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Smith's Thesis Provided Career Blueprint

 chds.us/c/item/793

Walt Smith's thesis at the Center for Homeland Defense and Security may have well served as a job description.

The December 2011 master's degree graduate penned a thesis titled "Developing a Model Fusion Center to Enhance Information Sharing." With a recent promotion to Inspector at the Philadelphia Police Department and an assignment as executive director of the Delaware Valley Intelligence Center, he has the opportunity to realize the fruits of his research.

One of more than 70 fusion centers in the nation, the Delaware Valley Intelligence Center (DVIC) serves 12 counties in four states.

"The Delaware Valley Intelligence Center was built from the ground up in order to support an effective information-sharing environment," said Smith, who is also a graduate of the Center's Fusion Center Leaders Program. "Utilizing the design and best or smart practices of well-established fusion centers, the support of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as well as the fusion center guidelines, the DVIC will enhance the overall security of the region through increased information sharing."

Smith is a veteran of the Philadelphia Police Department where he has worked a full course of police jobs including patrol, organized crime and homeland security, among others.

The Philadelphia region boasts a population of more than 3.5 million people and serves as a regional focal point for commerce, transportation and is a major port in the United States. Furthermore, it includes an array of historical icons that would be considered symbolic terrorism targets. Although, the region has developed a robust response capability through collaborative efforts, Smith said, communication and information sharing would be enhanced through a centralized information-sharing network.

His former role in leading the department's homeland security unit required strategic planning and collaborating with federal, state, local and military partners as well as the private sector. Smith's years of experience are complemented by his master's degree from CHDS. The collaborative environment fostered in the Center's coursework proved to be a valuable asset, he said.

"Interagency collaboration serves as the core of fusion center success," he said. "The concepts I applied from the CHDS Master's Degree program and the Fusion Center Leaders Program emphasized the importance of developing interagency trust and relationships. These experiences assisted me in the development of the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to become a fusion center leader in a complex environment, which seeks to protect civil rights and civil liberties of individuals, while lawfully connecting the dots to prevent the next terrorist incident."

Moreover, CHDS broadened his perspective beyond his job role.

"The education, based on strategic thinking, looks well beyond the present," Smith noted. "Emphasizing the value of looking at both the past and present to move forward into the future, the education also challenges the individual at



many levels. CHDS provides a preeminent education and experience to be an effective practitioner managing complex challenges in any position

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