



Office of University Programs

Harnessing the Intellectual Power of America's Universities

About the Office of University Programs (OUP)

OUP harnesses the intellectual power of America's universities to provide innovative research, development, and education to the Homeland Security Enterprise (HSE). One of the department's most forward-looking programs, OUP supports the HSE by: identifying emerging trends and pursuing groundbreaking research through the DHS Centers of Excellence; developing current and future homeland security talent through Workforce Development; and providing opportunities that cultivate a diverse and talented workforce through the Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) program.

Centers of Excellence

The DHS Centers of Excellence (COEs) are multidisciplinary academic consortia that engage leading experts to conduct groundbreaking research on threats facing the Homeland. In an operationally-driven department, the DHS COEs play a unique and pivotal role by offering rigorous, objective knowledge and solutions that directly enable DHS missions. Additionally, each DHS COE actively contributes to workforce development through the development of education resources and training.

- Arctic Domain Awareness Center - Addressing Rapid Changes through Technology, Innovation and Collaboration (ADAC-ARCTIC)
- Center for Accelerating Operational Efficiency (CAOE)
- Cross-Border Threat Screening and Supply Chain Defense (CBTS)
- Criminal Investigations and Network Analysis Center (CINA)
- Critical Infrastructure Resilience Institute (CIRI)
- Coastal Resilience Center (CRC)
- Master of Business Administration - Security Technology Transition (MBA STT)
- National Counterterrorism, Innovation, Technology, and Education Center (NCITE)
- Soft Target Engineering to Neutralize the Threat Reality (SENTRY)



Minority Serving Institutions

The Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) program provides opportunities that foster and cultivate a diverse university-based research capability and talented workforce and prepares motivated students to launch successful homeland security-related careers.

- Advance the research capabilities of students and contribute to MSI capacity building.
- Cultivate scientific leadership in areas of study critical to homeland security.
- Diversify the next generation of the homeland security workforce.
- Provide opportunities for students to directly engage with professionals in their areas of interest.

Workforce Development

Workforce Development helps ensure that the current homeland security workforce is performing to the best of its ability and cultivates the next generation of talent. The COEs, in concert with OUP, develop courses and offer a multitude of workshops and other opportunities for current employees to refine existing and develop new skills. Additionally, OUP grants, internships, and fellowships provide students with advanced technical knowledge and training through experiential learning.



OUP Impacts



Advancing our Understanding of the Structure and Operations of Criminal Networks

Transnational criminal organizations operate across the nexus of physical, cyber, and social space. CINA researchers are developing innovative approaches to understanding the complex structure and operations of such networks in order to develop more effective means to disrupt the organizations that pursue them.



Forecasting Impacts of Severe Storms in New England

CRC created the storm modeling system RI-CHAMP (Rhode Island Coastal Hazards, Analysis, Modeling and Prediction) to forecast the impacts of major storm events, helping to mitigate threats to people, infrastructure and economy. Since 2023, the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency has activated RI-CHAMP for multiple coastal weather events in order to make informed decisions and implement preparations around key assets in coastal areas.



Enhancing the Resilience of Maritime Ports

The Critical Infrastructure Resilience Institute (CIRI) risk assessment tool known as the Port Disruption Tool (PDT) was selected for participation in the Homeland Security Startup Studio Program. This tool allows port owners and operators to model and evaluate the operational and financial impacts of potential port disruptions in order to develop and implement prioritized, data-informed risk reduction and mitigation strategies.



Countering Terrorist Threats to the United States

NCITE researchers partner closely with HSE professionals at the Counterterrorism Mission Center, the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force, and state and local law enforcement and intelligence officers through the fusion center network. Through user-inspired projects, NCITE develops tools and improves the analytic work of identifying and neutralizing emerging and existing terrorist threats across rural towns, tribal territories, and urban U.S. cities.



Workforce and Professional Development

SENTRY workshops, conferences, and events provide professional development for students, faculty, and researchers while sharing the Center's latest research with government and industry professionals. The Center is increasing its engagement with underrepresented groups in STEM by partnering with Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and community colleges. Additionally, SENTRY is developing a curriculum for high schools and community colleges to promote hands-on learning in line with the DHS mission.



Improving Airport Checkpoint Performance

With more than 2.5 million passengers flying each day through U.S. airports, CAOE is working with TSA to improve airport checkpoint performance using resource allocation decision tools that evaluate passenger demand. Outcomes include reduced average wait time, improved customer service, and quicker responses to unplanned events without compromising security.



Addressing Arctic Challenges: Introducing the ADAC-ARCTIC Center of Excellence

On April 9, 2024, the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) formally launched the ADAC-ARCTIC Center of Excellence. This consortium, led by UAA, aims to meet a strategic need to ensure continuity of operations in the Arctic and to increase community and infrastructure resilience in a rapidly-changing environment.

Contact Us:

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