



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 and developing current and future homeland security talent.

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 educational 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)



Career Development

OUP 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 economies. 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 the United States.



Disrupting Transnational Criminal Organizations

CINA is working to help law enforcement more effectively identify individual members of Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) involved in smuggling and money laundering networks from network data with high levels of noise is challenging. This project developed a patent-pending technology that analyzes partially-known criminal networks to reveal probable unknown criminals, determine the best strategy for interdiction, and identify the most impactful strategies to disrupt criminal networks.



Improving Airport Checkpoint Performance

With more than 2.5 million passengers flying each day through U.S. airports, CAO E 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 and to increase community and infrastructure resilience in the Arctic region.

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