

US spy agencies come to Northern Virginia Community College

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality at NOVA
25 September 2018

On September 26, Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) will host a job and internship fair aimed at recruiting college students at its Annandale campus into the US spy agencies.

According to the official announcement, the event will provide an overview of “the function and hiring needs” of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other agencies. The information session is organized by the NOVA Career Services team and the school office of Student Activities.

The event is presented as a typical “job fair” for students, many of whom are eager to find a decent career that utilizes the talents and skills they are paying thousands in tuition to receive. However, it is, in fact, an ominous expression of the integration of college campuses with the US military and intelligence apparatus, which is responsible for countless crimes and is preparing many more.

The NOVA college system, with over 75,000 students and nearly 3,000 staff, is the second largest community college system in the US, hosting a diverse student body from over 180 countries. The six campuses comprising NOVA are in the Virginia suburbs of Washington DC, only a short drive from the CIA’s headquarters at Langley and the Pentagon in Arlington.

The school has developed an increasingly direct relationship with the military-intelligence apparatus. In 2017, it initiated a “Military Appreciation Day” at its Woodbridge campus. The school is a founding member of the National Cyberwatch Center, which is “a national consortium of colleges and universities focused on cybersecurity education.”

In 2013, NOVA was selected by the National

Security Agency (NSA) and the DHS as a National Center of Academic Excellence in the field of “Information Assurance.” According to the NSA’s website, Information Assurance is aimed at securing “National Security Systems, which [include] systems that handle classified information or are otherwise critical to military or intelligence activities” planning to “successfully outmaneuver any adversary.”

The school boasts numerous courses and programs associated with law enforcement and cyber security. The Cybersecurity Credit Program declares that its goal is “to prepare students for careers as cybersecurity technicians or analysts.” Many of the professors teaching these courses are former government officials or contractors who are also involved in intelligence gathering.

In a demonstration of NOVA’s effort to ingratiate itself with the US intelligence apparatus, it recently honored US Senator Mark Warner in a ceremony celebrating the school’s 50-year anniversary in 2016, naming the Annandale campus’ student services building after the Virginia Democrat. As the ranking Democratic Senator on the powerful Senate Intelligence Committee, Warner is one of the main figures demanding internet censorship, supposedly in the name of combating “fake news” and “Russian meddling” in the US 2016 elections, but in fact targeting left-wing and socialist political opinions.

While NOVA frames occupations in the spy agencies in the relatively benign terms of “national service” and “protecting American citizens,” the function is to train and recruit students as operators in the criminal activities of the US spy agencies.

In 2013, NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden exposed the agency’s illegal spying on the global population’s electronic communications, including US

citizens, whose phone calls, text messages and emails were regularly swept up in surveillance dragnets. A 2011 NSA internal document declares that the agency intends to “Collect it All,” “Process it All,” “Exploit it All,” “Partner it All,” “Sniff it All” and “Know it All.”

The CIA, famously dubbed “Murder, Inc.” has been responsible for numerous crimes and assassinations: from the attempted assassinations of Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba and Cuban President Fidel Castro, to the program of assassination and murder during the Vietnam War; the funding of Islamic fundamentalists during the proxy war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s; and the program of “extraordinary rendition” and torture under the Bush administration.

For its part, the DHS is the chief agency created to oversee the US government’s “war on terror,” which has functioned as a means to shred democratic rights at home and pursue militarism abroad. As the parent agency of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection, the department directly oversees the US deportation machine and President Donald Trump’s illegal program of separating immigrant children from their families, thousands of whom remain trapped within the US detention system.

The threat to international and immigrant students is especially dire. According to a 2017 news report, over 700 students in the NOVA system are registered Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program recipients, who at any time may have their temporary status ended by the federal government. More broadly, over 500,000 individuals throughout the Washington DC area are undocumented immigrants.

The military and intelligence agencies operate on the principle of authority and control. Those who are part of these organizations, including students, are expected to do as they are told and follow orders. This principle is in direct conflict with what should be the basis of education—free discussion, education and the exchange of ideas.

Despite the intelligence agencies’ advances in infiltrating the campus system, militarism and spying are broadly opposed at Northern Virginia Community College. As is the case throughout the US and internationally, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at Northern Virginia Community College has received a warm response

from students in support of socialist policies opposed to inequality, militarism and war.

The IYSSE at Northern Virginia Community College demands an end to all associations between the college and the US military and the spy agencies. Under conditions of increasing political radicalization of youth and workers, the presence of such agencies and their operatives at NOVA is a threat to the democratic rights and free political association of students and workers on campus.



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