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At DHS, Brody's star is rising

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Michael Brody doesn't carry a badge or a gun, but the nation might just be less safe without people like him.

His weapons of defense are zeroes and ones, along with a healthy dash of people skills and a firm grounding in technology.

The 2011 Center for Homeland Defense and Security master's degree alumnus earned a [2015 Rising Star award from Federal Computer Week \(FCW\) magazine](#). The award honors early-career professionals who work for the federal government in the information technology field.

Brody is director of policy, architecture and governance with the [Department of Homeland Security Information Sharing Environment Office](#). The role entails translating the Department's mission objective into systems, platforms and capabilities that facilitate information sharing, and thus help homeland security professionals do their jobs.

"It's a very D.C. headquarters' function that is removed from the daily work of state-local-tribal-territorial practitioners, but it is crucial because one of the roles DHS has is delivering common information tools for homeland security professionals to use nationwide," Brody said during a phone interview. "If I do my job right, the operations have the right systems in place and they have funding and support from leadership."

Along with that duty comes writing the policies that govern those systems and collaborating with stakeholders on those guidelines. That's where a CHDS education is invaluable, he said. Ensuring systems are user-friendly and help professionals do their jobs requires familiarizing himself with type of business involved. Studying and debating homeland security challenges with master's degree participants with varied professions and backgrounds is critical to the collaboration the job requires.

"I really got to broaden my horizons with all those different elements of the homeland security enterprise," he said. "I really learned the substance and the business mission of the people we are trying to serve. The technology is usually the easiest part of delivering information solutions. We know what's out there and we know what the technology can do whatever time and money you have to make it do. So our job is to get into the business of the mission and makes sure their requirements are driving the technological solutions we build. You can't do that without taking time to get to know the department's components and what they want to achieve."

During his time at DHS, he has been part of a team that developed Homeland Security Information Network Release 3 that launched in 2013. HSIN is a secure and trusted web-based portal for information-sharing and collaboration among federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, private sector, and international partners. In December 2014, he was part of a team, [along with fellow CHDS graduate Christy Riccardi](#), who conducted a wholesale review that resulted in memorandum of understanding between DHS departments. The agreement enhanced information sharing systems and governance for security assessments of the nation's infrastructure assets.

His work garnered the attention of FCW, which wrote: "He has a knack for bringing together officials with wildly disparate and often opposing views to make progress on common goals despite those differences. He led the effort to improve the processes and strategy for the Information Sharing and Safeguarding Governance Board — no easy feat because it required close consultations with DHS' many independent-minded components"



Brody graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and later earned a law degree from the University of Illinois. A tradition of public service instilled by his parents – his mom taught public school and his father was a veteran – sparked his interest in working for the government even as his academic pedigree and field of expertise are highly coveted in the private sector.

“Unlike the rest of my generation who went on to Wall Street and became management consultants, I made a decision a long time ago that I needed to get a sense of mission and purpose out of my life. I wanted more than a paycheck,” he said.

His time at CHDS continues to benefit him, he added. The curriculum provided a policy introduction to the individual roles of players in the homeland security enterprise and he continues to draw upon information from the Center’s courses, especially the Technology for Homeland Security class.

Despite his accomplishments, Brody seemed uneasy with the attention.

“I didn’t know I was nominated by my boss and one of my employees,” he said. “I thought it was wonderful to get the recognition, but everything I do is part of teamwork. It felt awkward to be singled out.”

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