OP-ED

MDC set to provide cutting-edge training in preventing cyberattacks

BY EDUARDO J. PADRÓN
@EduardoJPadron

August 23, 2018 02:22 PM
Updated 5 hours 23 minutes ago

With a cyberattack occurring every 39 seconds, it's no surprise that the demand for jobs in cybersecurity is on the rise. There currently are more than 285,000 unfilled cybersecurity jobs across the country — 12,000 of them in Florida alone. Companies are eager to hire highly trained professionals ready to detect hacking and prevent future attacks.

Always striving to address 21st-century workforce demands and remain at the forefront of innovation, Miami Dade College this week launched its state-of-the-art Cybersecurity Center of the Americas. This unique training facility, one of the most advanced in the nation, features a security operations center, or S.O.C., environment as well as a Cyber Range powered with technology developed by Cyberbit.

This groundbreaking endeavor — MDC is the only higher education institution in Florida with a Cyberbit range — gives local students and working professionals hands-on cybersecurity education and simulated training that mirrors real-life cyberattack scenarios. The need for these experts has never been more urgent. A quick glance at the news on any given day proves that cyberattacks are a serious global threat, and no business or government is spared the dangers of hacks and breaches.

By paving the way for a new generation of cybersecurity experts, MDC aspires to prepare students for careers in one of the country's fastest growing technical professions. This program is a needed and timely addition to MDC's extensive list of quality programs and pathways that contribute to local and national economies. They help prepare workforce-ready people who can handle the demands of emerging jobs.

Breaking News

Be the first to know when big news breaks

Many companies in our region and across the country struggle to find candidates to fill cybersecurity positions. The only way to address this shortfall is by providing students and professionals with the most advanced, hands-on cybersecurity training available.

Our program's goal is to dramatically increase the skills of cybersecurity professionals so that they can meet the increasing complexity and volume of real-life threats.

Trainees will face real-world hacking and other cyberattacks within a complex network that rivals the size and scope encountered at the professional level. By using firewalls, SIEMs and network monitoring software, among others, our students will need to detect, neutralize and remediate today's most threatening cyberattacks such as ransomware, data leakages and man-in-the-middle scenarios.

Unique to our program is a focus on training entire teams to become cyberattack experts. Security professionals often train individually, but the reality is that a hack or other threat often requires an entire team — from Tier 1 analysts to company executives — for assessment and troubleshooting. Our Cyber Range will record each team member's response to the attack, allowing management to assess how the team reacted both individually and collectively.

In addition to learning the theory behind cyberattacks and how to respond to them in real-time, MDC's cybersecurity curriculum incorporates industry trainers that will provide mentoring for students interested in the security field. Career counseling also will be available for information technology professionals looking to expand their skills as they attempt to advance in their workplaces. And even C-level executives looking to remain relevant in the current cybersecurity landscape will find customized trainings for senior management positions.

Moreover, via partnerships with numerous professional organizations, MDC's Cybersecurity Center will soon become the talent developer and candidate pipeline for the cybersecurity industry both locally and nationally. The Center will also host forums and a speakers' series for those in our community seeking to increase their knowledge regarding cyber threats.

By developing the most advanced cybersecurity training and education center in Florida, MDC is well on its way to producing highly qualified graduates to fill critically needed cybersecurity positions. Our students will undoubtedly play an important role in keeping our communities safe from hackers and cyberattacks.

Eduardo J. Padron is president of Miami Dade College.

💬 COMMENTS ⌄