

# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

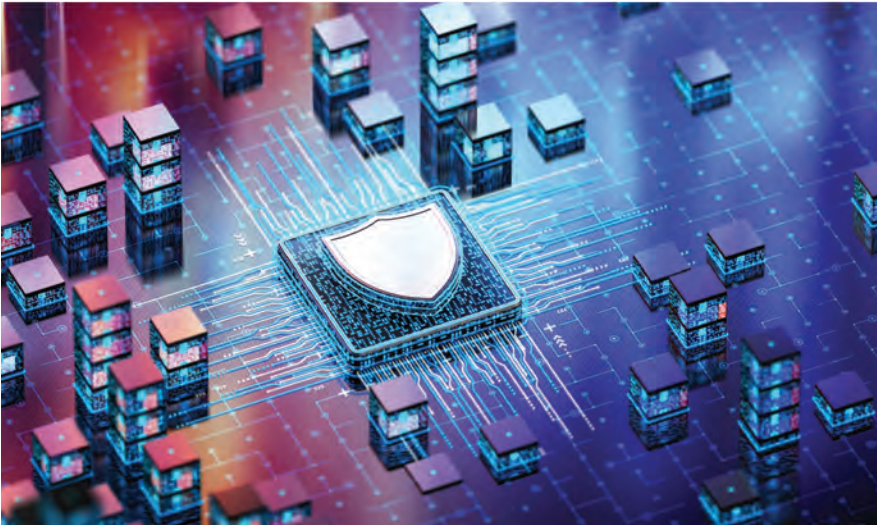
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# PC4A

**PA Community College Consortium Cooperative Agreement**

**FEBRUARY 2024**

Year 2, Volume 2



## PC4A: STRENGTHENING THE CYBERSECURITY WORKFORCE IN OUR COUNTRY

Indiana University of Pennsylvania, in conjunction with six PA community colleges, has been awarded a substantial grant from the US Department of Defense with the increasingly important goal of supporting and strengthening the cybersecurity workforce in our country.

PC4A has the following main objectives:

- Increase certification attainment rates.
- Increase transfer rates.
- Increase interest in DoD/DIB employment.

PC4A Partners Include: Bucks County, Butler County, Montgomery County, Northampton, Penn Highlands, and Westmoreland County Community Colleges, led by Indiana University of Pennsylvania

[WWW.PC4A.ORG](http://WWW.PC4A.ORG)

## IN THIS ISSUE

Activities conducted to financially support students in targeted programs.

IUP and PHCC participate in first annual BSides Flood City Cybersecurity Event.

IUP Hosts 16th Annual Cybersecurity Day for students, faculty, and the community.

Statistics on all PC4A activities provided since the start of the project.

Tobyhanna Army Depot Internships launch at NCC.

Department of Defense

# DoDSTEM

Science • Technology • Engineering • Mathematics

PC4A is proudly funded by the US Department of Defense. To learn more about the work that they are doing to develop exceptional STEM talent, visit their website at [dodstem.us](http://dodstem.us).

## PC4A PARTNERS PARTICIPATE IN FIRST ANNUAL BSIDES FLOOD CITY CYBERSECURITY EVENT

[BSides](#), a global series of community-driven conferences, offered the first annual cybersecurity event in Johnstown, PA on October 26, 2023. Penn Highlands Community College (PHCC) hosted the event, which was sponsored by PC4A. In addition to sponsorship, PC4A representatives attended the day-long event and distributed PC4A information to students, members of the public, and representatives from DoD/DIB contractors. Participants included local businesses, faculty, and students, and the event is expected to be offered again in fall 2024. Visit the [BSides Flood City website](#) for more details.



## PC4A SPONSORS IUP'S 16TH ANNUAL CYBERSECURITY DAY

Since 2008, IUP has offered the annual Cybersecurity Day, a public day-long event where participants can learn about important cybersecurity topics from experts in government, academia, and industry. This year, PC4A sponsored the in-person event which was held on October 31, 2023.

Presentations were given by representatives from DoD STEM, the US Department of Homeland Security, Duquesne University, the US Army, and CyberSN. Presentation topics included cybersecurity workforce development, cyber analytics, active cyber defenses, and a discussion panel that provided strategies for building IT and cybersecurity Careers. Students and faculty from five of the six PC4A community colleges attended the event.

Visit the [IUP Cybersecurity Day website](#) for all event details including speaker bios, complete presentations, event schedule, photo gallery, and details on all previously offered Cybersecurity Days.





## OVER 100 SCHOLARSHIPS DISTRIBUTED TO STUDENTS AT THREE COMMUNITY COLLEGES

When determining the objectives of PC4A, financial strain was identified as an obstacle students face when completing their college degrees. To eliminate this obstacle, many partners have developed scholarship programs that support students in their targeted programs. This quarter, over 100 scholarships were distributed to students at Butler County Community College, Northampton Community College, and Penn Highlands Community College. Scholarships varied in amount across partner schools, with an average award of almost \$600. As expected, these scholarships have had a significant impact on students, and additional PC4A partners will be offering scholarships in the future.

***“The award has allowed me to invest in computer repair tools and components that I otherwise would not have been able to acquire.***

-BC3 Scholarship Recipient

## 300 TEXTBOOK/VIRTUAL LAB VOUCHERS PROVIDED TO STUDENTS

To continue efforts to financially support students, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, the Lead Organization of PC4A, provided over 300 textbook and virtual lab vouchers to partner students enrolled in targeted programs. These vouchers will allow students to obtain required textbooks and access virtual lab platforms for free, saving the students an average of \$200. The majority of PC4A partners will also offer textbook/virtual lab vouchers to their students in the spring 2024 semester.

## CERTIFICATION PREPARATION WORKSHOPS HELD AT FOUR PARTNER SCHOOLS

To help reach the main project objective of increasing DoD approved certifications among PC4A partner students, four certification prep workshops were offered and attended by a total of 64 participants. Workshops helped students prepare for CompTIA Network+, A+, and Security+ certification exams, and students who successfully completed the workshop were provided with an exam voucher. The voucher allowed participants to take the certification exam for free, saving the student an average of over \$300.

## INTERNSHIP PROGRAM LAUNCHES AT TOBYHANNA ARMY DEPOT, SEVEN PAID INTERNSHIPS PROVIDED BY PC4A PARTNERS

Throughout the first year of PC4A, Northampton Community College (NCC) established a highly successful internship program and collaborated extensively with representatives from [Tobyhanna Army Depot](#) (TAD) to establish the first internship program allowed at the facility, which launched in September 2023. Two student interns enrolled in NCC’s information Security and Computer Science associate degree programs completed over 100 hours of hands-on learning through their internships with TAD. NCC also offered two additional internships, with more expected throughout the remainder of Academic Year 2023-24.

Due to the success of NCC’s internship program, Butler County Community College and Penn Highlands Community College offered three internships totaling 400 hours of paid hands-on learning, and Montgomery County and Westmoreland County Community Colleges will be offering paid internships to students beginning in spring 2024.

***The internship at Tobyhanna Army Depot served as an invaluable platform for my academic and professional growth in the field of Information Security.***

-Tobyhanna Army Depot Intern

## PC4A LAUNCHES NEW TRANSFER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

To help reach the main project objective of increasing students transferring from community colleges to four-year institutions, two new scholarship opportunities were developed for students from PC4A community college partners. First is the expansion of the IUP Cyber Scholarship Program (CySP). The IUP CySP is a scholarship program, funded by the US Department of Defense (DoD), that provides full-ride scholarships to cybersecurity students with additional benefits including a living stipend, books, and a laptop. Students who are awarded the CySP complete a summer internship with a DoD agency, and are hired with the DoD upon graduation. The CySP is typically only open to current IUP students, however through the efforts of the PC4A Program Director, Dr. Waleed Farag, graduates from any PC4A partner community college who transfer to IUP are now eligible to apply. Visit the [CySP website](#) for complete details.

In addition, the PC4A Transfer Scholarship Program (TSP) was established and launched in December 2023. The TSP is open to any current student or alumni from a PC4A partner community college who transfers into IUP's Computer Science - Cybersecurity track bachelors degree program, and the TSP covers full in-state tuition and fees for one academic year. Visit the [PC4A TSP website](#) for further information and to apply online.

## COURSES AND CURRICULUM UPDATED AT FOUR PC4A COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Continuing efforts that began during the first year of the project, four community college partners updated curriculum to better match industry standards and increase student knowledge in vital cybersecurity skills.

Bucks County Community College developed a new course in cyber defense, which will officially launch in April 2024.

Northampton Community College implemented major changes to their Cybersecurity, Computer Science, and Data Science programs. Three new courses were designed, including the addition of a computer science practicum which will allow students to gain hands-on experience while earning college credit.

Penn Highlands Community College launched the newly designed courses "Cloud Computing and Security," and "Network Defense," both of which are hands-on and focused on providing students practical experience to advance their careers.

Westmoreland County Community College also designed two new courses titled "Introduction to Cloud Computing," and "Penetration Testing" which have been designed to not only expand students technical knowledge, but to also prepare them to sit for CompTIA Cloud+ and CompTIA PenTest+ certifications exams.

## DID YOU KNOW

PC4A reaches 3,000 students in targeted programs across six community college partners.

Targeted degree programs include:

- App Development
- Cloud Computing
- Computer Science
- Cybersecurity
- Data Science
- Game Design
- Information Security
- Network Administration
- Networking Systems
- PC Computer Support
- Programming
- Server Administration
- Systems Administration
- Web Development

Visit [www.pc4a.org](http://www.pc4a.org) to learn more.

## PC4A ACTIVITY STATISTICS

Since the start of PC4A, all involved have worked tirelessly to offer activities and participate in events that will help reach project objectives. Below is an overview of all accomplishments through December 2023.

**174**

scholarships  
awarded

**716**

lab/book vouchers  
awarded

**27**

paid internships  
offered

**1.7K**

internship hours  
completed

**15**

certification prep  
workshops offered

**128**

workshops  
participants

**65**

certification exam  
vouchers awarded

**19**

certifications earned  
by students

**12**

faculty training events  
hosted or attended

**39**

faculty trained in  
cybersecurity topics

**1.3K**

hours of free  
tutoring provided

**15**

courses added or  
updated

**50**

events hosted or  
attended

**63**

collaborations with  
outside institutions

**32**

bi-weekly meetings  
held with partners

**163**

posts on PC4A  
Social Media

Join the PC4A mailing list [HERE](#) or follow us on social media:



# PC4A PROJECT LEADERSHIP AND CONTACT INFORMATION

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## JOIN US IN REACHING PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Effective collaboration is at the center of PC4A, and it is an important factor in reaching project goals. Join us in our efforts as we strive to create a stronger cybersecurity and STEM workforce.

### PC4A is actively seeking:

- Internships
- Employment opportunities
- Guest speakers
- Faculty development
- Transfer agreements
- Facility Tours

Contact us at [pc4a-stem@iup.edu](mailto:pc4a-stem@iup.edu) to get involved.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*March 22, 2024*

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Cybersecurity Event

Penn Highlands Community College will host the 2nd Annual Cybersecurity Event, a public event to share vital cybersecurity related information with HS students and senior citizens.

*April 5 and 12, 2024*

### POGIL Development Workshops

Westmoreland County and Northampton Community Colleges will host two in-person faculty development workshops for faculty to learn the POGIL instructional method.

*April 12, 2024*

### 3CS Regional Conference

Northampton Community College will host the annual National Cyberwatch Center's 3CS Conference.