"Some lessons are best learned outside the classroom"

The academic programs housed under the Economic Crime and Cybersecurity Institute (ECCI), those including the Bachelor's in Criminal Justice, Bachelor’s in Cybersecurity and Information Assurance, Bachelor’s in Economic Crime Investigation, Master’s in Cybersecurity, Master’s in Economic Crime Management and the Financial Crimes Investigator Certificate, offer exceptional internship and job placement within industry partners. Not only do the programs prepare students for excellent internship and job opportunities, but the programs (such as the Bachelor’s in Criminal Justice) prepare students to attend law school, and for a future career in law.

Our three bachelor’s degrees require students to complete an internship in order to graduate. At Utica College, internship or CRJ 470, is an academic course (with a professor and syllabus). What this means, is that students ultimately have three mutually reinforcing components; your student responsibilities, your student—intern responsibilities, and your intern responsibilities. Of course, if a student is unable to obtain an internship, Utica College offers an alternate degree requirement to CRJ 470; CRJ 475 – Senior Project. CRJ 475 is a course in which students are required to work on a criminal justice/cyber/fraud related project for the course of eight weeks. The chart below lists some (but not all) companies/businesses where our students have interned, currently intern, and currently work (see page 2 for testimonials).

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Ryan Harrigan  
Graduate of the CJ program Spring ’14

I enrolled in the Cybersecurity program at Utica College as a fulltime student in the Fall of ’11. I chose Utica College as my school of choice because I knew that I wanted a career in the field of cybersecurity. During my freshman year, I was split between the idea of utilizing my education at UC to obtain a career in law enforcement or using it to protect the data and infrastructure of a large corporation or organization. But what I soon realized was that my education would allow me to perform similar work in both fields and offer me a plethora of opportunities.

My education at UC taught me the principles and fundamentals necessary to be successful in the field of cybersecurity and allowed me to move on to more specialized courses in ethical hacking, digital forensics and cyber law. The small class sizes at UC were very beneficial because I was able to network with my professors, perform hands on labs in all of my major related courses and learn in a comfortable environment. Many of my professors were “professors of practice,” which allowed them to apply real life scenarios and experiences from their careers to our coursework. My professors taught invaluable technical skills and lessons, which really gave me an edge up on the competition when competing for a career.

Three years later, as a senior, I felt fully prepared to apply for numerous internships, which I would need to complete in order to graduate. I had applied for several internships and careers in both the private and public sector before finishing my degree. I was one of nine individuals out of 2,700 applicants who were offered two honors internship positions with the Department of Homeland Security. Ultimately, I chose to pursue an opportunity as an information security analyst intern with a local credit union as my internship. Halfway through my internship, I was offered a full-time position as a Cybersecurity Analyst at Excellus BlueCross BlueShield where I now work in Rochester, NY.

I am thankful for Cybersecurity program at UC and all of the professors who have helped me along the way. My education has thoroughly prepared me for a career in cybersecurity and will allow me to give back to others.

Michelle Collver  
Graduate of the ECI program Spring ’13

Before I started my internship, a professor at Utica College asked me if I would like to volunteer in analyzing a few Economic Crime cases for the Oneida County District Attorney’s Office over the summer. Having this experience helped me secure my internship at the District Attorney’s Office. During the internship, I assisted in several active Economic Crime cases, prepared worksheets to show the misappropriation of funds, and created PowerPoint presentations for the grand jury and also for the courtroom to display evidence. I gained analytical and social skills that has helped me get the job I have today. Utica College has also played a major role in me achieving my career from the information that was taught in the ECI, CYB, and CRJ courses perspectives and also the professors. I would not be the Crime Analyst Associate for the Utica Police Department/Oneida County District Attorney’s Office without the applicable knowledge and the professors/staff.

Sean Hulser  
Graduate of the CJ program Spring ’14

Fall ’13, Commissioner Hauer of NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) came to Utica College to speak about the State Preparedness Training Center (SPTC) in Oriskany and the new advancements it would have in future years. After he was done with his speech, I went straight up to him and told him I was interested in an internship at the Training Center. I stood and talked with the Commissioner and William Cullen, the Director of Security for a few minutes and it lead to them wanting my contact information.

I was later interviewed by the Assistant Director of the SPTC, Bob Stallman and Lori Percle, the Assistant Director of National Center for Security and Preparedness (NCSP).

A few days after the interview, the Assistant Director of SPTC contacted me telling me I had the internship. During my internship I did a variety of different tasks however, my main task was organizing and trying to maintain the Law Enforcement Survival Kit (LESK) program. I also helped coordinate School Violence Workshops in many schools all over the state. Soon after my internship I was offered a job with NCSP as a Project Coordinating (PC) stationed at Oriskany.

As a PC I have many responsibilities, to list a few: I coordinate with Subject Matter Experts, NCSP staff, and other stakeholders. I must manage the development, composition and editing of assigned tasks. Also coordinate instructor travel, travel reimbursement, and compensation with the Administration and Technical Services Section. I am also a Point of Contact (POC) of many different classes and am responsible for the class to run smoothly and make minor adjustments if they are needed.
FBI deems UC worthy

Students are offered employment opportunities after completing their internship. The chart does not reflect all of our internships and job sites.

Industry leaders, such as several listed below, seek interns and future employees from our programs, given our “niches.” For example, our Bachelor’s in Criminal Justice now has four areas in which students can specialize, those including public policy and leadership, legal issues in criminal justice, homeland security, and white-collar crime. Our Bachelor’s in Cybersecurity and Information Assurance is known for its computer forensics specialty and our Master’s in Cybersecurity offers specialty areas in cyber intelligence, cyber forensics, and cyber operations.

According to an article from the American Society for Public Administration, a recent survey conducted by The Chronicle of Higher Education and American Public Media’s Marketplace, concluded that employers weigh internships and employment during school higher than any academic credentials that a potential employee may have. The 2012 study found that internships are, “the single most important credential for recent college graduates to have on their resume.”

Internships are an experience in which students are taught lessons, and learn from their mistakes. With the difficult economy we are faced with today, internships are serving as a prominent marketing asset for higher education. The Chronicle of Higher Education also concluded in their survey that students are often lacking the skills sought by employers, including written and oral communication skills, managing multiple priorities, and decision making/problem solving. The good news, is that CRJ 470 and CRJ 475 are both deemed writing intensive courses. Utica College’s guidelines for writing intensive courses include mandated formal and informal writing opportunities. These various writing opportunities were created to allow the student to be able to connect intellectually with the course content.

According to an article entitled, “The Best Schools for Becoming an FBI Agent” posted by the Global Post, Utica College in one of the top schools to attend if becoming an FBI agent is what a student is after. UC has an excellent cybersecurity program, that is offered both online and on-ground, that is geared toward skills the FBI is searching for. The master’s cyber program and the economic crime management program have also been deemed worthy of the FBI’s recognition. U.S. News & World Report deemed UC has ranked in the top 200 regional universities of 2014. Two recent UC graduates, Leah Kazlaski and Samantha Slattery were both hired on to the FBI.

Pictured above on the right is the Dean of Business and Justice Studies, James Norrie, and Associate Dean, William Virkler on Saturday, Oct. 18 during homecoming. Both men were sporting “GO UC” sunglasses right before the homecoming football game between UC and St. John Fisher College kicked off.
The benefits of CompTIA

Recently Utica College has partnered with the CompTIA Academy Partner Program. CompTIA is an IT association that validates technical skills in the areas networking, server, security, and technology PC repair and support. It is also one of the leading associations in the IT industry.

CompTIA offers a certification called A+. The A+ certification is intended to help students to become entry-level IT technicians. This certification includes preventive maintenance, communication skills, basic networking, troubleshooting, installation, and professionalism. Aside from A+, there are two certifications that will complement students majoring in cybersecurity; Security+ and Network+. Security+ is a certification garnered to IT professionals that are focused on system security. The Security+ certification validates skills in network infrastructure, assessments, cryptography, and audits. The Network+ is a certification that is designed to help students grow into entry-level networking professionals. This certification validates skills in maintaining, managing, operating, troubleshooting, and configuring basic network infrastructure. A major benefit of UC partnering with CompTIA is that students are eligible for generous discounts on the tests for the certifications. For instance, if a student were to take the Security+ and Network+ without being part of the CompTIA academy it would cost them $293 and $269 respectively. With the student discount the tests would then be $185 and $133 respectively. In addition, the UC cybersecurity curriculum offers several courses that help a student to prepare for certifications CompTIA offers. Specifically CRJ 107, Computer Hardware and Peripherals, helps to prepare for the A+ certification, and CRJ 333 Information security helps to prepare for the Security+ certification.

According to “6 Reasons IT Certifications and Credentials are Vital to Your Career Development Strategy,” the IT industry is expanding at a rapid pace, and there is an increasing gap between formal education and the technical and management skills required in a business environment. Furthermore, the article stated that, “Those who have earned certification and credentials can provide documented, third-party verification of their experience that demonstrates their personal commitment to professional development...also serve as tangible indicators that you possess the necessary breadth and depth of knowledge and skills in a given technology, platform, or discipline...Those capabilities are of great value to employers.” These certifications can help a UC student to stand out amongst the job competition, and can also increase entry-level job salaries.

Any student can pass these certification tests by completing the necessary coursework but also by completing additional self-study. For any further information on the partnership between CompTIA and UC, the Point of Contact (POC) is Zachary Lewis (zllewis@utica.edu).

Economic Crime Management Program

Utica College was front and center at the Association of Certified Anti Money Laundering Specialist (ACAMS) conference Sept 29 - Oct 1. Over 2000 attendees from both the private and public sector came together to learn about the ever increasing challenges in money laundering and terrorist financing investigations. This conference is a key recruiting venue for our Economic Crime Management, Financial Crimes Investigator and Cybersecurity programs.

This is made possible by Utica college educational partnership with ACAMS, the only college in the US with this designation. This partnership benefits both the online and on campus students, which includes a free student membership for up to two years, as well as the opportunity to take the CAMS certification examination after graduation at a significant discount. ACAMS is an organization dedicated to improving the knowledge and capability of anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing detection and prevention professionals. ACAMS is also a widely recognized certification around the world.
In the last ten years the criminal justice program has not undergone significant change. However, last year it was decided that the program would attempt to first align itself with other schools’ criminal justice programs, then exceed those programs while still acknowledging the unique student body that Utica College has. Phase 1 of this plan’s construction was started in the Fall Semester of 2013 and was implemented in Fall Semester of 2014. Phase 2 will be implemented during the Fall Semester 2016. According to Dr. Shanna Van Slyke, who had a huge part in the research done for this project, “...the general plan implemented offers courses and updated courses in order to expose and improve student’s skills for employers.”

The major changes to the curriculum are the increased rigor within course requirements and students must now complete a concentration in order to graduate as well. Associate Dean, Professor Virkler, expressed that the idea behind the increased rigor of course requirements is designed to make the courses more demanding, in turn furthering students’ skills. Furthermore, the additional requirement of completing a concentration strengthens the rigor of the program as well. As of now a criminal justice student must complete a concentration in either public policy and leadership, legal issues in criminal justice, homeland security, or white collar crime. In order to complete any concentration students are required to take four courses with no more than once course per concentration at the 200 level. At least two courses must have a CRJ prefix and one must not have a CRJ prefix. Students can access the lists of classes for each concentration on the pink sheets found in the Business and Justice Studies office or in the Criminal Justice Student Handbook. By Fall Semester of 2016 there will be seven concentrations to choose from.

These changes in the courses, course requirements, and program requirements focus more on skills and knowledge in criminology, public speaking as well as writing aspects. The reasoning behind these changes is that the criminal justice field is an ever-changing one therefore the program needs to grow and adapt in order to reflect those changes. Essentially, the updates to the program are updating to the realities outside of the college. Additionally, these changes help to fulfill the goal to have students enter UC on one level and leave on a higher level academically and socially. This creates better applicants for employers compared to other institutions.

If any student has any questions regarding the new curriculum you can find a copy of the Criminal Justice Student Handbook in the ECJSC office, online via several professors, and upon email request.

Friday Oct. 10 Utica College hosted a panel that discussed the importance of data privacy. After Edward Snowden’s extensive leak of classified information about U.S. government surveillance, a nationwide debate erupted. The panel discussed many issues surrounding the question, “Is it conceivable to balance security and liberty when a major portion of our interactions occur using a form of electronic communication?”

The panelists were Professor of Practice in Economic Crime Income, Suzanne Lynch, Cybersecurity Analyst for Exelis, Leslie Corbo, Associate and Technical Research Director of Edelson LLC, Chandler Givens, and Professor of Practice in Criminal Justice and Executive Director of the Economic Crime and Cybersecurity Institute (ECCI), Raymond Philo. Associate Dean, Professor Virkler, started off the event with the opening remarks, and then handed the mic to Professor of Practice of Cybersecurity, Austen Givens, who moderated for the duration. Throughout the presentation cameras were broadcasting live all around the world to those who tuned in. To view a recording of the event visit this link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDd8Ma8YNAM&feature=youtu.
Randall K. Nichols, Professor of Practice in Cybersecurity at Utica College is retiring after eight years of service to the College. Before joining the Utica College faculty, Professor Nichols was Chief Operating Officer of INFOSEC Technologies, LLC.

Professor Nichols is internationally respected, with over 40 years of experience in a variety of leadership roles. He previously taught graduate courses at George Washington University, Washington, D.C., University of Maryland University College Graduate School, College Park, MD and Towson University Graduate School, Towson, MD. Professor Nichols is the author of five authoritative books, including Wireless Security: Models, Threats and Solutions, (with co-author Panos C Lekkas).

In his time at Utica College, Professor Nichols played a pivotal role in both the undergraduate and graduate cybersecurity programs. He was the leading force behind Utica College’s nationally renowned master’s degree program in cybersecurity. We thank Randy for his many years of service and dedication to Utica College.

Oswego Police Communications Center named for Thomas Ryan

On August 11, 2014 Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, Thomas Ryan, was honored by SUNY Oswego with the dedication of the police communications center to him and his wife, Lynda Ryan. Professor Ryan is the former University Police Chief at SUNY Oswego of 13 years and both him and his wife are Oswego alumni. This dedication ceremony was held with some two dozen people, including Ryan’s successors, and former Professor of Criminal Justice, Bruce McBride, who is now SUNY’s police commissioner. McBride stated during the ceremony that the dedication of the communications center is an appropriate to credit Ryan who set a fine example for all SUNY police.

Contact the school of Business and Justice Studies via phone: (315) 792-3055 fax: (315) 792-3173