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Center for Homeland Defense and Security

Monterey, CA; Naval Postgraduate School

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Educators Discuss Emerging Homeland Security Trends

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Homeland security education in 2012 is a different stew of disciplines than when the topic began scholarly study a decade ago.

Gone is the all-terrorism all the time curriculum of just a few years ago. While intelligence and terrorism remain cornerstones of the discipline, emerging topics such as cyber, environmental and even financial security have found a place under the homeland security umbrella.

Twenty-seven educators from around the country convened to discuss emerging trends and needs in the homeland security discipline at the University and Agency Partnership Initiative's annual Faculty Development Workshop held August 27-31 at the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security.



The UAPI program expands homeland security education by sharing CHDS curriculum with universities and colleges around the country. There are currently almost 300 schools that participate in sharing ideas and course material. The workshop allows educators fresh to the field to immerse themselves in the discipline while offering longtime programs the opportunity to keep abreast.

"The workshop participants are all experienced faculty, with remarkable backgrounds as practitioners and scholars. So, it's not about the Center teaching Homeland Security to these educators. Rather, UAPI – and the workshop – provide a forum for good ideas to be aired and shared," UAPI Director Steve Recca said.

Educators today face a different landscape than when most homeland security programs were established. The challenge for universities and colleges is to maintain academic expertise with the changing landscape of the profession.

"What we see with homeland security 3.0 are a new range of subjects," Recca said. "The family is bigger than just terrorism."

While the workshop was designed initially to cultivate and mature homeland security programs, a wave of emerging issues means some educators now attend to monitor trends. Dave McIntyre of the National Graduate School said he participates to stay current on educational trends and, equally as important, to engage with other educators on curriculum.

"Clearly, CHDS is the gold standard for homeland security curriculum in the United States," McIntyre said. "They also better than anyone else have their finger on the pulse of the direction of homeland security education, both inside Washington, D.C., and outside in the greater homeland security enterprise."

Jill Olen of National University said she benefitted from discussions on a common homeland security curriculum. National University is in the process of restructuring its program to expand from its emergency management base into broader topics such as critical infrastructure protection as well as law and policy to meet the demands of the job market.

"It's a growing field," Olen said. "I have been a practitioner so I am coming in to help revamp the entire program and make it more relevant, more appropriate to what needs to be taught.

You really need to have someone who understands it, stays on top of it and is networked with practitioners and academics in order to give the university and the students the best possible outcome."

