



News Release

Pat Quinn, Governor

Jay Rowell, Director

For Immediate Release
November 6, 2013

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Illinois Participants in Homeland Security Cyber Initiative Illinois Students and Interns Honored at D.C. Event

CHICAGO – Illinois is a leading state in the nation in support of federal initiatives to develop the next generation of cybersecurity talent, the Illinois Department of Employment Security said today. Illinois interns attended a White House event to be recognized for their work in cybersecurity programs and helping to protect our nation's critical infrastructure.

The event is part of the Obama Administration's effort to develop the next generation of cybersecurity talent. The students and interns joined senior leaders from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the White House for a roundtable discussion.

In 2012, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn created the Illinois Internet Privacy Task Force to address cybersecurity issues facing the state, the first of its kind in the nation. Task Force members include senior leadership from the private, academic and nonprofit sectors, including organizations such as Boeing, CME Group, Northwestern University, and others.

"Cybersecurity threats are real. Each day there are stories emphasizing the critical role cybersecurity professionals play in the public and private sector," IDES Director Jay Rowell said. "This event helps celebrate those individuals who have been working to protect our infrastructure, economy and security, with a focus on discussing ways we can continue to develop the next generation of cyber talent in Illinois."

Participants at the event included White House Special Assistant to the President and Cybersecurity Coordinator Michael Daniel, DHS Acting Under Secretary for Management Chris Cummisky, DHS National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD) Acting Under Secretary Suzanne Spaulding, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Acting Director John Sandweg, NPPD Deputy Under Secretary for Cybersecurity Phyllis Schneck and Office of Intelligence and Analysis Deputy Under Secretary Scott McAllister.

"As an intern for the Governor's cybersecurity task force, I had a great experience working with leading businesses and other Illinois institutions that came together to enhance our state's cybersecurity efforts. The event was an honoring and humbling experience and I was excited to hear about the great work my peers have been doing all across the country," said Matt Calhoun, of Tinley Park. "I'm very motivated to continue to further my development and work in cybersecurity to help protect our critical infrastructure."

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The Secretary's Honors Program Volunteer Cyber Student Initiative offers two-year community college students majoring in a cybersecurity-related field an unpaid student volunteer position to gain invaluable hands-on experience at ICE and Homeland Security Investigations computer forensics labs. The Fusion Center Cyber Student Initiative provides high-achieving college interns with a unique glimpse into how state and local law enforcement officials use technology and implement cybersecurity best practices.

In October 2012, the Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) Task Force on CyberSkills provided 11 recommendations to help DHS more successfully attract, recruit, retain and develop advanced cybersecurity professionals. Additionally, DHS established the CyberSkills Management Support Initiative in March 2013 to help the Department expand the national pipeline of men and women with advanced cybersecurity skills and enhance the Department's ability to make our nation safer, more secure and more resilient.

Illinois was one of the leading states in the DHS initiative to develop greater cybersecurity forces to counter evolving threats. This collaborative program is a partnership between the state and DHS in which students and interns have the opportunity to gain real-world cybersecurity experience in the state while receiving mentorship and support from the DHS.

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