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Featured Researcher | Ambareen Siraj Cybersecurity

TITLE

Tennessee CyberCorps: Scholarship for Service Program

INVESTIGATORS

PIs: Ambareen Siraj, Doug Talbert and Mohammad A. Rahman

FUNDING

National Science Foundation

PROJECT SUMMARY

Tennessee Tech's Cybersecurity Education, Research and Outreach Center received a grant from the National Science Foundation for nearly $4 million to establish the Tennessee CyberCorps: Scholarship For Service program. To date, this is one of the largest grants Tennessee Tech University has ever received.

"This once again proves that Tennessee Tech can compete with anybody, anywhere," said TTU President Phil Oldham.

The grant further enables an ongoing project titled "Tennessee Cybercorps: A Hybrid Program in Cybersecurity," and is under the direction of computer science professors Ambareen Siraj, Doug Talbert and Mohammad A. Rahman. The grant began Jan. 1 and will run through Jul. 31, 2021.

"This makes TTU one of the highly visible cyber defense education programs in the country," said Siraj, director of Tech's Cybersecurity Center, known as CEROC. "Many strides are being taken to improve our cybersecurity program at Tennessee Tech to produce prepared students ready for the cybersecurity workforce."

After completing the program, students are expected to secure a position with government federal, state, local, tribal and national labs in cybersecurity.

All students are required to participate in service learning projects in education, research and outreach at CEROC and work a paid summer internship with a government agency or federally funded research and development center. Following graduation, each student must work for a government agency for each of the years he or she received the scholarship.

Students will be provided with full tuition, health insurance reimbursement, professional and development travel, and money for books. Additionally, an undergraduate student will receive a $22,500 stipend, and a graduate student will receive $34,000 a year.

"This grant will allow the Tennessee Tech College of Engineering to elevate the value and skills our graduates bring to the workforce already," said Joseph J. Rencis, College of Engineering dean. "I am particularly gratified that we will be able to attract the best and brightest students to help ensure our nation's infrastructure stays secure."

In November 2015, the National Security Agency and the United States Department of Homeland Security designated TTU as a Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense. Graduates receiving their degree in this concentration will have a seal of certification from the NSA and DHS agencies on their diplomas.

The Tennessee CyberCorps: Scholarship for Service is exclusive to Tennessee and will provide multiple opportunities for future programs in cybersecurity at Tennessee Tech.

"Our nation is in dire need of cybersecurity professionals at all levels and roles," said Siraj. "It is our honor and privilege at Tennessee Tech to prepare students to serve the nation with this unique skill."

*Last edited **2016.03.16** by **Hill, Amy**.*