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National Defense University (NDU iCollege) Hosts Federal IT Job Shadow Day

(Washington, DC) Recently, the nation's future IT and business leaders were given an introduction to emerging technologies, virtual worlds, information assurance, cybersecurity and government careers at the Federal IT Job Shadow Day held at the National Defense University iCollege at Fort Lesley J. McNair in Washington, D.C. The "Shadow Day" is an initiative of the Office of the Department of Defense (DoD) Chief Information Officer (CIO) and the Federal CIO Council. Fourteen students from Benjamin Banneker Academic High School spent the day exploring the tech savvy NDU iCollege labs and learned about ethical hacking prevention, real world virtual avatars, and how the use of technology is adding another dimension in communications within government and the business world.

NDU iCollege has hosted the Federal IT Job Shadow Day for four years. Dr. Stan W. Boddie, professor of Systems Management and Dr. Cassandra D. Lewis, Project Manager for Academic and Faculty Enhancement, co-planned the event. "This is an opportunity for the Department of Defense (DoD) to reach out to high school students and share examples of technology that DoD uses," said Dr. Boddie. "We are excited to have the students with us today. What they learn here may shape and influence their future career choices," remarked Dr. Lewis.

Dr. Mary McCully, Dean of Faculty and Academic Programs, welcomed the students and gave this advice, "If you are interested in embarking on an information technology career in government or industry, there are infinite opportunities and a lot of excitement!"

After Dr. McCully's well wishes, the students joined Dr. Mike Piller, Director of Academic Computer and Laboratories, for a hands-on tour of the technology labs. They learned how to protect computer systems from unknown perpetrators. They were introduced to Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA), which monitor and control infrastructure systems such as electricity, water, transportation systems and even traffic lights. Additionally, the students were given a computer demonstration of virtual worlds through Second Life. They were shown how people are communicating through avatars world-wide, and how government, academia, and industry are using virtual worlds to communicate and share information.

Students also met with Paul Flanagan, professor in the college's Systems Management Department. Mr. Flanagan took the students on a tour through emerging technologies and introduced them to automatic speech recognition, machine translation, robotics, e-books, and tablet computing devices. Professor Flanagan showed the students how the use of robotics allows vehicles to drive by themselves. He discussed automatic speech recognition and how speech via a computer converts to text, and how computerized machine translation can take English and translate it into a foreign language. He also used the e-books (Kindles) and tablet computing devices (iPad) to demonstrate how this technology is used in the NDU iCollege's classrooms.

Energized students summarized the day for everyone and commented about the importance of protecting their personal information on social media sites such as Facebook. Others were thrilled with emerging technologies and the cool things they learned about iPads and Kindles. The students were abuzz with excitement as they left the NDU iCollege, and the college hopes that some of them will consider working for DoD in an IT field after they graduate. It was a successful day for all.

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About the College - The NDU iCollege, a U.S. Department of Defense educational institution, prepares leaders to direct the information component of national power by leveraging information and information technology for strategic advantage. Although most students come from DoD (military and civilians), the school also accepts Federal Agency, private sector, and international students into its graduate programs.

Education is focused around CIO, CFO, Information Assurance/Cyber, Enterprise Architecture, IT Project Management, and other information leadership competencies. The NDU iCollege also has been awarded degree granting authority from the U.S. Department of Education for its new Government Information Leader (GIL) Masters of Science Degree. Students are already active in the program and new applications will be accepted soon. Courses are completed on campus and/or online.

For more information about the NDU iCollege's programs, please contact: Jolly Sienda at jolly.sienda.ctr@ndu.edu; or for general information about the college, visit: www.ndu.edu/icollege.

The National Defense University is the nation's premier center for joint professional military education. The university is an accredited graduate-level institution that provides an educational and research environment to prepare future leaders of the armed forces and other civilian agencies for high-level policy, command, and staff responsibilities.

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