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Forum: IAFIE Conference Welcome
Speech: Remarks
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Title: IAFIE Conference Welcome

Good morning, members of the International Association for Intelligence Education and esteemed colleagues. I am delighted to welcome all of you to the University of Maryland University College.

This conference incorporates an exceedingly diverse group of professionals…which spans all three sectors, as well as multiple disciplines within the intelligence, security, and law enforcement communities.

Yet despite our many different perspectives on intelligence education per se, we are all equally invested in creating academic programs and career development opportunities that are innovative and transformative…effective and empowering.

And let me assure you that UMUC is fully committed to becoming a leader in this burgeoning academic field.

As everyone here will agree, we live in a complex and sometimes even volatile world…where homeland security decisions and responses at every level must be made rapidly, collaboratively, and judiciously.

While in the past, on the job training was for the most part sufficient for these decision-makers and first responders…that is no longer the case. Because in today’s world, the security environment has become far more dynamic…and intelligence management systems, increasingly more sophisticated.

Not surprisingly then, our local, state, and national leaders are looking to American colleges and universities for help in preparing a new breed of public safety professionals. Men and women who are strategic thinkers, effective communicators, and responsive team players….with both the intellectual agility and the technical know-how to operate successfully within a quickly changing environment of escalating risk and evolving threat. So in meeting this need, we are taking a far more holistic approach to advanced learning…within the context of a new academic discipline we now refer to as intelligence education.
Moreover, as this discipline emerges, international organizations such as IAFIE (i-a-fee) and global universities such as UMUC are joining forces to close the gap between ongoing intelligence requirements…and the supply of quality academic programs and research. In fact, this university is uniquely well-positioned to take the lead in closing that gap.

Having first been established more than 60 years ago as a visionary experiment in adult education, UMUC is by no means a conventional institution. Yet today, as the nation’s largest public university and fastest growing virtual campus, it is undeniably one of academia’s greatest success stories and a major player in the global higher education market.

At UMUC, our goal is to prepare competent and creative 21st century knowledge leaders. Individuals who, because they value the power of intellectual capital, see education as the engine of opportunity…and who, as quintessential lifelong learners, are always ready to retrain and retool as the need arises. Using what they have learned to cultivate essential skills, explore new perspectives, and come up with innovative solutions.

In educating these leaders, UMUC has developed a worldwide learning network, with other institutions of higher education…with federal, state, and local governments…with non-profit organizations…and with corporations who share our mission.

So as a truly global academic enterprise, we operate divisions on four continents, and provide more than 130 degree and certificate programs to nearly 94,000 students…onsite in some 157 locations…and online through our award-winning virtual campus.

UMUC is also one of the nation’s leading providers of postsecondary education for the military. As such, we enroll some 60,000 active duty soldiers and their family members…and furnish classes, advisory services, or both on more than 120 military installations throughout the world.

And while UMUC is an open access university…committed to serving all qualified applicants…the vast majority of our students are busy, working adults…who span the age continuum from 18 to 80…and represent a myriad of abilities, cultural traditions, professional backgrounds, and socio-economic circumstances.

For most of them, the school day begins once the evening rush hour is over…in many parts of the world and more than a few different time zones. So UMUC has invested heavily in furnishing them with unparalleled support…ensuring that every service is
available onsite can also be accessed online. In putting its students first, UMUC has consistently proven both its willingness and its ability to effectively anticipate and quickly address their professional development needs. That said, we have worked hand-in-hand with members of the public safety community for several decades now….to provide cutting-edge academic opportunities in such expanding fields as criminal justice, homeland security, fire science, emergency management, and information assurance.

We have also recruited a renowned faculty of scholar-practitioners, such as Bill Sondervan….UMUC’s Director of Criminal Justice, Investigative Forensics, and Legal Studies….who I am excited to see is scheduled to make a presentation at this conference.

As accomplished and energetic leaders in their fields, our highly credentialed faculty members are literally driving the research and development renaissance in intelligence education and its supporting fields. We have also created a multi-disciplinary criminal justice advisory board of senior leaders in intelligence, security, and law enforcement.

Working together, our faculty and advisory board members are designing programs built around solid outcomes and coherent assessment strategies…within a experiential learning environment that is learner-focused, rather than teacher-directed…with ample opportunities for both students and faculty to engage in active, collaborative, and authentic knowledge creation.

For example, working with the Baltimore Police Department UMUC piloted an eight-month certificate program, designed to expand the department’s leadership capacity. This program incorporated flexible scheduling and course delivery…along with plenty of applied learning activities…chosen specifically by the Commissioner to promote teambuilding and enhance critical decision-making skills.

And I am proud to report that our inaugural class graduated in December. What’s more, they made a number of excellent recommendations, including a proposed Master of Science in criminal justice here at UMUC…which has just been approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

We have also created a tremendous partnership with our sister institution, University of Maryland College Park Police Department; the HIDTA Program; and the i2 Corporation…to provide a six-course criminal justice intelligence certificate.

This program…which is already up and running in the face to face environment…will soon become available online….and promises to be an
extraordinary first step in our ongoing quest to create innovative degree programs at both the graduate and undergraduate level.

Of course, in addition to providing greater latitude around what we teach…technology offers tremendous flexibility in how we teach it. That said, UMUC is optimizing the latest digital technologies to provide its students with state-of-the-art education…which is both hands-on and highly applicable.

We are still the only institution in the country with a remote-access Security Studies Laboratory – an important learning tool in such high-need career fields as homeland security and information assurance. This lab represents the ultimate “win-win” in that our students gain real-time, real-world experience with advanced technologies and applications…while the workforce benefits from hiring graduates who bring this experience with them.

In fact, this lab has proven so successful…it has earned UMUC its highly coveted status as a National Security Agency Academic Center of Excellence in Information Assurance Education. And building upon this achievement, our university is also developing the next generation of cybersecurity education…thanks to a substantial investment from its industry partner, Booz Allen Hamilton.

Needless to say, this project will have an enormous impact on the intelligence field…by providing a remarkable opportunity for practical research….while also serving as a powerful recruitment tool for the best and the brightest students and faculty.

I think it’s safe to say that intelligence education is becoming a permanent… albeit rapidly evolving…academic discipline, which will greatly enhance our national security and transform the nature and purpose of public safety.

To be sure, I speak for everyone here at my university when I say that we look forward to sharing information on critical intelligence education priorities and best practices…as we move on to serve the next generation of public safety professionals.

Thank you.

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