



**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS**  
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## News Release

### For Immediate Release

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# UTD Designated as Center of Excellence In Information Assurance Education By Two Agencies of Federal Government

***University to Open 'World-Class' Lab for Related Research, Education;  
Facility to be One of First Tangible Benefits to UTD from 'Project Emmitt'***

RICHARDSON, Texas (May 6, 2004) – The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) has been selected as a “National Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education” by the United States National Security Agency (NSA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), thus becoming a key player in the nation’s efforts to secure its information assets.

UTD joins 58 other universities so designated under a program implemented in the late 1990’s, the goal of which is to reduce the vulnerability of the U.S. national information infrastructure by promoting higher education in information assurance and producing a growing number of professionals with experience in the field. Other universities in the select group include Stanford University, Purdue University, Carnegie Mellon University, the Georgia Institute of Technology and the U. S. Military Academy at West Point.

In a related development, the university announced a plan to establish a new, \$2-million Security Analysis and Information Assurance Laboratory in the Erik Jonsson School of Engineering and Computer Science by the end of 2004. The lab, to be part of the Digital Forensics and Emergency Preparedness Institute (DFEPI), will be a hub of cybersecurity research and education for faculty, university partners, government and industry.

Jonsson School Dean Dr. Bob Helms said the laboratory would be one of the first tangible benefits to UTD from the Engineering and Science Research Enhancement Initiative, commonly known as “Project Emmitt” – a massive economic development project announced last summer by its principals, the State of Texas, The University of Texas System and Texas Instruments Incorporated (TI). Under the initiative, UTD expects to receive an infusion of as much as \$300 million in public and private funds. As part of the deal, TI will build a \$3-billion wafer fabrication plant near the UTD campus.

“The NSA-DHS designation is an important new mantle for UTD,” said Dr. E. Douglas Harris, associate dean of the Jonsson School and executive director of DFEPI. “We are now part of the vanguard of universities across the country that the federal government is relying on to play a critical role in protecting the national information infrastructure. We take this responsibility seriously, particularly in light of the current state of world affairs and the threats to our nation and its assets.

“The Security Analysis and Information Assurance Laboratory will give us the ability to conduct large-scale, cybersecurity research and will greatly enhance our ability to collaborate with other universities and corporations doing leading-edge research in this critically important area.”

Colleges and universities designated as National Centers of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education must offer a curriculum that complies with standards for the education of information assurance professionals, as judged by the two federal agencies. Designation as a center is valid for three academic years.

Institutions awarded the designation are eligible to apply for scholarships and grants through several Information Assurance Scholarship Programs offered by the federal government. In addition, such institutions are encouraged to conduct research in information assurance and may become focal points of recruiting by federal departments and agencies seeking individuals with information assurance expertise.

According to Harris, the new UTD laboratory will be staffed by more than 20 Jonsson School faculty members who are engaged in a comprehensive research effort to develop methods utilizing computer hardware and software to create highly secure and attack-resilient network systems. It will be housed in existing space in the recently expanded Jonsson School building on campus.

"This will be a world-class facility that we anticipate will become an important center for the development of techniques and technologies vital to the protection and restoration of information and information systems," Harris said. "With the addition of this laboratory, UTD will be positioned squarely on the front lines in the war against cybercrime and terrorism."

Among the endeavors in which the laboratory is expected to be involved, Harris said, are:

- Investigation of methods of network attacks, such as viruses, worms and defect-exploitation attacks
- Development of real-time, on-line, vulnerability-assessment methods to continuously monitor a network and evaluate its susceptibility to attacks.
- Investigation of powerful intrusion detection and digital forensic mechanisms to rapidly identify security probes, locate their origin and track their actions.
- Development of adaptive methods to enable a system to adjust its security schemes and sophistication quickly to counter escalating sequences of attack.
- Development of integrated hardware, middleware and software capabilities to enable the creation of highly secure, rapidly deployable networks.

Harris said that the facility will be capable of emulating real-life scenarios of threats and counter-threat techniques on networks, both wired and wireless, of any kind.

Half of the \$2 million in start-up costs for the laboratory will go toward the purchase of advanced computer and related equipment, he said, with the other half slated to be used as matching funds for high-value faculty research proposals.

UTD will receive formal recognition of its new NSA-DHS designation during an annual conference of the Colloquium for Information Systems Security Education, to be held on June 8 at West Point.

### **About UTD**

The University of Texas at Dallas, located at the convergence of Richardson, Plano and Dallas in the heart of the complex of major multinational technology corporations known as the Telecom Corridor®, enrolls more than 13,700 students. The school's freshman class traditionally stands at the forefront of Texas state universities in terms of average SAT scores. The university offers a broad assortment of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs. For additional information about UTD, please visit the university's web site at [www.utdallas.edu](http://www.utdallas.edu).

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