Criminal Investigations and Network Analysis
A DHS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

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THOUGHTS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Jim Jones

As I've written before, one of the benefits of leading CINA is the many opportunities we have to meet and talk with a wide variety of people who are directly or indirectly interested in our work and the work of the Department of Homeland Security.

In the last two weeks we participated in a workshop regarding privacy enhancing technologies and another workshop about cybercrime, hosted several guest speakers with deep domain expertise, met with a group of international visitors, and continue to work with visiting faculty and students from several Minority Serving Institutions. Besides making new connections and learning from each of these activities, I was struck by the interconnectedness of our problems, work, and solutions.

For example, consider the data challenge: for both operations and research, how do we get it, cleanse it, store it, and share it? At the privacy workshop co-hosted by the Center for Accelerating Operational Efficiency (CAOE) and the DHS Privacy Office, we met with government practitioners, academics, and industry experts to talk about technologies for securely sharing information. The presentations included topics like Secure Multiparty Computation and Homomorphic Encryption that allow sharing and operations on data without exposing the actual data – these were esoteric and impractical research areas a few years ago, and now they are being put into practice.

To my point about interconnectedness, we attended a cybercrime workshop a few days later and the researchers lamented the lack of available datasets. Having been freshly informed, I shared the technologies and resources discussed at the privacy workshop. This doesn't instantly solve

first publications in our domain based on data securely shared using one or more of these technologies.

In the same week, I had the pleasure of hearing two domain experts talk about – you guessed it – data, specifically the analysis of data to understand human trafficking networks, and the need to securely share data between different entities to understand and disrupt criminal networks. In these examples and others, the ability to share useful data in a privacy-preserving way is the key to breaking through the current barriers. So yes, we can have our cake and eat it, too - we can share data, fulfill our respective missions, and protect privacy.

Two CINA Science Committee members recognized with Presidential Awards for Faculty Excellence

CINA Science Committee members David Weisburd and Louise Shelley were named recipients of the 2022 Presidential Awards for Faculty Excellence, honoring Mason faculty members for their work on behalf of the university, students, and the broader community.

The faculty cited for 2022 come from five of Mason's schools. “Honoring faculty at various stages of their careers gives us the opportunity to recognize their exemplary achievements and the tremendous contributions they make to George Mason University,” Mason President Gregory Washington said.

“We are proud to recognize them for their groundbreaking efforts in research, teaching, social impact, and diversity and inclusion.” The Presidential Awards committee review team, which solicits nominations each year, is made up of faculty representatives, including prior award recipients, and senior leaders.

View the complete list of honorees

Kerry Riddle Appointed as Assistant Director for Finance and Operations

After serving as CINA's Financial and Administrative Specialist, Kerry Riddle has been promoted to Assistant Director for Finance and Operations.

In this role she leads project management for CINA’s dynamic research portfolio, provides operational leadership for the center’s activities and staff, and supports strategic planning to meet the goals established by CINA’s sponsor, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Riddle has served with the CINA center since 2018, and her prior experience includes several years of teaching experience, as well as with the U.S. Navy. Riddle holds a Master's in Business Administration and has experience in finance, project management, and business data analytics.

Allison Redlich named University Professor at Mason

Allison D. Redlich, a professor in the Department of Criminology, Law and Society (CLS) and CINA Science Committee member, has been named a George Mason University Professor. Her status was approved by a resolution of Mason's Board of Visitors in May. Along with endowed chairs, the title of University Professor is the highest academic rank bestowed on members of Mason's faculty.

"Professor Redlich is a highly-regarded scholar and we are thrilled Mason's Board of Visitors has selected her for this recognition," said CINA Director, Jim Jones.

Read more

CINA Welcomes Luke McBride as Financial and Administrative Specialist

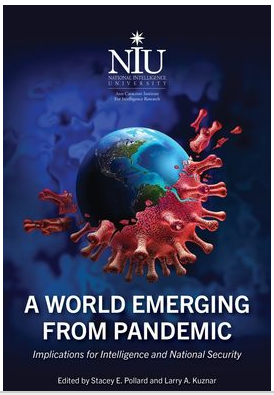
CINA recently brought on Luke McBride as a Financial and Administrative Specialist.

McBride intends to contribute his fiscal and organizational background to the position. His experience in key organizational support roles at Mason includes service as a Budget Administrative Assistant, Building Manager, and Operations Specialist. He currently manages Buckhall Volunteer Fire Department as President and has committed to years of managing the company, building the non-profit, and staffing the emergency apparatus.

In McBride's new role at CINA, he will manage CINA's budget, coordinate research subcontracts, handle fiscal and purchasing requirements, and provide general support for all operations, including travel, scheduling and equipment.

RESEARCH

A World Emerging From Pandemic: Implication for Intelligence and National Security



This newly published book explores how the COVID pandemic has impacted-and will continue to impact-the U.S. Intelligence Community.

Authors from multiple disciplines, including CINA Director, Jim Jones, and CINA Science Committee members Anthony Stefanidis and Louise Shelley, probe the ways in which pandemic-associated conditions interact with

qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods analyses so their projections can be tested against future conditions. This project results from a cooperative effort between National Intelligence University and the Pentagon's Joint Staff Strategic Multilayer Assessment office.

Read the book

Identifying and Interacting with Minor Victims of Human Trafficking

In a recent podcast, CINA Principal Investigator Dr. Jodi Quas discussed new research on forensic interviews for minor victims of human trafficking. Check out the podcast to hear what the research is saying, strategies to work with minors, and how this research is being disseminated for implementation.

Listen Now

Russia's war in Ukraine is tied to corruption, organized crime

Louise Shelley, a University Professor, CINA Science Committee member, and director of Mason's Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center explains to Mason President Gregory Washington the connections between the war in Ukraine and Russian corruption and organized crime, and how criminals and terrorists take advantage in diverse ways of the globalized world in which we live. Shelley's center exposes that criminality and recently helped take 55 million counterfeit and sub-standard medical masks out of circulation worldwide with the takedown of more than 50,000 online marketplaces and social media posts.

Listen to the podcast

CINA MSI Week offers life transforming opportunities

This month, CINA hosted students and faculty researchers from four university cohorts for the center's annual Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) Summer Workshop. The attendees from

Jackson State University, Sul Ross University, and the University of North Texas visited George Mason University's Fairfax, Arlington, and Manassas, VA campuses for a full agenda of workshops, talks, tours, and meetings with researchers and administrators.

Throughout the week-long agenda, participants attended sessions on open source research, digital forensics, human trafficking, and collaboration skill building, which laid the foundation for their research project work when the students were grouped into cross-functional teams.

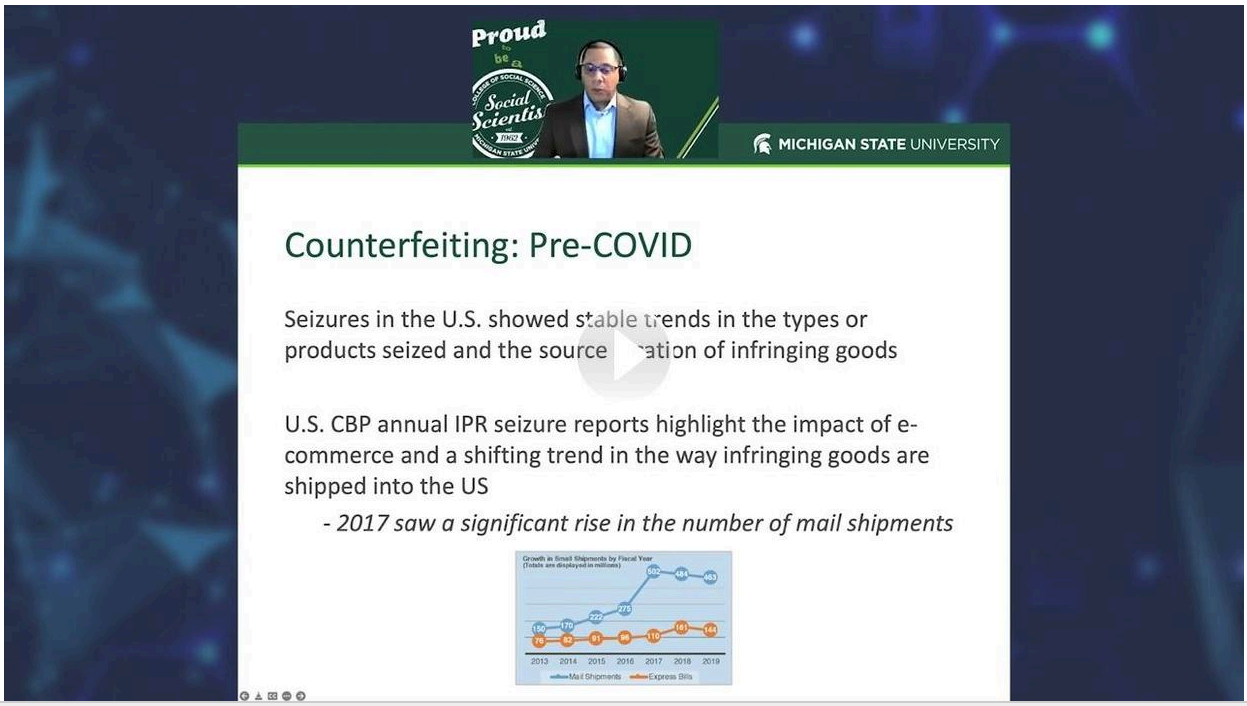
The teams presented situation analysis and recommendations on topics related to the week's speaker presentations. Participants toured Mason's outdoor Forensic Research and Training Laboratory, Mason Square's Cyber Living Innovation Lab, and as a team building activity, toured the Spy Museum in Washington D.C.

In addition to the week long program, CINA is also sponsoring various Summer Research Teams (SRTs) paired with faculty mentors to solve CINA mission related challenges.

Learn more about the SRT program

Jay Kennedy: "The Future of Counterfeiting"

In case you missed it, watch Jay Kennedy, Assistant Professor at Michigan State University discuss "The Future of Counterfeiting: Shifting Patterns in Enforcement, Opportunity Structures and Consumer Engagement". Dr. Kennedy is actively involved in research, education, and outreach efforts that focus on external partners including corporations, industry associations, and law enforcement agencies.



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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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