



The Air Force Association's CyberPatriot Program Office announced that the Midwest CISSE Chapter (MCISSE) has just been designated as its newest CyberPatriot Center for Excellence. University of Detroit Mercy is the lead institution for the MCISSE coalition.

"The designation as a Center of Excellence is quite an honor," said Tamara Shoemaker, Director of the Center for Cybersecurity & Intelligence Studies at University. "There are only twelve such Centers in the entire Country. So, this is pretty exciting. It indicates that Detroit-Mercy's effort to make a difference for the citizens of the State Michigan has been acknowledged at the highest level in the Nation."

CyberPatriot is the Air Force Association's flagship science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) program dedicated to strengthening cyber skills among American youth. The programs run from K-12; ranging from games that promote cyber awareness at the elementary school level, to full-out cyber competitions at the junior high and high school level.

"As a center, an important part of our work is outreach into the community," Shoemaker said. "Both the President and Congress have recently, formally recognized that properly trained cybersecurity professionals are a National necessity. The concern is that most people do not have the slightest idea what cybersecurity work entails, or what jobs are available in the profession. This program introduces kids to careers, by having them experience formal and organized cybersecurity work. That awareness is essential to getting cyber security workers into the pipeline."

Detroit Mercy has been the lead institution for MCISSE since 2006. MCISSE comprises eight universities, both in the U.S. and the U.K. as well as eleven community Colleges in Michigan and Ohio. All of these institutions, share ideas and promote cybersecurity awareness in their curricula. All of the institutions in the U.S. are NSA Centers of Academic Excellence.

MCISSE has earned recognition from Michigan's Governor and the head of the Michigan National Guard for its efforts. In that respect, "It has been our honor to help foster the spread of cybersecurity across our region," Shoemaker said. "Our goal is to make a difference. We started three years with ago with just four teams. We currently have 117. It was my goal to eventually extend this Program to all areas in upper, and lower Michigan.

"The K-12 students are learning about cybersecurity before they get to college, and they know what the really lucrative career paths are," Shoemaker said. "More importantly, they learn things by doing them. We use gaming and competition, things that are natural for children of that age to get involved in. They think they are just playing games and winning little awards, but what they are really learning are essential skills in the field."

The CyberPatriot program also allows Detroit Mercy students to serve as mentors for teams. Shoemaker said both graduate and undergraduate students enjoy the mentoring, and it helps reinforce what they are learning. "Giving students the chance to be mentors is really important because they're learning so much more when they're teaching others," Shoemaker said.

For more information on the Midwest CISSE Chapter visit: <http://www.mcisse.info/>

For more information on the AFA's CyberPatriot Centers of Excellence visit:

<http://uscyberpatriot.org/about/centers-of-excellence>