

**A conversation with Jim Warren,
Advanced Security and Research Program Manager,
Security and Trust Organization, Cisco**



Cisco partners with higher education institutions to advance cybersecurity research

The Cisco Security and Trust Organization, Advanced Security and Research team offers a grant program through which higher education research institutions can take action in the evolving cybersecurity threat landscape.

Attacks are becoming more sophisticated and more disruptive. A comprehensive approach is necessary to be prepared and get ahead of advanced threats emerging in the next 5 to 15 years. With that in mind, Cisco has made research grants available to higher ed research institutions through its Advanced Security Research team, to drive innovative cybersecurity research that will help mitigate threats of the future.

The Advanced Security and Research team is part of Cisco's Security and Trust Organization. What is the mission of this special team?

The Advanced Security and Research team is dedicated to the research of emerging threats and disruptive technologies to help our customers be better prepared before, during and after a cyberattack. Cisco offers a grant program through which higher ed research institutions can participate in the battle against cybersecurity threats. Our program includes all Cisco products and customers. Our team of security experts focus on how we can best protect our customers and their communities through the products and services we deliver.

What are some of the specific threats that the Advanced Security and Research team targets?

Through collaboration with Cisco customers and researchers, our Cisco Fellows, Distinguished Engineers and Principal Engineers have identified four areas:

- Advanced cryptography
- Privacy and analytics
- System integrity
- Threat mitigation

What criteria does Cisco use to award grants?

Every proposal goes a thorough assessment to determine the likelihood of a new threat being critical, long-term, or an industry-wide issue. We also consider the reputation of the research team and institution. After engaging with the proposal submitters throughout the evaluation process by contacting them for questions and clarifications, we award grants each quarter.

Why should academic researchers want to work with Cisco?

Our goal is to be a strategic trusted partner to institutions. We facilitate collaboration by connecting researchers from different institutions. And because Cisco is the industry leader in security, receiving one of our grants is excellent market validation for the institution.

What are some examples of the critical work these institutions are doing?

On the integrity side, Virginia Tech is researching the potential of Physically Unclonable Functions to validate system integrity and prevent counterfeiting. The University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada, is exploring how hardware security modules can help secure small devices, which is critical to the expanding Internet of Things. And the University of Florida focuses on quality control against malicious code in supply chains and integrated circuits for its research.

Why is it important for research institutions to make cybersecurity a priority?

Cybersecurity will continue to evolve. Unfortunately, there are headlines in the news every week about security breaches. Higher ed research institutions typically explore broad-range issues that touch every level of society, and cybersecurity is a natural fit for exploration and innovation. In addition, there is a huge shortage and growing demand for security professionals, and the academic community is helping meet that need by expanding programs from the community college level up to the top-tier doctorate level.

Cisco has a threat-centric approach to security. What makes Cisco one of the top security companies in the industry?

This year at the RSA Conference, Cisco was named "Best Security Company" and the Security and Trust Organization was named the 2016 Security Organization of the Year, which we are all very proud of. Cisco's top priority is our customers and their security. It is not only the IT systems that are at risk – it is ultimately an organization's brand, reputation, intellectual property and growth that must be protected. We deliver built-in security as the foundation of our solutions, which are pervasive, integrated, continuous and open. Through our acquisitions and in-house R&D, which totaled \$6.2 billion across all product areas in 2015, our cybersecurity experts are innovating every day to protect our customers' most important assets.



For more information on applying for a grant, visit research.cisco.com and visit the Trust and Transparency Center at trust.cisco.com.

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