PROFESSOR NASIR GHANI LEADS SUCCESSFUL NSA/DHS CENTER OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE REDESIGNATION

The University of South Florida has once again achieved designation as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education (CAE-CDE), thanks to an extensive recertification effort led by Nasir Ghani, Ph.D., USF Professor of Electrical Engineering and Research Liaison for Cyber Florida. This designation applies to the university's M.S. in Cybersecurity degree, a multi-disciplinary online program offering courses from across USF's Colleges of Engineering, Business, Education, and Arts and Science, and is valid through 2024. Dr. Ghani worked in partnership with colleagues from across the program to once again secure certification, a process that requires institutions to demonstrate that their training curriculum meets the latest cyber defense knowledge units (KU), as defined by the National CyberWatch Center. A host of other program metrics are also considered, including student enrollment, graduation rates, placement, and outreach. Prof. Ghani stated, "This renewed designation ensures that our degree program follows the highest curricular standards and is evolving to meet the challenges of training tomorrow's cybersecurity workforce."

The National Security Agency (NSA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) established the National Centers of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense (CAE-CD) to promote cyber defense education and research to boost workforce training and improve the security of national information infrastructures. The CAE-CD program consists of two designations, namely Cyber Defense Education (CAE-CDE) and Cyber Defense Research (CAE-R). Prof. Ghani also led the successful designation of USF as CAE-R institution in 2017. For more details, visit https://www.nsa.gov/resources/students-educators/centers-academic-excellence/.

The National CyberWatch Center is a consortium of higher education institutions, governmental agencies, industry corporations, public and private schools, and expert practitioners focused on strengthening national security workforce education. For more details visit https://www.nationalcyberwatch.org/.

Cyber Florida is a state-funded center hosted at the University of South Florida that supports cybersecurity research, education, training, and outreach throughout Florida. The center was established by the state legislature in 2014 and has distributed almost $4 million in funding, launched a series of regional conferences and symposia, and hosted numerous seminars, training events, and cyber competitions. For more details, visit www.cyberflorida.org.