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CHDS Essay Contest Winner Visits NPS

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Matthew Allen, winner of the Center for Homeland Defense and Security's first annual homeland security essay competition, recently presented his winning paper to CHDS staff and faculty. Allen's essay entitled "Reducing the Risk" was selected from eighty other entries for its creativity, eloquence, and innovative thought. Allen is a staff scientist at Sandia National Laboratories in California and is currently serving as an American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Congressional Fellow.

His essay promotes the use of rhetorical tools to help frame the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's mission. He proposes that DHS adopt the rhetoric "reducing the risk," as a way to define the purpose of DHS and measure its successes and failures.

Allen explained that this rhetoric is important because it gives policy makers the ability to answer the resounding question, "Are we safer today than we were six years ago? Over the past six years we have reduced threat, vulnerability, and consequence. If we measure the success of DHS by these standards, the answer is yes, we are safer." Allen argues that this is a substantial tool to gauge the effectiveness of DHS and a term that is easily understood by the public.

The presentation sparked ample discussion and debate amongst members of the audience. "The contest was created for individuals to articulate their unique ideas and innovations," said Glen Woodbury, CHDS Director. "We were pleased with the amount of interest Matthew's essay produced." Along with the trip to CHDS, Allen was also presented a \$1,500 cash award.

The winner and four finalists will have their essays submitted to the *Homeland Security Affairs* journal (<http://www.hsaj.org>) for a special supplement edition in July. The four finalists and their essays are:

Jesse Tucker, a graduate student at the University of Alabama, "Proliferation of Biodefense Laboratories and the Need for National Biosecurity."

Meredith Allen, an epidemiologist with the Department of Health in Bucks County, PA, "Brick by Brick: The Strategic Re-Building of the Public Health Infrastructure."

William L. Gardella, a Deputy Marshal with the Maine Judicial Marshal Service. His essay addressed the importance of having dedicated investment in academic homeland security research and inquiry.

William Goodman, Assistant for Plans in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Making Consequence Management Work: Applying the Lesson of the Joint Terrorism Task Force."

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