For Immediate Release

NEW CYBERSECURITY PROGRAMS PRESENT NEW CAREER OPTIONS

CUMBERLAND, Md. – Allegany College of Maryland is launching new academic programs in cyber technology that will prepare graduates for careers in the growing cybersecurity industry.

ACM is this fall introducing associate-degree and certificate programs that will help employers fill job openings in this important information technology sector.

These new credit options, to be complemented by workforce development training through continuing education, are offered with support from the U.S. Department of Labor.

ACM is sharing in a nearly $15 million federal grant that is enabling it and other Maryland community colleges to establish Cyber Technology Pathways Across Maryland, or CPAM.

Together, the consortium will offer training and education that bolsters Maryland’s standing as a national center of cybersecurity.

CPAM colleges will partner with employers to prepare participants for such careers as information security analysts and network support specialists.

“Graduates of the certificate and degree programs will be directly connected with employers across the state that have significant hiring needs in cybersecurity-related positions,” said Kristi Smith, the ACM computer science faculty member who is leading the new initiative.

The new credit programs will enable students to enter the cybersecurity field after one or two years of study at ACM or after transfer and further study at a four-year college.

Both the cybersecurity certificate and the computer technology degree option prompted the development of new courses in digital information and network security.

New this fall is Introduction to Cybersecurity. The course, which provides a broad overview of computer security, ethical issues and information assurance, is already in demand with three sections scheduled.

In later semesters, students in both the one- and two-year career programs will take the other four newly developed courses: Security+ and Cisco Networking 2, 3 and 4.

Meanwhile, existing computer science courses have revised to reflect the heightened need for cybersecurity in information technology.
These include courses in the newly revised computer science/cybersecurity/information systems curriculum, which is designed to enable students to transfer toward a bachelor’s degree at another college.

The new and revised courses are intended to prepare students for certification exams in Comp TIA A+, Comp TIA Security+ and Cisco CCNA. All are designations widely recognized in the IT industry.

As all five of the new courses have hands-on components, newly equipped computer labs with specialized software are being established in ACM’s Technology Building.

“Certifications open the door to many cybersecurity jobs,” said Dick Soderman, ACM assistant professor and lead instructor in the new cybersecurity programs.

“Some employers require employees to have a CompTIA Security+ certification before they are even allowed to access enterprise networks with the privileges necessary for system administration,” he added.

ACM’s efforts in cybersecurity and role in the consortium complement efforts of the new Western Maryland IT Center of Excellence. Key area information technology stakeholders have formed a Strategic Industry Partnership to offer workforce development training.

This skills-training and economic-development initiative of the Maryland Department of Labor will prepare workers for a growing number of area jobs foreseen in IT.

CPAM, spearheaded by Montgomery College, is supported by a jobs-focused training program through the U.S. Labor Department’s Employment and Training Administration.

The funding is part of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training competitive grant program, which is co-administered by the federal departments of Labor and Education.

Although Maryland is a national center of cybersecurity with more than 130,000 IT jobs – 49 percent above the national average – many workers find these careers difficult to enter.

The job training offered through CPAM will benefit military veterans and workers made jobless by unfair foreign trade practices.

Low-skilled adults, women and other populations underrepresented in cybersecurity and other IT fields are also prime candidates for CPAM, which seeks linkages with employers and career pathways for its students.
In addition to job training in credit and continuing education programs, students will be afforded academic support services in assessment, career planning and job search. The consortium’s goal is to graduate approximately 2,000 students after three years.

For more information contact Smith, ACM associate professor of computer technology and TAACCCT program director, at ksmith@allegany.edu or 301-784-5326. Information is also available on the college website, www.allegany.edu.

-30-