

Homeland security at home here

By Tom Constantine, Commentary
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As I reflect on a 45-year career in law enforcement, I realize that our challenges in the 1960s,'70s, and '80s were far less complex than present day problems. Our major threats were organized crime and the explosion in violent crime. We were able to dismantle the Mafia, and in New York City we reduced the number of murders from 2,200 in 1990 to several hundred in 2013.

The challenge of jihadi-based terrorism, homicidal bombers, weapons of mass destruction and cyber-threats will require a sustained effort on the part of our best and brightest.

While we've integrated precautionary measures into our lives and systems, it's time to take this assimilation to the next crucial step — we need to integrate the commitment to confront homeland security threats with the talented assets and resources that exist in our university system. The next generation of stewards of our safekeeping must be highly educated, skilled,

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creative and vigilant.

And so they will be. In January, Gov. [Andrew Cuomo](#)'s far-reaching vision for a comprehensive academic hub of security training paid off as he named the University at Albany as the location for the country's first [College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity](#).

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The university was selected in part for its ongoing emergency management and preparedness initiatives. These include such innovative academic and research programs as an undergraduate degree in digital forensics, a graduate certificate and concentration in homeland security, the training programs of the university's [National Center for Security and Preparedness](#) and the university's stewardship of the advanced statewide early warning weather detection network, the NYS Mesonet.

Along with designating the college, the governor has reappropriated \$15 million in capital funding for development of the new facility on the state's Harriman Campus, adjacent to the [State Emergency Management Office](#), [State Police](#), and other homeland security-related departments.

By locating near the state's major homeland security and emergency management assets, College of Emergency Preparedness students will be able to "learn by doing" while also contributing their efforts and talents to the protection of the state and its citizens through internship opportunities and other forms of experiential learning. Co-location with state agencies also provides a continuous pool of intellectual and physical resources to assist the state's emergency preparedness and reaction plans.

The university has a multidisciplinary vision for the new college, beginning with a strong educational foundation. Though UAlbany will serve as the college's administrative and academic home, partnerships with other state and national institutions will provide students with a broad array of programs and options.

The new college will leverage recent advances in educational technology and online programs to maximize access, minimize duplication and integrate existing programs across the state. Additionally, the college's operational training component will be located in Oriskany in Oneida County, which has hosted training for the National Center for Security and Preparedness since 2007.

The nation is at a critical juncture in its history, and there is no question that UAlbany's College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity will be a leader in our drive to prepare and secure a safe future for our country, and the world. Governor Cuomo and the University at Albany are implementing my long-held belief for the need to blend the talent available at the university with the operational experience of our line agencies.

Tom Constantine served as superintendent of the State Police, administrator of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, oversight commissioner for Police Reform in Northern Ireland, and adviser to the U.S. Director of National Intelligence. He is a public service professor of public administration and policy at the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, University at Albany.

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