

Naval Academy should be center for study of cybersecurity, new superintendent says

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The U.S. Naval Academy's new superintendent wants his campus to become a center for cybersecurity education, with a \$100 million building and a slate of new classes devoted to the emerging discipline, he said Friday in his first interview since taking the job in August.

"It's an important part of my tenure here to get that project going forward," said Vice Adm. Michael H. Miller during a session with reporters at the academy's on-campus museum.

Miller said an introductory [cybersecurity](#) class would replace another required course in the curriculum for the Class of 2015, and he eventually expects the academy to produce graduates who specialize in cyberwarfare.

The academy has yet to request funding for a cybersecurity building, and Miller acknowledged the difficulty of asking for construction money in the current fiscal climate. He said the academy might first need to "prime the pump" by collecting private donations for the project.

"It will probably take a joint effort," he said. "I'm just so firmly convinced this is the right place."

Miller said the academy's proximity to the [National Security Agency](#) headquarters at Fort Meade and to Washington makes it a logical center for cybersecurity training.

The academy's interest makes sense, given the explosive growth in the field, said Richard Forno, director of the graduate program in cybersecurity at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

"They are doing what they should be doing as a service academy," he said. "Cybersecurity is a constant concern at the national security level, business level and personal level."

Beyond meeting the military need, Forno said, students of cybersecurity could set themselves up for lucrative futures in the private sector and at civilian government agencies.

Earlier this year, Gen. Keith Alexander, head of the U.S. Cyber Command at Fort Meade, spoke to the midshipmen about preparing for "warfare that we cannot yet predict." Alexander has compared the importance of mastering cyberwarfare to the importance of mastering air combat in the early 20th century.

Miller said he took that message to heart and believes that future midshipmen will not be adequately prepared without a grasp of cyberwarfare. He imagines the academy producing a subset of graduates who might be more proficient with a keyboard than an airplane or a machine gun.

"It's like 'The Matrix,'" he said. "They can look at lines of code and see things. I can't do that."

The superintendent has not decided which core course will be replaced by cybersecurity.

Miller said he has looked at a parking lot between Nimitz and Rickover halls as a possible location for the proposed cyber center, which he imagines as a secure collection of high-tech laboratories. But an

engineering study found 190 feet of water under the lot, so it's unclear if the site would be optimal.

Also during Friday's session, Miller said that internal auditors and outside agencies (which a spokesman declined to name) are still reviewing the academy's financial practices in the wake of a June report from the Office of the Naval Inspector General that criticized the use of a slush fund to pay for private tailgate parties, catered receptions and gifts for football coaches.

The report hastened the retirement of Miller's predecessor, Vice Adm. Jeffrey L. Fowler.

Miller said that by early next year, he expects to implement new guidelines for financial practices based on recommendations from the internal and external reviews.

"There is always room for a refurbishment of business practices," Miller said.

He is particularly concerned about rules governing the use of money raised from private sources such as alumni and other boosters. He noted that while he is a military base commander, he's also a college president competing with wealthy private institutions for elite students. He said uncertainty about spending rules has hampered him in the second role.

"I've been very conservative," he said. "I have not done much entertaining. The outreach part of my job has been truncated."

He hopes that once the rules are clear, he'll have more freedom to use privately raised funds for recruiting and entertaining alumni.

"It's a necessity that the superintendent be able to reach out," Miller said.

"It's how universities expand their reputations."

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