TSA staff visits with ADAC Fellows

By Kyle Alvarado

In December 2017, ADAC received a guest visit from Senior Transportation Security Officer Manager Christopher Nelson. Accompanying Mr. Nelson were two young Transportation Security Officers with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) who work in the Ted Stevens International Airport in Anchorage, AK. This visit was planned as an opportunity for the ADAC fellows to offer them information on career opportunities with the TSA both locally and nationwide. To start, Mr. Nelson discussed the brief history of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and TSA as a component of the agency offering details on the reasoning behind its creation. Following the introduction, the two TSA officers, Ms. Chavez and MC Trinka, shared their working experience with TSA in Anchorage and other locations around the U.S. Based on their experience at different airports, the officers expressed that no two U.S. airports are operated the same way. Additionally, they remarked that most airport security and safety related challenges encountered by TSA officers are now completed, ADAC staff will continue to look for in-person opportunities to learn about the TSA and other federal agencies in the Homeland Security Enterprise.

During the visit, ADAC fellows took the opportunity to ask questions about the TSA job application process, general TSA employment and job requirements, as well as employment opportunities within the agency from the perspective of the TSA science and technology field. During the discussion, meeting participants also discussed that while they currently have no science and technological developments developed solely by the TSA, becoming a Transportation Security Officer requires a disciplined, law enforcement mentality. Furthermore, applicants must have an affinity for protecting the United States and the passengers that pass through each airport.

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ADAC hosts another IoNS Workshop in Anchorage, AK

By Kyle Alvarado

Arctic operations by necessity are a collaborative effort. ADAC’s Arctic-related Incidents of National Significance (IoNS) workshop, hosted at the University of Alaska Anchorage, took place during October 24 and 25, 2017. This oil spill response-focused workshop was the second IoNS workshop hosted by ADAC since the launch of the Center in 2015. All materials for this workshop are available on ADAC’s website.

To bring in subject matter experts to the workshop organizing team, ADAC partnered with the Coastal Response Research Center (CRRC) from the University of New Hampshire. Known for studying spills and environmental hazards, the CRRC team led by Dr. Nancy Kinney provided excellent insights into workshop organization and assisted in the development of the Arctic spill scenario. In addition, the CRRC team, including Dr. Kinney, Kathy Mandelburger and students, Melika Goeller and Jesse Ross, assisted to co-facilitate the event.

The overall methodology by which the IoNS workshops are conducted involves bringing together researchers, Arctic operators, industry representatives, and government officials into a structured seminar. The workshops are opened with a plenary session on day one that consists of short introductory presentations by workshop organizers and different stakeholders involved in the workshop. The plenary session is then followed by working in smaller breakout groups that are focused on targeting current capability and research shortfalls for the Arctic operator. Day one is concluded with closing remarks by workshop organizers and preparations to continue working in break groups the following day. After the opening remarks delivered by workshop organizers, day two consists of continued breakout group work followed by final summary presentations by breakout groups.

Infrastructures, and environmental resilience. Several participants noted that the importance of forums such as the ICE-PPR, is to communicate the shortfall of research to effectively utilize or pair technology with its respective platform.

The workshop included a field visit to the Port of Anchorage and presentations by researchers from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Anchorage. These presentations showcased the on-going research and research that has been conducted in each of the projects. In addition to project presentations, the first day of the meeting featured ADAC graduate fellows Leif Hammeis and Matthew Ahlrichs from the University of Alaska Anchorage presenting on their student research and personal journeys as we ADAC follows.

While each project presentation dealt with different issues surrounding the challenges of operating in the Arctic, all spoke on the growing importance of the High North. With more marine traffic every year, the Arctic’s importance will continue to grow. The more we continue to learn about the Arctic, the better prepared the U.S. government and the U.S. Coast Guard will be. Time will tell if the changes in the Arctic are permanent, but certain, the importance of the region will not diminish in the near, or longterm.

The event keynote speakers, U.S. Coast Guard Vice Commandant, Admiral Charles Michel and Rear Admiral Michael McAllister, Commander of District 17 captured the audience with their thoughtful and inspiring remarks about the importance of the Arctic for the U.S. and the nation and what we have to do in the Arctic region. ADAC would like to offer our Center’s sincerest thanks to both keynote speakers for taking time from their busy schedules to honor the annual meeting in attendance. Meeting agenda, project videos, and presentations from the event are available on the ADAC’s website: http://adac.uaa.alaska.edu/