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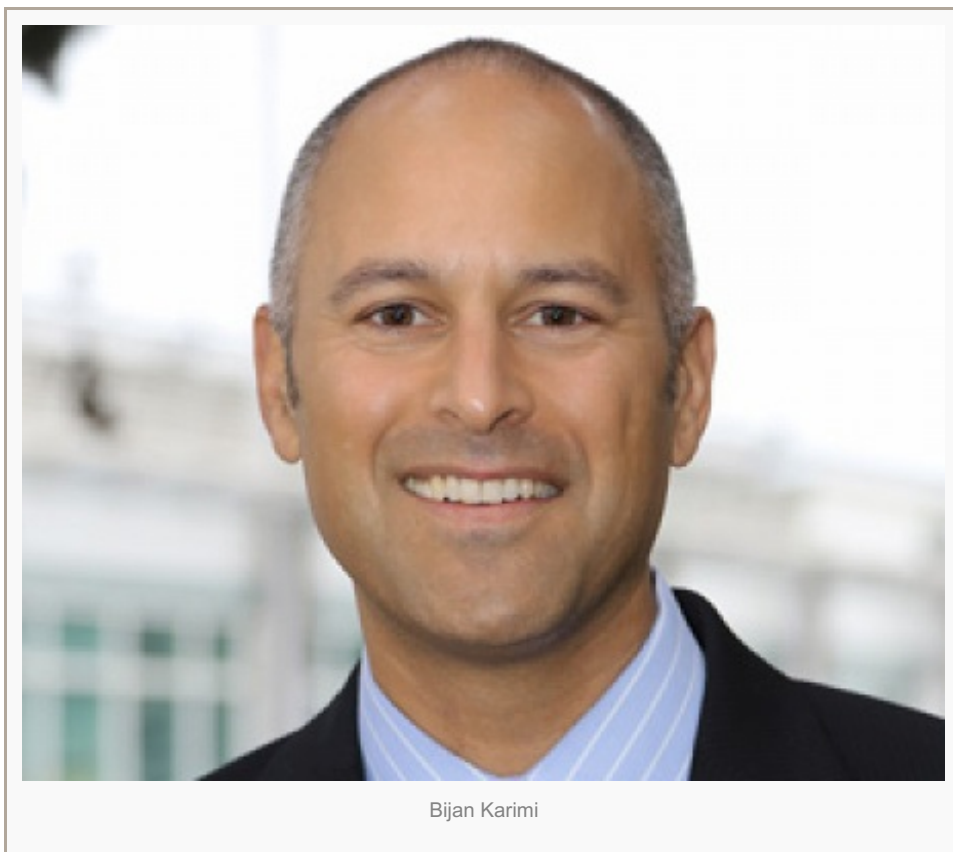
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Student employs CHDS curriculum in his agency's training

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Bijan Karimi isn't waiting until graduation to spread the message of the Center for Homeland Defense and Security. He's sharing it as he goes.

In a different take on the CHDS multiplier effect, the San Francisco Department of Emergency Management Assistant Deputy Director has shared the lessons learned in his [master's degree studies](#) in the form of post-In-Residence briefings and by modifying the way his office conducts training.

Spreading CHDS concepts, the "multiplier effect," has long been a piece of the Center's mission, with the hope graduates would in turn teach and recruit colleagues. Also, the [University and Agency Partnership Initiative](#) freely shares Center curriculum with colleges across the country to extend the reach of homeland security education. Karimi has fashioned his own version of the idea.

Prior to joining CHDS, Karimi introduced a standard practice to his team of briefing co-workers about what they learned at a convention or conference. The practice forces the person to critically think about and recount what was learned and extends the benefit of the knowledge to the rest of the team.

When he started the CHDS program he did the same for his own coursework. "It helps me better understand and apply the concepts that we are learning and it is a great way of making sure my team and partners from around the city benefit from the investment made in me attending CHDS," Karimi said. "For me, I need to lead by example. If I'm out for two weeks and everyone is covering for me, then I need to in turn to teach them the things I am trying to put in place. The only way they will buy into it is if they buy into the underlying concepts."

So, a training session for emergency operations professionals may include discussions on drone use by the military, developing an understanding of terrorist organizations or becoming attuned to how the homeland security enterprise is viewed by the public.

“I’m doing my best to create the same dynamic discussions the CHDS instructors are providing. It helps my own team to recognize the complex challenges we have in emergency management,” he said. “The goal is not to come to a solution but to get a robust discussion going. I know they are getting something out of the brief when they continue the discussion over lunch or someone wants to borrow one of my course books.”

Among the courses that have been used as a training foundation:

- The “Unconventional Threat to Homeland Security” course was helpful for a profession, emergency management, which has little exposure to the issue in the course of work. “It has been helpful in understanding terrorism overall and understanding why people become terrorists. It is a much more complex situation than the media portrays.”
- The “Technology for Homeland Security” class was helpful in targeting and discussing emerging technologies and their potential impact on cybersecurity risks
- “Critical Infrastructure: Vulnerability Analysis and Protection” and the concept of “key performance indicators”, or KPI, was also beneficial. The concept discusses how to identify the right benchmarks to measure and define the success of an organization or activity.

With that information from school, Karimi is modifying San Francisco’s citywide emergency management training program to include performance measures that focus on how well employees retain information. He is drawing on lessons learned in the classroom textbook, “Make it Stick.”

“After developing KPIs for a class project I realized how this can be applied to our training program,” Karimi said of KPI. “If we want to evaluate training based on retention, how do we educate people in way more compatible with adult learning and make the information stick. I realized our success is less about the number of students we teach and more about how long they remember what we have taught them.”

Employees are trained using more traditional pedantic approaches, as well as more progressive CHDS-style presentations. Trainees are then given a short quiz at 10 and 30 day intervals to cement the learning points and measure how much they recall to demonstrate the benefits of the new techniques

“The book said not to make learning too easy,” Karimi said. “Making it difficult cultivates the mental pathways and primes the brain for learning. “

More personally, CHDS education has expanded Karimi’s view beyond his own profession.

“It’s expanded my understanding and appreciation of the complexity of the homeland security enterprise,” he noted. “Our instructors guide us as we explore new topics and I also learn a tremendous amount from my classmates as they draw on their own experiences. Our discussions draw on hundreds of years of collective experience and you can’t get that anywhere else.”

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