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UMA's new Maine Cyber Range signals cybersecurity training 'revolution'



PHOTO / MAUREEN MILLIKEN

The University of Maine at Augusta is unveiling the Maine Cyber Range training and simulation center Friday.

By [Maureen Milliken](#)

The Maine Cyber Range, designed to enhance cybersecurity education for new workers and training for professionals, will officially open Friday on the University of Maine at Augusta campus.

The training and simulation center will aim to increase the number of fully prepared students entering the cybersecurity workforce, according to Henry Felch, UMA associate professor of cybersecurity and computer information systems.

“The main goal of our Cybersecurity program is to provide a lot of hands-on experience, so that when students graduate they have skills that can be applied in the workplace on day one,” he said in a UMA news release.

The cyber range is also designed to be a resource to the entire University of Maine System, as well as colleges, municipalities and businesses in Maine and New England, UMA said.

The university partnered with Cyberbit, a global hyper-realistic cyber range platform provider, which has U.S. headquarters in Texas and offices in the U.K., India and Germany.

Adi Dar, CEO of Cyberbit, said the center is part of the "revolution" in cybersecurity education and training, which has moved from theoretical practice to hands-on simulated experiences. He said the change is driven by a global shortage of cybersecurity professionals.

The center is not only for students, but for professionals at large organizations, small and midsize businesses, and government agencies "seeking realistic and cutting-edge techniques for defending against malicious cyber-attacks," UMA said. Typical users might be in the information technology, cybersecurity or law enforcement fields, as well as professionals who handle corporate continuity of operations and cybersecurity educators at high schools and colleges.

Dar said the UMA center is the first Cyberbit Range in New England. "This facility will join a growing list of higher education institutions using Cyberbit Range to revamp their computer science and cybersecurity curriculum and position themselves as the regional cybersecurity hub," he said.



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University of Maine at Augusta President Rebecca Wyke has said cybersecurity education is a priority at the school. The Maine Cyber Range will open on campus Friday.

'Immersive experience'

The center aligns with UMA President Rebecca Wyke's goal of enhancing cybersecurity education at the school. When Wyke took the post in July 2017, [she told Mainebiz](#), "There's a huge need for individuals with those skills. If they can't find it here they're going to go elsewhere."

The range allows working professionals and cybersecurity students at UMA to use security products as a sophisticated attack generator runs a wide range of attacks "providing the disruptive cybersecurity experience that professionals in these positions face every day," said Felch.

It provides an "immersive experience" that simulates a real-world security operations center and leverages real-world security and network infrastructure, he said. "Trainees use market-leading, commercially licensed security products, while a sophisticated attack generator runs a wide range of attacks providing the disruptive cybersecurity experience that professionals in these positions face every day."

Training opportunities for businesses include large-scale exercises and "capture the flag" environments, and participants face live cyber attacks. The exercises allow them to build their skills on how to detect, stop and remediate cybersecurity incidents.

The Maine Cyber Range can be used to evaluate an organization's cyber capability, test new procedures and train staff, according to UMA. The range provides a safe, legal environment to gain hands-on cyber skills for product development and security posture testing.

U.S. Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, and University of Maine System Chancellor Dannel Malloy will join Wyke at a ribbon cutting for the new facility, scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Friday in the Randall Student Center at UMA.