Criminal Investigations and Network Analysis
A DHS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

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THOUGHTS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Jim Jones

The threat landscape facing our nation and world is complex, varied, and dynamic. We are actively dealing with a global pandemic, mass shootings, foreign and domestic terrorism, climate change, supply chain disruptions, organized criminal activity, and adversarial nation states. From deliberate acts like terrorism, to inadvertent events like large ships drifting sideways in critical shipping lanes, to natural disasters like hurricanes and floods, the possible and actual threats to our safety and security can appear overwhelming. We shouldn't forget threats that fade from view, we cannot just address the latest or most visible problem, and we can't spend all of our time looking over the horizon and spending all of our resources addressing risks not yet realized. So how do we tackle this daunting spikey ball of challenges?

The obvious answer is by working together toward common goals, mixing tried and true solutions with innovative approaches that solve problems better, faster, and cheaper, while also invoking our imagination and creativity to anticipate the problems of tomorrow and blunt their effects before they even materialize. Striking this balance requires thoughtful consideration, open minds, leadership, focus, diligence, discipline, persistence, and investment. A microcosm of this approach is the DHS Center of Excellence program. This collection of universities, researchers, students, and practitioners represents a wealth of knowledge, experience, ability, and imagination, all focused on the problems faced by DHS, and more broadly by our nation and world.

There are related and complementary skills and expertise at the different centers, and we have learned when to join forces, when to share, and when to get out of each other's way. This works

because we have more than enough challenges to fill our plates, we have a strong and valuable partnership with DHS at all levels, we trust each other, and we are all working towards the common goals of safety and security for our people, our nation, and the world. The combined COE-DHS network is formidable, but if there is one thing we have all learned, it is that we cannot do this alone or in a vacuum.

I invite you to register for the virtual 2021 COE Summit on May 19-20, 2021 to see what the COEs are doing and how we are doing it. Visit our virtual booths, catch a project demo, or plug in to the various keynotes and panel discussions. If you like, come just to listen and learn. It's a free conference, and like previous COE Summits, we also welcome your questions, thoughts, input, and feedback to shape our portfolio and create partnerships for our shared mission.

NEWS

DHS Centers of Excellence Summit: Panel Highlight - Network Discovery from Data

Detecting and understanding a network in real time, i.e., finding the needles and their connections in the haystacks, is a hard problem.

At the upcoming 2021 DHS COE Summit, CINA and partner COEs CCICADA, START, and NCITE are leading a panel to discuss network discovery from data. The panel includes academic and industry experts, and will address the state of the art, challenges and gaps, case studies, and way forward.

Register for the Summit

George Mason University Collaboration Receives Grant to Hunt for Blockchain Crime

Maurice Kugler: 'Impeding these operations is essential to stopping many forms of heinous crimes including slavery, as well as sex

A grant from the Criminal Investigations and Network Analysis Center (CINA) at George Mason University will enable Professor of Public Policy Maurice D. Kugler (Schar School of Policy and Government), along with Mason Assistant Professors Foteini Baldmitsi (Computer Science) and Jiasun Li (Business Administration), to apply tools from economics, cryptography, and finance using groundbreaking blockchain technology in an effort to trace possible money laundering and financial fraud in cryptocurrency markets.

The two-year $400,000 grant from the CINA Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence supports a new partnership with the Blockchain Intelligence Group (BIG), the Vancouver-based

crypto-currency technology company responsible for creating a suite of cutting-edge tools for analyzing Bitcoin, Ethereum, and other blockchain currency transactions.

and organ trafficking, terrorism, and other illicit activities.'

Read the full article

Virtual Hearing - Ending Exploitation: How the Financial System Can Work to Dismantle the Business of Human Trafficking

Dr. Louise Shelley, Science Leadership Team and Mason faculty member was part of the Subcommittee on National Security, International Development and Monetary Policy that held a virtual hearing on Thursday, March 25 where the discussion focused on the role of financial systems in combating human trafficking.

Watch the Hearing

CINA Welcomes 2020-21 Open RFP White Paper Submissions

CINA continues to welcome white paper submissions presenting research ideas intended to address questions and challenges that CINA, DHS, and/or its federal partners are currently facing, or are expected to be facing in the near future. This rolling RFP provides an opportunity for submissions to be accepted at any time during the RFP open period (June 2020 – June 2021).

Learn how to submit a proposal

CINA Scholar internship at TSA

Congratulations to CINA scholar, Tasheonna Walton who was recently selected for a highly anticipated internship with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) in summer 2021.

Internship opportunities at TSA allow students to develop skills and talents while blending their academic studies with federal work. Student interns may be involved in public policy and administration, civil rights and liberties, assisting with projects related to global strategies and policies, business and financial management, information technology, human resources, communications, engineering, supporting the mission of security operations, and the Federal Air Marshal service

During the internship, Walton will assist and collaborate with TSA-DHS Performance Management members through a variety of opportunities. She will:

- Attend and participate in meetings and discussion with TSA customer
- Perform basic data analysis and provide improvement recommendation
- Review data sets and identify inconsistencie
- Deliver in-depth explanation of reports and metrics

Walton, an Information Systems and Operations Management major at George Mason University, is well prepared for the experience, holding multiple knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) beyond just her certifications in Microsoft Office Word, PowerPoint and Excel. She also holds an IC3 certification – Global Standard 5, and is Dell Tech Direct certified.

Tasheonna's civic service is also impressive; as a volunteer, she strongly supports "Gleaning for the World," packaging materials for disaster victims; assisted "Stop Hunger Now," packing meals for distribution; handed out school supplies to local students, and facilitated an effort to make teddy bears for 30 at a nursing home.

To learn more about the CINA Scholars program, contact Deanna Austin at dausti@gmu.edu.

Digital Archive: CINA Virtual Distinguished Speaker Series with Diana Dolliver

Watch the recent CINA Distinguished Speaker Series with Diana Dolliver as she discusses cryptocurrencies and criminal investigations: from transaction to seizure.

Watch the Event

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Centers of Excellence Summit 2021

Theme: University Research and Workforce Development for a Safe and Secure Homeland

When: May 17–21, 2021
Where: Virtual Event

Register Now

Hosted by the DHS Centers of Excellence (COE), this virtual event offers a unique opportunity for COE researchers to connect and network with DHS components, federal, state, and local stakeholders, as well as industry partners.

Register online at Register2021.coesummit.org

For more information about the DHS COE Summit visit the event website at:

www.coesummit.org

If you have any questions, please contact cina@gmu.edu

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Criminal Investigations and Network Analysis (CINA)
4400 University Drive, MS2A1
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: 703-993-4409

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