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Sharing Best Practices in the Fusion Center Leaders Program

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Sharing Best Practices in the Fusion Center Leaders Program

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Kevin Saupp, Chief, DHS Intelligence & Analysis, Chief, Federal Interagency Coordination, and David Sobczyk, Group Director of Nationwide SAR Initiative, Program Management Office, participate in a discussion at the ninth iteration of the Fusion Center Leaders Program June 5.

Thirty fusion center leaders participated in ninth iteration of the [Fusion Center Leaders Program \(FCLP\)](#) June 2-6 at the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security.

The program brings fusion center professionals together to study best practices on topics such as intelligence collection, dissemination and analysis as well as addressing privacy, operations and leadership issues.

Now in its fourth year and encompassing nine cohorts, the program is aimed at enhancing the management capabilities across the national network of fusion centers and enable best practices in information sharing and leadership to be shared among the fusion center directors.

Kelly Nee of the Boston Regional Information Center said her goal in attending was to better understand how exactly a fusion operation should look like and how it contributes to public safety while respecting rights of citizens.

“We are an all crimes fusion center and provide a great deal of information to decision makers of our area police departments that directly affect their deployment decisions,” Nee noted. “One thing I took away is that ‘closing the loop’ and getting information pushed back out to our private sector partners is critical to the operation. I believe my time at FCLP will empower me with the understanding of why this is so important and how best to accomplish that mission.”

While the content is generally geared to state and local operations, students working at the federal level say they found the course beneficial.

“From the national level, we have little insight in how fusion centers work together,” said Michael Burge of the National Counter Terrorism Center. “They’re all different. Just understanding the national network of fusion centers

was incredibly helpful.”

Scott McAllister, Deputy Undersecretary of DHS’ Office of Intelligence and Analysis, said leadership education was important to the future success of fusion centers.

“As the national network continues to mature, the key issue we need to think about is how we can lead the path to the future,” said McAllister after a classroom presentation. “We still have to address the naysayers, so it’s up to us to maintain the highest level of professionalism.”

Among the highlights of the week:

- CHDS master’s degree graduate Major Ray Guidetti, commander of the New Jersey State Police Intelligence Section, discussed intelligence products and customers, and challenged the class to examine whether their products were reaching their intended targets.
- Lieutenant Sasha Larkin and Officer Braden Schrag of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department provided insights on how to develop effective Terrorism Liaison Officers (TLOs) and how the Las Vegas model can be adapted to other communities and operating environments.
- Rafael Brinner, DHS Intelligence Liaison Officer assigned to the Northern California Regional Intelligence Center (NCRIC), provided alternative perspectives on analyzing Suspicious Activity Reports (SAR), including using the SAs with all-source information to produce viable intelligence.

NPS faculty member Robert Simeral, director of the FCLP, said, “This FCLP cohort demonstrated that the national network of fusion centers is coalescing around a mutual understanding of roles and missions. Spending one week in Monterey reinforces for our fusion center leadership how and why the national network strengthens the nation’s domestic intelligence domain. When our leaders finish the FCLP, they all have a better understanding of where their fusion centers fit and what key leadership and management attributes ensure viable fusion center operations into the future.”

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