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## Recent graduates discuss their research in the 2016 Thesis Series

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# Recent graduates discuss their research in the 2016 Thesis Series

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 [chds.us/c/item/3732](https://chds.us/c/item/3732)

[Master's theses](#) from NPS Center for Homeland Defense and Security March 2016 graduates have just been published. Several of our graduates joined our [Viewpoints video series](#) to talk about their research.

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## Armed to Learn: Aiming at California K-12 School Gun Policy

Although the idea of a school shooting strikes fear in the hearts of school administrators, school employees, and parents, there is no agreement on whether arming employees is a sound strategy to counter this threat. There is a wide gap in viewpoints between gun control advocates who want tighter gun control and constitutionalists who believe as strongly in the Second Amendment right to bear arms. Whether or not to implement a weapons policy is an issue every school superintendent or school authority may need to face sooner or later. In this [Viewpoints video](#), **Catherine Jones, Director of Risk Management Services for the Kern County CA Superintendent of Schools Office**, discusses her Master's thesis, entitled, "Armed to Learn: Aiming at California K-12 School Gun Policy." This research does not seek to answer the question of whether school districts should arm their employees, but rather it seeks to provide a framework for each educational agency to explore, contemplate, and determine its course of action based upon risk management principles that take into account the values, goals, and capabilities of the community in which the policy would apply. Possible outcomes include the policy options of MoreGuns (allow teachers to be armed), BanGuns (no one is armed), or SomeGuns (trained security or law enforcement can be armed but not teachers). This research is intended to stand as a resource for stakeholders, such as legislators, parents, and employees, to equip them to engage in the policy debate and to empower their participation in making informed decisions about school district weapons policy.



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## A Different Shade of Blue: an Evaluation of the Civilian Detective Concept and Its Impact on Police Capabilities

Financial distress and shrinking police candidate pools have diminished cities' abilities to protect the public. In this [Viewpoints video](#), **David Green, Lieutenant for the San Bernardino Police Department**, discusses his CHDS Master's thesis, which examines the manner in which cities have adapted by using civilians to perform the duties of sworn detectives. Specifically, he looks at whether this practice enhances cities' contributions to public safety. Nine law enforcement organizations across the country that applied this policy were analyzed. It focused on cost implications, impacts on investigative and emergency response capabilities, job qualifications, training standards, scope of duties, and overall efficacy. Similar themes include the ability of cities to reduce costs and to achieve equivalent work output from civilian personnel. Dissimilar themes surrounded the reasons cities adopted the policy and how they trained the personnel. From the analysis, this thesis determined that the use of civilian personnel does enhance cities' contributions to public safety. This thesis also identified a need for a uniform national framework for policy adoption and for state peace officer accrediting commissions to develop guidelines for training and certification.



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## The Ethical Imperative of Reason: How Anti-Intellectualism, Denialism, and Apathy Threaten National Security

This thesis explores the roots and manifestations of anti-intellectualism, denialism and apathy. Philosophical in its design, this research explores the following question: What are the potential effects of cultural anti-intellectualism on the construction and execution of national security and homeland security policy? Specifically, it focuses on how anti-intellectualism can affect how a course of action is created, presented, messaged, supported, and executed. The thesis amasses a review of previous research on the nature and manifestations of this issue and offers an account of the prospective implications for the securities field. Utilizing a case study model, this research explores three examples to highlight the manifestation of this current problem. The findings indicate that anti-intellectualism impacts the highest levels of the political, media, and security processes and, as such, requires practitioners to acknowledge and address its influence. This thesis concludes by arguing that widespread ignorance of objective reality poses a threat to the democratic process. It provides three overarching strategies designed to limit the impact of anti-intellectualism in the policy process and demonstrates that, in the intricate and dynamic matters of our nation's security, there is an ethical imperative for 'reason' and factual discussion to rule the policy process.



**Greggory Favre is a Captain, Special Operations & Strategic Planning, with the St. Louis Fire Department.**

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## Flight Plight: an Examination of Contemporary Humanitarian Immigration from Honduras, Cuba and Syria to the United States with Considerations for National Security

CHDS graduate **Catherine Ventura, Immigration Officer for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services**, received the March 2016 award for Outstanding Thesis. In this [Viewpoints video](#), she discusses her work, which examines contemporary U.S. immigration for humanitarian populations from Honduras, Cuba, and Syria. Humanitarian immigration refers to refugees, asylum-seekers, and those who are forcibly displaced from their homelands. The study explores how the United States can balance its identity as a nation of immigrants with its increasing security concerns within forced migrant populations. The research describes various philosophies of and motives for migration and the United States' role as an international destination for refugees. The study also provides a comprehensive review of all U.S. humanitarian immigration programs available to forced migrants from Honduras, Cuba, and Syria. These unique reviews, or case studies, are introduced with descriptions of each country's social, political, and historical context for migration and feature fictional scenarios in which immigrant families interact directly with country conditions and the U.S. humanitarian immigration programs available to them. Finally, the thesis reviews national security concerns presented by humanitarian immigration programs and explains how national priorities and legislative remedies can temper public fear.



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## Saving the Savable: Using Bystanders to Increase Survival From Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest in NYC

Every year in America, thousands of people needlessly die following out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA). Because first responders in New York City (NYC) have difficulty arriving soon enough, cardiac arrest survival rates lag significantly behind jurisdictions around the country. One successful approach used elsewhere to increase OHCA survival rates is encouraging bystanders to perform CPR prior to first responders' arrival. Regarding bystanders as the "first" first responders requires a shift in thinking as well as an understanding of the modern bystander. In this [Viewpoints video](#), **Frank Leeb, Battalion Chief for the Fire Department City of New York**, discusses his Master's thesis, which examines the people, policies, and technology that are available—some of them already tested in other jurisdictions—and presents specific recommendations for NYC. Bridging the gap from the time a person stops breathing until the arrival of first responders may not be as difficult as it seems.



## Suicide in the Fire Service: Saving the Lives of Firefighters

**Steve Heitman, Fire Chief of the Mercer Island WA Fire Department**, talks about his CHDS Master's thesis research, looking at whether Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and firefighter suicide are on the rise in the U.S. fire service and how fire chiefs can implement programs to curb PTSD-related firefighter suicide. The research was limited, however, by imprecise statistics on PTSD and suicide in the fire service, caused in part by the firefighter culture. To work toward a proactive solution, this research examined current, effective mental health programs that can be utilized in-house by fire departments, including Critical Incident Stress Debriefing, Psychological First Aid, and Stress First Aid. Research on professional mental health focused on therapies used by the Department of Veterans Affairs, including psychotherapy, medication, and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing. Through a critical review of available programs, this thesis identifies best practices for collecting accurate firefighter suicide data, and suggests development of a tiered approach to decrease PTSD and firefighter suicide. A limitation of the research was the inability to verify results of a firefighter being "cured" of PTSD.



## Team of Advisors: The Social Science of Advice in Homeland and National Security

The establishment of the homeland security enterprise within the United States created new challenges for executive decision makers at the federal, state and local levels of government. In the second decade of the 21st century, matters of homeland security and national security seemingly grow closer to one another, as transnational threats abroad increasingly influence events at home. Executive decision makers at all levels of government face significant challenges, often under the pressures and constraints of crisis conditions. Public leaders need not face significant decisions alone and in a vacuum, devoid of subject matter expertise and guidance. The role of advisors in supporting public leaders is broad and underexplored, particularly in the evolving homeland security space. In this [Viewpoints video](#), **Theodore Berger, Chief of Staff for the City of Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communications**, discusses his Master's thesis, which examined the relationship between advisors who support executive decision-makers in the homeland security enterprise and national security domain and the factors that



influence the advice process. This thesis seeks to tie the experiences of high ranking practitioners with the viewpoints of academics in social science to derive a better understanding of what leads to success as an advisor.

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## Unmanned Aircraft Systems for Emergency Management

Responding to disasters is a critical function for first responders and the emergency management community. The primary mission when responding to disasters is saving lives, which often requires the use of multiple resources. Rotary and fixed-winged aircraft have traditionally performed disaster response missions, such as overhead damage assessments, reconnaissance, and missing person searches. However, with the advancement of unmanned aircraft systems (UASs), there is an opportunity to perform many conventional aerial missions in a safer, more expeditious, and cost effective manner.



In this [Viewpoints video](#), **Darren Price, Regional Operations Supervisor for the Ohio Emergency Management Agency**, discusses his Master's thesis, which explores the introduction of UASs for disaster response missions into the national airspace system of the United States. His thesis also includes a review of traditional disaster response missions and opportunities for the utilization of UASs; a comparison of UAS programs, both military and civilian, as well as international UAS programs; a review of barriers to implementation; offers policy and program considerations for agencies and jurisdictions to consider when implementing a UAS program; and recommends future research concerning the topic of autonomous UASs. Lastly, his thesis provides a decision guide to assist policy makers and practitioners with determining the need and feasibility of a UAS program.

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