

CSM students take a ride on the Maryland Cyber Fast Track

Posted by [Alan Van Wormer](#) On 11/08/2018

From left, CSM students Jeremy Foster, Netsanet "Netsy" Deribe, Aljan Tablizo, CSM Instructor Wendy Hayes, students Gage Beavan, Cody Hight, Samala "Sam" Howard, Jeremy Plum, Myea Kelly, William "Preston" Fouch and Usaamah "Sammy" Al-Farooq recently participated in the launch of Cyber Fast Track Maryland, a new program established to help close a widening gap of job openings in the cybersecurity field.

LEONARDTOWN, Md. - College of Southern Maryland (CSM) students recently participated in the launch of Cyber Fast Track Maryland, a new program established to help close a widening gap of job openings in the cybersecurity field. The free, one-day event was tailored for Maryland community college students to give them a chance to show off their skills and meet with cybersecurity experts from Cisco, IBM, GEICO, Vanguard and Fannie Mae, to name a few.

(Pictured Below) CSM Professor Wendy Hayes and CSM student Usaamah Al-Farooq work through one of the many real-world cyber security challenges in the CyberStart Game, an online platform featuring hundreds of hours of realistic examples and threats faced by cyber security experts in the field.

Cybersecurity Ventures in its Cybersecurity Jobs Report for 2018-2021 predicted 3.5 million cybersecurity job openings by 2021. The company recently published an article by Brian Fonseca, of the Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy at Florida International University's Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs, who called upon educational institutions, industry and government to collaborate in addressing the "challenging skills gap that has caused a global shortage of professionals."

"For far too long the skills gap — or the mismatch between the skills employers are looking for and the skills potential employees have — has dominated conversations between higher education and industry," Fonseca wrote. "One thing is clear: To fill this need, our higher educational institutions, industry and government agencies must work together. If what we are doing is not working for our students — or the good of society — it's time to rethink education and how we prepare students."

That is where Cyber Fast Track Maryland comes in. During the event held at the Germantown Campus of Montgomery College, students from all over the state engaged in online games filled with hours of real-world cybersecurity challenges. As students worked through the levels, they tackled realistic examples of security tests and threats faced by cybersecurity practitioners in the field while professionals stood nearby ready to assist and answer questions. There were individual and team challenges rewarded with prizes throughout the day.

Students representing CSM at the Cyber Fast Track Maryland event were Aljan Tablizo, Myea Kelly, Jeremy Foster, Samala Howard, Netsanet Deribe, Jeremy Plum, Gage Beavan, Usaamah Al-Farooq, Cody Hight and William "Preston" Fouch.

"Cybersecurity professionals are in great demand," confirmed CSM Business, Technology, and Public Service Division Chair Bernice Brezina. "Programs like the Cyber Fast Track Maryland help us attract and support those students who have voiced interest in this exciting field."

Cyber Fast Track is a SANS Institute program enabled by funding from the Maryland Department of Labor Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) EARN Program. Montgomery College and 13 Maryland employers are helping to make the program successful.

CSM is a Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense. This program has been designated as a Center of Academic Excellence for two-year schools (CAE-2Y) by the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). For information about the CyberHawks, email DaphneP@cmsd.edu. For information about CSM's cybersecurity program, visit <http://www.cmsd.edu/programs-courses/cyber-center>.

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