



Calhoun: The NPS Institutional Archive
DSpace Repository

Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS)

Center for Homeland Security and Defense Publications

2016-03-14

Brown fuses CHDS education, RAND research

<http://hdl.handle.net/10945/50789>

This publication is a work of the U.S. Government as defined in Title 17, United States Code, Section 101. Copyright protection is not available for this work in the United States.

Downloaded from NPS Archive: Calhoun



Calhoun is the Naval Postgraduate School's public access digital repository for research materials and institutional publications created by the NPS community. Calhoun is named for Professor of Mathematics Guy K. Calhoun, NPS's first appointed -- and published -- scholarly author.

Dudley Knox Library / Naval Postgraduate School
411 Dyer Road / 1 University Circle
Monterey, California USA 93943

<http://www.nps.edu/library>

Brown fuses CHDS education, RAND research

 chds.us/c/item/3642

After working eight years in various inspection, international, and intelligence roles for the Transportation Security Administration, Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security master's degree alumnus Michael A. Brown returned to homeland security research this year as a Department of Homeland Security fellow at the prestigious research organization, RAND Corporation.

The 2011 CHDS graduate joined RAND in August 2015, where he is conducting field research, writing case studies, and evaluating current and emerging homeland defense and security policy issues, including countering violent extremism, community partnerships, information operations, strategic communication, and trends in global terrorism.

"I've admired the high quality of (RAND's) work for a long time, so I was keen with the opportunity to join their team," Brown said. "Having served in several collaborative roles in the past, I thought the timing was good to bolster analytical proficiency and cultivate assessment and evaluation skills for future homeland security work."

The work has involved teaming up with nationally-acclaimed researchers and delivering subject matter knowledge to projects on real-time events, such as kidnappings for ransom, foreign fighters, refugee vetting, and cyber security. Brown has also authored three published op-ed articles for the think tank.

In one instance, his fellowship resulted in an opportunity to work with 2013 CHDS alumni [Tony Parker](#). Both men's theses touched upon convicted terrorists, countering violent extremism, and post-prison implications, topics which Parker testified about before a Congressional committee last October. CHDS Academic Programs Director Chris Bellavita connected the two to discuss the nascent issue predicted in their theses years before, in preparation for the House hearing.

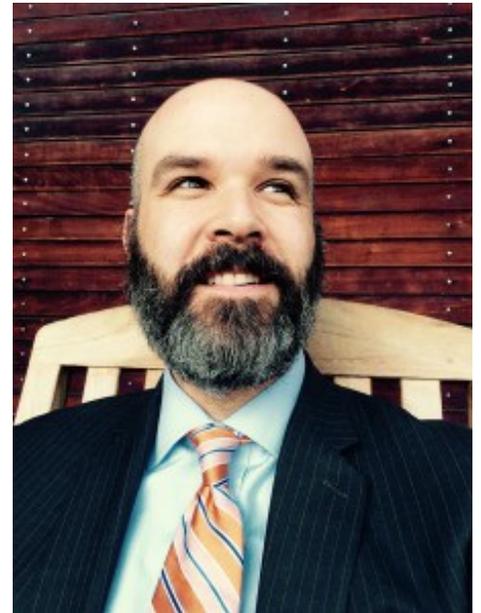
"It was a proud moment for CHDS, to recognize and advance a new policy topic from a classroom five years ago, through multiple cohorts, into the halls of Congress, and into a developing [national narrative](#)."

The fellowship provides a special opportunity to study with nationally-acclaimed researchers on critical issues, Brown added. At least three researchers with the organization were cited in Brown's master's degree thesis, "[Freed: Ripples of the Convicted and Released Terrorist in America](#)," and CHDS instructor Dr. Seth Jones is the director of the organization's International Security and Defense Policy Center.

"The DHS Fellowships help RAND research staff to better understand the operational pressures and constraints that affect homeland security missions," said Dr. Henry Willis, director of the RAND Homeland Security and Defense Center. "Gaining this knowledge and working with the Fellows helps us draw practical and actionable recommendations from analysis."

Both RAND and CHDS are similar settings in that they hold their personnel to the highest analytical standard, Brown noted, adding that the rules of a master's curriculum text that alludes to Bovine excreta in its title applies.

"You better have data to support your assessments, and offer a non-partisan assessment," Brown said. "Individuals in both settings are driven and self-motivated. And there is a respectful camaraderie among interdisciplinary colleagues in both settings as well."



A CHDS lesson he has taken with him to the fellowship came from Dr. Lauren Wollman, who urges students to “go into the abyss” while researching and formulating research questions.

“Dr. Wollman encouraged us to go into the unknown space and recognize it as your unique contribution to your product, institution, academia, and the world,” Brown recalled. “I love that unknown space.”

[The DHS Fellowship](#) at RAND began in 2008. According to RAND, the program enables DHS to 1) develop up-and-coming leaders with the strategic analysis and planning skills needed to meet the challenges of a complex organization, 2) help achieve the Department’s broad mission set by studying with nationally-known RAND researchers on critical homeland defense issues, 3) form effective partnerships outside of the Department and provide RAND continuous exposure to DHS operations, and 4) support the innovations needed to better manage finite DHS resources.

“It has been great to collaborate with military fellows that RAND employs as well,” Brown said. “I look forward to continuing relationships with RAND alumni after my time here, just as I have with the CHDS cohorts that studied before, with, and after me.”

[Copyright/Accessibility/Section 508](#)