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Washington/Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas program joins George Mason University's Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy
Partnership creates opportunities for cross-disciplinary research

Fairfax, VA – The Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy (CEBCP), housed within the Department of Criminology, Law and Society at George Mason University, announces the arrival of the Washington/Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program. Portions of the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA will be housed within CEBCP as the new GMU-HIDTA.

The Washington/Baltimore HIDTA is known for its innovative approaches to drug enforcement, treatment and prevention work that combine evidence-based research with state-of-the-art technology.

HIDTA's intelligence-driven initiatives are currently working in 18 sites across Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. A portion of the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA's annual funding, \$2.8 million, will go to Mason each year to support intelligence analysts, project managers and foster new research opportunities.

Mason Provost S. David Wu praised the program and its opportunities for multidisciplinary research.

"George Mason University and the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy are well-suited to house the HIDTA program," Wu said. "These are exactly the kind of partnerships that could facilitate faculty research collaboration and direct community impact. For instance, emerging faculty and student research to address the opioid epidemic, a serious public health crisis, could benefit a great deal from the network and connection provided by HIDTA and the partnership."

Cynthia Lum, director of the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, said the program provides an incredible opportunity for the Mason and Fairfax community.

"HIDTA will provide Mason faculty and students across various disciplines with new data and opportunities to research prevention and treatment interventions to combat drug trafficking, addiction, and related concerns," Lum said.

David Weisburd, executive director of the CECBP, who has collaborated with HIDTA in the past, said the partnership will also advance scientific and policy research about key issues in criminal justice.

"This is a major opportunity for the university and the nation to integrate cutting edge practice with cutting edge science, all in the pursuit of reducing drug use and drug trafficking in the United States," Weisburd said.

Tom Carr, executive director of HIDTA, said Mason's CEBCP is ideally suited for HIDTA's applied research approach.

"Mason faculty and students alike will have the opportunity to work alongside of HIDTA practitioners to develop solutions for America's illicit drug and crime problems," Carr said.

Carr also expressed interest in working with Lum to develop a certificate program at Mason in criminal intelligence.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy designated the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA in 1994. One of 28 HIDTAs across the United States, its mission is to improve interagency collaboration, promote the sharing of accurate and timely information and intelligence, and provide specialized resources to participating law enforcement and treatment/criminal justice agencies partners.

About George Mason University

George Mason University is Virginia's largest public research university. Located near Washington, D.C., Mason enrolls 36,000 students from 130 countries and all 50 states. Mason has grown rapidly over the past half-century and is recognized for its innovation and entrepreneurship, remarkable diversity and commitment to accessibility. Learn more at www.gmu.edu.