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Women in CyberSecurity (WiCyS) Transitions to Non-Profit Organization
Development Signals Acceleration of New Cybersecurity Diversity Initiatives

Springfield, Va., September 23, 2018—Women in CyberSecurity (WiCyS) has announced the launch of its new 501(c)3 non-profit membership organization, transitioning from its roots as a National Science Foundation-funded grant that was awarded in 2013 to Tennessee Tech University (Award #1303441).

Dr. Ambareen Siraj, Director, Cybersecurity Education, Research and Outreach Center (CEROC) at Tennessee Tech, founded the initiative as an annual WiCyS Conference. The 2019 Conference will be held March 28-30 in Pittsburgh, Pa., together with local university host Carnegie Mellon University.

The mission of the non-profit organization WiCyS (pronounced Wee-Sis), continues to focus on the recruitment, retention and advancement of women in the cybersecurity workforce. By all accounts, hundreds of thousands of cybersecurity jobs remain unfilled nationwide, and various projections estimate the challenge is exploding at exponential rates. At the same time, women currently comprise only between 11 percent and 14 percent of the cybersecurity workforce.

“While three out of four tech jobs are held by men, the gender gap is even more significant when it comes to cybersecurity,” said Dr. Siraj. “As cyber threats daily become more acute for businesses, government, institutions and in our daily lives, it is clear that a focus on broadening pipeline and participation with diversity, and especially women, will help to stem the tide. With the help of our partners, and the WiCyS community, the new WiCyS organization will be instrumental in fixing this problem.

The WiCyS Governing Board is led by Dr. Janell Straach, Director of the Center for Engaging Women in Cybersecurity at the University of Texas-Dallas, and includes senior representation from five academic institutions and four leading industry firms, including the Founding Partners Cisco, Facebook and Palo Alto Networks.

“WiCyS is a unique organization bringing together women in cybersecurity from academia, research, government and industry to share knowledge, experience, networking and mentoring,” said Dr. Straach. “We’re already seeing progress since establishing the non-profit this year.”

In addition to the Annual Conference, WiCyS’ new initiatives include a broad array of membership services including a Job Board, Speakers Bureau, Student Chapters, Affiliate Program, online forums, webinars and regional events.
Ms. Taly Walsh is the newly appointed Executive Director of WiCyS who has extensive experience heading up membership, marketing, events and content strategy at leading technology associations. “I feel confident that the organization, which was born at a grass roots level, will flourish under Taly’s leadership,” said Dr. Siraj.

For more information, contact info@wicys.org.

About Women in CyberSecurity (WiCyS)
Women in CyberSecurity (WiCyS) is the premier organization with national reach dedicated to bringing together women in cybersecurity from academia, research and industry to share knowledge, experience, networking and mentoring. Established as a conference in 2013 by Dr. Ambareen Siraj of Tennessee Tech University through a National Science Foundation grant, WiCyS is now a non-profit organization offering many membership, sponsorship and collaboration benefits. The organization’s Founding and Strategic Partners include Cisco, Facebook, Palo Alto Networks and the Security Industry Association (SIA). The WiCyS Conference is an excellent opportunity for companies to connect with women students and candidates to recruit them into cybersecurity jobs. More than half the attendees are students seeking opportunities who have been accepted through the WiCyS scholarship program that sponsorships help to support. Contact info@wicys.org for details.