

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

ENVISION | 22

NCITE Annual Conference



OCTOBER 27TH & 28TH •

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SCOTT CONFERENCE CENTER •

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Dear ENVISION22 Guests,

Welcome to NCITE! We're thrilled you could join us for our first ever in-person annual conference — a long-awaited opportunity to bring together our consortium of expert researchers and leaders in the fields of counterterrorism, law enforcement, national security, information technology, higher education, and more.

The timing of this conference couldn't be better. Now in our third year, NCITE is experiencing a period of sustained growth: Our research portfolio continues to diversify, our administrative footprint is expanding into a new space, and our center regularly draws visits from high-profile decisionmakers in national security and industry.

In a word, we've been busy.

Our research now spans 26 projects — all of which you'll learn about over the next two days. This important work is funded through our initial cooperative agreement with the Department of Homeland Security, an additional DHS funding mechanism known as the Basic Ordering Agreement (BOA), and other security grants awarded to our team of researchers.

NCITE experts are not only doing important academic work, they're also responding quickly to events in the real world. After the mass shooting in Buffalo, N.Y., we worked quickly to map the shooter's manifesto to mobilization indicators and share government reporting information.

And more recently, we held a virtual panel discussion with three NCITE researchers that outlined the potential for violence in upcoming elections.

And big names are taking notice. In July, we hosted DHS Deputy Secretary John Tien, who held a fireside chat-style Q&A with our student workers and researchers. And earlier this month, we welcomed National Counterterrorism Center Director Christine Abizaid, who viewed several demonstrations of our technology projects and heard presentations on our efforts to build the homeland security workforce of the future.

And this week, we host you.

Hosting an in-person NCITE conference is the most important event I can imagine for our space. Our goal is to build a community of the most innovative, curious, and security-minded students and researchers to be part of the call to keep our country safe. This week marks significant progress to that end. As we gather here together, please know I am in awe of your commitment to cutting-edge research, national and local security, and to each other.

Again, welcome to Omaha.



Gina Ligon
NCITE Center Director



ABOUT OUR INDUSTRY PARTNER



Splunk is the data platform leader for security and observability. Our extensible data platform powers enterprise observability, unified security, and limitless custom applications. Splunk helps tens of thousands of organizations turn data into doing so they can unlock innovation, enhance security and drive resilience.

Grant Acknowledgement and Disclaimer

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NCITE Board of Directors

NCITE has oversight from an external board of directors composed of DHS and other government officials:

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LINA ALATHARI

U.S. Secret Service National Threat
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DHS Intelligence & Analysis (I&A)



JOANNE LI

Chancellor

University of Nebraska at Omaha

Joanne Li became the University of Nebraska at Omaha's 16th chancellor in July 2021 following a national search and unanimous approval from the University of Nebraska Board of Regents. She is the first woman of color to serve as UNO chancellor and the first Asian-American in the history of the University of Nebraska System to hold an executive leadership role.

Since joining UNO, Li has focused on positioning the university – and Omaha – as a leader in the state's workforce development engine through innovative approaches to teaching, learning, and community partnerships. Her belief in the transformational power of education drives her mission to see UNO reach its highest potential as the space where community service and academic excellence meet.

A first-generation student and native of Hong Kong, she has a passion for serving learners of all ages and all social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. She ensures UNO Mavericks have the resources and support they need to be successful in their journey and strengthen their social and economic mobility.



DANA SAFT

Program Manager

DHS Science and Technology Directorate, Office of University Programs

Dana Saft is an experienced program manager with more than a decade of combined experience managing research and development efforts in both the private and public sector. Currently she serves as a program manager at the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate, Office of University Programs (OUP). In this role, Saft helps to inform the overall development and execution of investments in early-stage university-based research. She manages two DHS Centers of Excellence, advises OUP leadership on strategic and multi-year planning, conducts analysis on current research and development portfolios to determine potential commercialization pathways, and identifies projects ripe for advanced development and collaboration.

Prior to joining DHS, Saft was an associate at Booz Allen Hamilton where she served as post-merger integration project manager for corporate. She is currently obtaining her Master of Business Administration at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. She graduated from George Mason University with a Master of Science in Biodefense and from Radford University with a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry, Pre-Health.



GINA LIGON

Director

NCITE

NCITE is led by Gina Ligon, an industrial-organizational psychologist with proven terrorism research experience who serves as the point of contact for all critical center functions.

Prior to becoming director of NCITE, Ligon earned the academic rank of professor of management in the University of Nebraska at Omaha's College of Business Administration, and she still holds the Jack and Stephanie Koraleski Chair of Collaboration Science. Before joining UNO, she worked as a management consultant at Psychological Associates in St. Louis, and later as an assistant professor of psychology at Villanova University.

Ligon has published over 80 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters related to violent extremist organizations, leadership, and collaboration. As the former editor of the journal *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict: Pathways toward Terrorism and Genocide*, she also serves on the editorial board of four academic journals.



JOSHUA GELTZER

Deputy Assistant to the President, Deputy Homeland Security Advisor
White House National Security Council

Joshua A. Geltzer serves as deputy assistant to the president and deputy homeland security advisor for the White House National Security Council. He served previously as special assistant to the president and special advisor to the homeland security advisor on countering domestic violent extremism, and in that role, he oversaw the development of the U.S. government's first-ever National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism.

Before returning to government service, Geltzer was the founding executive director and visiting professor of law at Georgetown Law's Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection. Additionally, he was an International Security program fellow at New America and an executive editor at *Just Security*.

From 2015 to 2017, he served as the senior director for counterterrorism at the National Security Council, having served previously as deputy legal advisor to the National Security Council and as counsel to the Assistant Attorney General for National Security at the U.S. Department of Justice. Before those roles, he served as a law clerk to Justice Stephen Breyer of the U.S. Supreme Court. Geltzer received his J.D. from Yale Law School, where he served as editor-in-chief of the *Yale Law Journal*, his Ph.D. in War Studies from King's College London, where he was a Marshall Scholar, and his undergraduate degree from Princeton University, where he studied in the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs.



SAMANTHA VINOGRAD

*Assistant Secretary for Counterterrorism,
Threat Prevention and Law Enforcement Policy*
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Samantha Vinograd is the assistant secretary for counterterrorism and threat prevention and senior counselor for national security at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. She was previously a CNN national security analyst, a senior advisor at the Biden Institute, and a visiting fellow at the University of Chicago Institute of Politics. She began her career under President George W. Bush as the deputy U.S. Treasury attaché to Iraq, and she subsequently served on President Barack Obama's National Security Council as director for Iraq, director for international economics, and senior advisor to the National Security Advisor. She later joined Goldman Sachs, where her work focused on building public-private sector partnerships across a broad range of policy and business issues, and she later led global public policy at Stripe.

Vinograd has been deeply engaged in social impact work and served as an advisor to the U.S. Fund for UNICEF, Save the Children, and to the Concordia Summit. She is fluent in French and studied advanced Arabic and Hebrew. She received her B.A. in Asian and Middle Eastern studies from the University of Pennsylvania and her M.A. in security studies from Georgetown University.



MARTHA CRENSHAW

Principal Investigator
Stanford University

Martha Crenshaw, a political scientist and pioneer in the terrorism research world, is a principal investigator with NCITE. She's the director of Stanford University's Mapping Militants Project, which examines the nature of relationships and evolution among militant organizations. Crenshaw is also a senior fellow emerita at multiple notable collaborative research centers, including the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC). She has served on numerous committees throughout her career, particularly for multiple boards on the National Academy of Sciences.

Crenshaw published her first article on terrorism in 1972 as a graduate student at the University of Virginia. Since then, she has published more than 40 articles, covering the ideological spectrum of jihadist suicide bombers, war in Algeria, ethnic violence in India and Sri Lanka, and more recent work on the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. On Friday, Crenshaw will receive NCITE's Career Achievement Award.



NCITE Research Themes

NCITE funds 20 projects through its cooperative agreement with the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security. They fall into four themes.

Theme 1 Nature of Counterterrorism and Targeted Violence Operations

Theme 2 Strengthening the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative

Theme 3 Preventing Terrorism and Targeted Violence

Theme 4 Research on Counterterrorism and Targeted Violence Workforce Development

How can we spot new technologies terrorists could use?

Gary Ackerman



Anticipating Terrorist Technology Adoption to Secure the Homeland (ATTASH)

Objective: Create a sustainable way to identify problematic technologies, prioritize their threat, and find ways to prevent them from harming the homeland.

Emerging technologies such as 3D printing and machine learning are dangerous in the hands of terrorists. The project will use new and existing prediction models to develop a tool to anticipate which emerging technologies are security risks for the DHS.

More Information

- Theme 1
- Principal Investigator: Gary Ackerman

How can MBA students help the Homeland Security Enterprise?

Erin Bass



Erin Pleggenkuhle-Miles



Building Capacity in Homeland Security Enterprise (HSE) - Focused Business Analysis Application

Objective: Expose business students to the HSE through project-based courses that solve real-world challenges for DHS end users.

Now more than ever, business professionals are rising to address today's most challenging issues. This project aims to build a workforce pipeline and address DHS needs through courses offered in the Master of Business Administration and Data Analytics programs, as well as a Homeland Security Focused Business Analytics graduate certificate.

More Information

- Education Project
- Principal Investigator: Erin Bass
- Co-PI: Erin Pleggenkuhle-Miles

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How can the intelligence community improve training to prevent terrorism?

Michelle
Black



Lana
Obradovic



Deanna
House



Training and Education Research and Implementation Strategies for Homeland Security Intelligence Community

Objective: Examine the impact of technology across the intelligence community, including strategies, methods, and sources used for mission success.

The U.S. IC community faces an ever-changing environment with new demands and advances in technology. This project aims to identify what technologies and practices could be most helpful to the intelligence and counterterrorism workforce.

More Information

- Theme 4
- Principal Investigator: Michelle Black
- Co-PIs: Lana Obradovic and Deanna House

How does studying terrorism affect the workforce?

Matthew
Crayne



Neil
Shortland



Psychological Trauma in Terrorism Research (PT2R): Identifying Risk Factors and Intervention Points for Work-Related Psychological Trauma

Objective: Examine the manifestation and consequences of trauma in those who study terrorism and targeted violence and identify intervention points for improving resilience in the workforce.

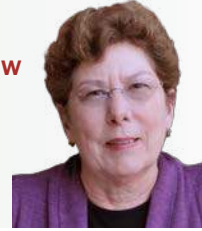
To date, there has been no consensus or systematic study on the forms of trauma terrorism researchers are exposed to. This project will thoroughly study the work environment to identify the risks and sample the workforce to better understand and address them.

More Information

- Theme 4
- Principal Investigator: Matthew Crayne
- Co-PI: Neil Shortland

How does today's environment influence the threat of terrorism?

Martha Crenshaw



Iris Malone



How Organizational Dynamics in a Multi-Actor Environment Shape Terrorist Threats and CT Responses

Objective: Examine threat and response capabilities in today's complex environment.

Building on conversations with DHS stakeholders, this project will examine organizational dynamics to develop profiles of key adversarial threats, forecast models for areas at-risk for election violence, and more.

More Information

- Theme 1
- Principal Investigators: Martha Crenshaw and Iris Malone

How can Information Technology students help the HSE?

Doug Derrick



Information Technology Innovation in the Homeland Security Enterprise (HSE)

Objective: Expose Information Technology Innovation (ITIN) students to the HSE domain.

Through the ITIN Homeland Security Enterprise Fellowship Program, four graduate fellows per year will receive a stipend and tuition. These master's students will create innovative technology solutions for the HSE, building a pipeline of innovators and innovations for DHS and its partners.

More Information

- Education Project
- Principal Investigator: Doug Derrick

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How can augmented reality help DHS analyze and share intelligence?

Aaron Elkins



Bongsik Shin



Augmented Reality Supported Intelligence Operations to Prevent Terrorism and Targeted Violence

Objective: Develop an augmented reality system that increases the efficiency and effectiveness of intelligence sharing and analysis among DHS components and partners.

This project will also work to transition technology to DHS stakeholders quickly with a focus on cybersecurity for new technology.

More Information

- Theme 1
- Principal Investigator: Aaron Elkins
- Co-PI: Bongsik Shin

How can DHS assist supervisory officials managing extremists released from prison?

Joel Elson



Building on Examination of Risk Assessment for Incarcerated Extremists

Objective: Study and understand prison recidivism for people affiliated with extremism, and develop information sharing technology for authorities at the federal, state, and municipal levels. The technology will be evaluated by key stakeholders.

More Information

- Theme 3
- Principal Investigator: Joel Elson

How can we interest more minority students in HSE careers?

Eric Frost



Lance Larson



Building Capacity at Minority-Serving Institutions

Objective: Redesign and deliver homeland security master's degree and certificate programs that focus on counterterrorism and targeted violence extremism.

This project aims to build education and training that can motivate graduate students at Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) while giving students compelling research to share while pursuing careers in the HSE. Classes and materials will be made available to share through NCITE.

More Information

- Education Project
- Principal Investigator: Eric Frost and Lance Larson

How effective is SAR in detecting cybercrime?

Thomas Holt



Steven Chermak



Joshua Freilich



Examining the Utility of Suspicious Activity Reporting on Cybercrime Incidents

Objective: Enhance understanding of how Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) processes capture information about cyberattacks.

The Nationwide SAR Initiative is a collaborative effort to standardize processes for gathering, documenting, and processing information on suspicious activities. This project aims to determine the effectiveness of this initiative on cybercrime and targeted violence through online platforms.

More Information

- Theme 2
- Principal Investigator: Thomas Holt
- Co-PIs: Steven Chermak and Joshua Freilich

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How will extremists use the metaverse?

Samuel
Hunter



Scarlett
Miller



Understanding Malevolent Creativity and the Metaverse: An Emerging Threat Landscape

Objective: Provide a framework for how the metaverse relates to terrorism and gain a deeper understanding of what factors shape malevolent ideation in the metaverse.

A number of factors, including a decentralized, anonymous internet, make the emerging metaverse a domain ripe for potential violence. This project aims to determine whether ideation and interaction in the metaverse represents a greater or lesser threat than outside.

More Information

- Theme 1
- Principal Investigators: Samuel Hunter and Scarlett Miller

How are platforms like Twitter used by extremist groups?

Matthew
Jensen



Shaila
Miranda



Shane
Connelly



Ideological Influence and Radicalization in Online Microblog Platforms

Objective: Gain insight into extremist groups' cyber tactics, techniques, and procedures and provide it to DHS stakeholders.

Extremist ideological groups increasingly use microblogs such as Twitter to recruit members, harness social identities, mobilize communication, increase commitment to extremism, and incite violence. This project aims to determine how messaging strategy enhances commitment to extremism and identify what types of messaging precipitate violence.

More Information

- Theme 1
- Principal Investigator: Matthew Jensen
- Co-PIs: Shaila Miranda and Shane Connelly

What datasets do the counterterrorism workforce need?

Michael Logan



Steven Windisch



The Needs of the Counterterrorism Workforce and the Utility of Existing Datasets

Objective: Understand data-related limitations and needs of individuals working in CT and provide easy-to-use resources that can be shared with DHS partners.

By building relationships with current CT professionals, this project aims to gather information regarding the types of data most often used and barriers or limitations to data access. It will also synthesize the kinds of data individuals in the CT workforce would like to have access to.

More Information

- Theme 4
- Principal Investigator: Michael Logan
- Co-PI: Steven Windisch

What terrorist literature has most often inspired attack planning?

Shiraz Maher



Marc-André Argentino



Tore Hamming



Innovation and Planning - Understanding the role of Terrorist Training Manuals in Tactical Dissemination, Attack Planning, and Threat Vectoring

Objective: Develop a matrix to evaluate tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) found in terrorist instructional materials and rank them based on potential lethality, how often they've been used, and against which targets.

Malevolent creativity within terrorist movements is receiving greater attention from the academic and professional communities. This project will highlight TTPs shared by several extremist groups.

More Information

- Theme 1
- Principal Investigator: Shiraz Maher
- Co-PIs: Marc-André Argentino, Tore Hamming

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How do the traits and backgrounds of recruits play a role in terrorist organizations?

Evan
Perkoski



Meredith
Loken



Alec
Worsnop



Understanding the Link between the Recruitment and Operational Behavior of Terrorist Organizations

Objective: Understand how military experience, technical training, age, gender, occupation, and other characteristics of recruits affect the lethality, success, complexity, and targets of terrorist violence.

While terrorist groups strategically target certain types of members, we lack a systemic understanding of how the recruits' characteristics impact the organizations' behavior. Results will be packaged into a comprehensive report with a framework to anticipate terrorist threats based on recruitment practices.

More Information

- Theme 1
- Principal Investigator: Evan Perkoski
- Co-PIs: Meredith Loken and Alec Worsnop

What threats are public officials facing?

Pete
Simi



Seamus
Hughes



Understanding Threats to Public Officials

Objective: Provide a more comprehensive understanding of the ideologies of those that target public officials.

Threats targeting public officials are increasingly recognized as a growing problem requiring a counterterrorism response. The project will conduct an open-source examination of threats in the election, health, and education sectors to create a series of briefs summarizing trends and patterns.

More Information

- Theme 1
- Principal Investigator: Pete Simi
- Co-PI: Seamus Hughes

How can DHS partner with families of extremists to reduce potential recidivism?

Karyn Sporer



Barriers to Family Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) of Mobilization Behaviors

Objective: Understand how family members of violent extremists experience having a radicalized family member, and gain insight into how DHS and other agencies can partner with family members to reduce recidivism.

Family members of homegrown violent extremists play an important role in countering extremism through deradicalization and disengagement or by alerting authorities. This project aims to provide DHS with insights into how families of extremists recognize, respond to, and mitigate radicalization.

More Information

- Theme 3
- Principal Investigator: Karyn Sporer

How does political discourse turn violent during elections?

Adan Ernesto Vela



Steven Windisch



Understanding the Transition from Political Discourse to Election-Motivated Violent Extremism

Objective: Establish a criteria to assess the transition from political discourse to election-motivated violence.

Many times following the 2020 election, the line between political action and election-motivated violent extremism dissolved. This project aims to develop a threat-level monitor to assess the risk of election violence as well as easy-to-use tools, including a best-practices document that highlights ways election officials can mitigate exposure to threats.

More Information

- Theme 1
- Principal Investigator: Adan Ernesto Vela
- Co-PI: Steven Windisch

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What is the current violent extremist threat to the U.S. homeland?

Lorenzo
Vidino



Seamus
Hughes



Practitioner Counterterrorism and Terrorism Prevention Risk: Threat Assessment Tools

Objective: Comparatively analyze domestic violent extremist and homegrown violent extremist movements, groups, and ideologies to understand the changing threat landscape in the U.S.

The Program on Extremism at George Washington University is evaluating the extremist threat to the U.S. by answering:

- What is the current state of the threat to the U.S. from foreign and homegrown extremists?
- How does this compare to the current state of the threat from domestic extremists?

More Information

- Theme 1
- Principal Investigator: Lorenzo Vindino
- Co-PI: Seamus Hughes

How are CT practitioners affected by exposure to violent material?

Joseph
Young



Daisy
Muibu



Vicarious Trauma in Counterterrorism Practitioners

Objective: Understand how counterterrorism practitioners experience vicarious trauma due to continuous exposure to violent materials and create tools to mitigate potential harm.

Trauma that counterterrorism professionals experience during the course of the job could have an impact on the future development of the homeland security workforce. Using research on how to measure vicarious trauma, this project will develop a survey to assess how many practitioners experience trauma and to what extent.

More Information

- Theme 4
- Principal Investigator: Joseph Young
- Co-PI: Daisy Muibu

NCITE's UNO researchers have obtained funding for six additional projects through grants or the Basic Ordering Agreement (BOA) with DHS.

What's the impact of the TVTP Grant Programs?

Co-PI: Gina Ligon

Subcontractors: Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International and University of Nebraska Public Policy Center

Matt Allen



Public Safety Violence Prevention

Objective: Conduct outcome and impact evaluations for a selection of Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) Grant Programs.

The DHS' TVTP program provides grant funding to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, nonprofits and higher ed institutions to enhance the capabilities of local terrorism and targeted violence prevention efforts.

How can we reintegrate the families of foreign fighters?

Subcontractor: George Washington University Program on Extremism

Austin Doctor



Reintegrating the Returning Families of Foreign Terrorist Fighters

Objective: Evaluate existing knowledge and practices regarding the reintegration of spouses and children associated with foreign terrorist fighters.

Bringing home families of terrorist fighters who left the U.S. to fight for the Islamic State can be a complicated and controversial process. This project aims to promote evidence-based models for the reintegration of spouses and children and develop tools and training for practitioners.

How has the IED threat landscape changed?

Co-PIs: Gina Ligon and Sam Hunter

Subcontractors: Hazards & Explosives and Research & Education (HERE), LLC and National Strategic Research Institute (NSRI)

Austin Doctor



Workshop and Report on Research Challenges in Combating Terrorist Use of Explosives in the United States

Objective: Develop an updated, unclassified report that reflects the changes to the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) threat and capability landscape. The updated report will improve the nation's ability to prevent, respond to and mitigate the use of explosives against critical infrastructure.

How can we change bombing prevention training to improve infrastructure security?

Co-PIs: Gina Ligon, Matt Allen, Austin Doctor, Joel Elson, Erin Kearns
Subcontractors: Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International and UCL Consultants, Ltd.

Sam
Hunter



Public Safety and Violence Prevention Evaluations

Objective: Evaluate and assess the current state of Office for Bombing Prevention (OPB) trainings to improve prevention efforts within the infrastructure security community.

How can we screen for insider extremist threats in law enforcement?

Co-PIs: Justin Nix, Jessica Huff, and Sadaf Hashimi

Erin
Kearns



Screening for Insider Threats in U.S. Law Enforcement: A National Representative Sample of Department Policies & Practices

Objective: Develop a better understanding of current policies to screen for insider extremist threats in law enforcement, including new hires and active officers around the country.

This project aims to identify best practices in screening applicants and current officers and develop a toolkit and online module for agencies to self-assess.

Can a chatbot help identify threats?

Co-PI: Erin Kearns

Joel
Elson



Innovation in Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention: Developing and Testing an Intelligent Chatbot to Help Individuals Identify Threats and Improve Tips Reporting

Objective: Create and test an intelligent chatbot that can be used for terrorism and targeted violence tips reporting. The goal is to use the new chatbot as a standalone tool or integrate it into existing tip reporting platforms, and members of the public will be able to report concerning behavior.

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NCITE Annual Conference

Follow-On Funding Workshop

Follow-on funding is a process in which researchers build on previously sponsored projects and acquire additional funding when the academic, societal, and/or commercial benefits of continuing the research program are clear and attainable. This event is designed to give leading officials from across the federal science and technology community a platform to share insight into the role of applied research in combating challenges to national and homeland security, with a special focus on follow-on-funding. The event will include a large-group discussion featuring panelists from DHS and the University of Nebraska system and small-group breakouts in which researchers can discuss ideas for transitioning sponsored projects into proposals for follow-on funding.



Inspiring the Future Workforce – Sponsored by Splunk

NCITE is offering its first-ever networking event, Inspiring the Future Workforce. Here, undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students from several disciplines – including political science, industrial and organizational psychology, and more – will have the opportunity to meet with leaders in the national security sector and discuss research, career plans, and workforce opportunities. This event is sponsored by Splunk, the data platform leader for security and observability.



THANK YOU!

It takes many hands to pull off an event like ENVISION22. In addition to our students and staff, all of whom graciously offered their time and effort in making this conference possible, we'd like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their invaluable support:

Splunk

Chancellor Joanne Li

UNO College of Business Administration (CBA)

Scott Conference Center

A Catered Affair

Abraham Catering

Dog & Pony Productions, Inc.

CBA Mammel Hall Technology Services