PRESS RELEASE

From the University of Illinois Information Trust Institute

Information Trust INSTITUTE

Information Trust Institute Wins $1.25 Million in Undergraduate Scholarship Funding

The Information Trust Institute (ITI) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has just won $1.25 million in funding from the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) to support scholarships for undergraduate students who are working towards careers in information trust.

The grant, which establishes the Illinois Cyber Security Scholar Program (ICSSP) at the University of Illinois, was awarded by NSF's Federal Cyber Service: Scholarship for Service (SFS) program. SFS's mission is to increase the number of students entering the fields of computer security and information assurance, with the ultimate objective of improving the U.S. government's ability to protect its own information infrastructure. Under the terms of the award, each participating student will receive a scholarship and stipend in exchange for committing to work for two years following graduation as an information assurance specialist in the federal government. The funding will also support the development of innovative curriculum changes designed to support the scholarship program. The program will initially support five undergraduate students per year, and may be expanded in the near future.

"Information trust" consists of the study and practice of ensuring that networked information systems remain secure, dependable, correct, safe, and private, even in the face of accidents or malicious attacks. Skilled workforce development in the area of information trust is seen by experts as a crucial step in ensuring the trustworthiness of information systems that support critical areas of the U.S. economy, ranging from financial systems to homeland security defense.

"This scholarship program will be instrumental in attracting our outstanding pool of students in the College of Engineering to the critical area of information security," said Dr. Masooda Bashir, ITI's Assistant Director for Social Trust Initiatives, who is one of the co-Principal Investigators of the new ICSSP program. "This program will also continue to build on ITI's tradition of excellence and success to promote research and education in information trust and security." ICSSP will be led by Professor Roy Campbell of the Department of Computer Science and ITI at Illinois; Professor William H. Sanders of ITI, the Coordinated Science Laboratory, and the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering will serve as an additional co-Principal Investigator.

The Illinois departments of Computer Science and Electrical & Computer Engineering have both been developing new information assurance programs for undergraduates, but lack of funding has presented a barrier for some students. "We have many highly motivated and talented students for whom an SFS scholarship could make an enormous difference in allowing them to pursue studies in this crucial area," said Michael Heath, interim Department Head of Computer Science. "This funding will enable promising students to become part of our long tradition of excellence." Richard E. Blahut, Department Head of Electrical & Computer Engineering (ECE), added that the new program will be "an important new asset" in the effort to increase the number of highly trained graduates in the field of information trust. "Our undergraduates have unique opportunities to participate in our cutting-edge research, benefiting from our outstanding undergraduate instructional laboratories and programs," said Blahut. "We're very pleased to

be able to offer the ICSSP scholarships, which will make sure that the recipients' educational ambitions aren't limited by their financial resources. Ultimately, they'll also help ensure that the U.S. government's information assurance needs are met. This will be good for the students, the University, and the nation."

In addition to receiving financial support, each participating student in the ICSSP program will attend orientation training that explains the government's information assurance needs, will perform a summer internship in a federal government or national lab setting, and will prepare a senior design project that addresses a security topic. ICSSP will also offer a lecture series on information assurance topics and maintain an informative web site. The program will include active recruitment of students from underrepresented groups and transfer or community college students.

About the Information Trust Institute (ITI)

The Information Trust Institute is a multidisciplinary cross-campus research unit housed in the College of Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It is an international leader combining research and education with industrial outreach in trustworthy and secure information systems. ITI brings together over 90 faculty, many senior and graduate student researchers, and industry partners to conduct foundational and applied research to enable the creation of critical applications and cyber infrastructures. In doing so, ITI is creating computer systems, software, and networks that society can depend on to be trustworthy, that is, secure, dependable (reliable and available), correct, safe, private, and survivable. Instead of concentrating on narrow and focused technical solutions, ITI aims to create a new paradigm for designing trustworthy systems from the ground up and validating systems that are intended to be trustworthy. www.iti.uiuc.edu

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