including Northwestern University, represented by President Schill here today, and Carnegie Mellon University, with President Jahanian, who is not here today but who is a member of this group.

First, I want to tell you that I'm really proud of the way our universities have, at your urging and others, dramatically ramped up their efforts to protect the security of our research and our intellectual property. They have really been examining the greatest risks on their campuses and devoting their greatest security efforts and resources toward the greatest risks, and I think that is the right way to do it.

I am grateful for the partnership we've had with the FBI, and I want to call out Assistant Director for Counterintelligence Alan Kohler, who just retired, and now Assistant Director Suzanne Turner, who succeeded him. They have worked with us to help us think through these issues and to make sure that our campuses are doing the best job possible, and also really work to create good relationships between our campuses and local FBI agents. And that has been very, very valuable.

I also want to note and applaud the change in the name of what used to be called the China Initiative and tell you how destructive and damaging that was for our campuses. And just so you know, I want to second the comments already made by Dr. Feldblum that our Chinese American and Chinese faculty and students contribute greatly to the advancement of science, to our research priorities, to our national security, and it is so important for us that they feel valued for those contributions and welcomed. And right now, it continues to be difficult for them because of the lasting impact of the so-called China Initiative, and I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that to you today. So, thank you.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Thank you. I appreciate that.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Thank you. And I will just chime in here to say that in the conceiving of the foreign malign influence tasking, we had intended that it would also include acts of transnational repression, where, you know, Chinese nationals, other students from foreign nations are targeted because of who they are or their families are targeted elsewhere. So, really trying to take a broad-based approach to that.

So, this is the quick moment of liberty I'm going to take here, and I would encourage you all, as you think about some of these ideas, bear in mind what the Department can and cannot do. There are a lot of big challenges, and we confront this every day. It would be nice if we could wave a

magic wand and resolve some of the problems, but we are bound by the Constitution, bound by the laws of this country, bound by regulations, bound by budgets, quite simply.

And so, as you think through these, keep that in mind. If you have questions, please reach out to Traci or any member of the academic team or myself. We're happy to speak with you and help you air out thoughts as you're trying to work through them, because ultimately the goal here is to figure out the big questions to ask such that this body can then develop the best, most comprehensive recommendations that the Department can bring to bear, the resources we can bring to bear, and the solutions that we can help implement to help you all, you know, keep students faculty, campus life, your schools, safe. So, I will leave that there and Secretary, I'll turn over to you for the last word.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Rebecca, thank you. The last word will end where I began with an expression of gratitude. But before that, you know, what I tried to do is identify issues that were narrow enough to really tackle and make concrete recommendations that are actionable and can be very impactful. My impression from the discourse in which we just engaged is that perhaps the aperture that I created is too narrow. What we need to do is, perhaps — and this is my impression from what has been expressed — is we need to widen the aperture a little bit more on the issue of safety and security and what that means.

At the same time, I would ask, as we consider what work we will embark upon, that we not broaden the aperture so much that it'll be very, very difficult to actually have really result from our work. We need lines of effort that we can action and operationalize together and actually deliver concrete results to make the world safer for everyone on the campuses of whatever age and background and future.

It's difficult, but whether it's cybersecurity, physical security, mental health, safety and security in whatever specific domain, let's try to find that sweet spot of big, wide impact. But impact.

Because what can do in the Department is actually operational. We can make things happen to enhance our goals in the lives of the people about whom we care and in whose care we are entrusted. So, I'm really excited and grateful for your willingness to work together on this, and I look forward to continuing the conversation after we've given it more thought. Thanks so much.

REBECCA K. STERNHELL: Thank you. We are adjourned.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Thank you all.

[UNIDENTIFIED]: Thank you.

ASSISTANT CHIEF RUDY PEREZ: Thank you.

Transcript certified by:
Zarinah Traci Silas, Designated Federal Officer of the Homeland Security Academic Partnership Council

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