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2019-10-10

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# International students explore Silicon Valley tech through NPS outreach program

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MC2 Tom Tonthat | October 10, 2019



NPS international students gather for a group photo while touring Palo Alto Networks through the Silicon Valley Outreach Program. Developed between NPS and the U.S. Commercial Service, the program provides international students with an introduction to a handful of Silicon Valley companies, observing their capabilities and culture as a unique addition to their NPS experience.

A new outreach program developed by the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) International Graduate Programs Office (IGPO) is providing a unique opportunity for international students to get an up-close look at technology and innovation in the Silicon Valley.

Through the Silicon Valley Outreach Program, developed in partnership between NPS and the U.S. Commercial Service, students visited Silicon Valley companies such as SRI International, Ravenswood Solutions, Juniper Networks, and Palo Alto Networks.

“Our students are here studying in a lot of different curricula,” said IGPO director Al Scott. “And this program is a great opportunity to have our international students learn more about the capabilities of these Silicon Valley tech companies while the companies could

have the opportunity to interact and make connections with our students.”

On campus, international students are enrolled in the same curricula as their U.S. colleagues, everything from computer science to national security studies. The Silicon Valley Outreach Program tours enabled them to observe first-hand how some of topics they study are applied in the commercial sector, especially in the cyber realm.

“I am interested in cyber operations,” said one NPS student who attended the tour. “Most companies in Silicon Valley are strongly related to technology and, coincidentally, we visited three companies of which two were cybersecurity companies. As a newcomer in the cyber field, I found it insightful to see how much activity is going on in the cyber domain and how two companies approach this challenge from different angles.

“The meetings were actually so interesting that we followed up with one company to ask whether they have internships,” he continued. “Although it may be a brief internship, we expect that practical experience in this field will greatly enhance the theory of cyber courses that we are going to attend.”

Although the interactions with the tech companies are brief, they provide a unique addition to the NPS educational experience for these students.

“From the NPS standpoint, I think these tours provide more depth to our IGPO program to enable our international students to not only benefit from the education they’re getting directly at NPS, but to see the capabilities of U.S. tech companies and make those connections that provide even more value to their experience here in the U.S.,” explained Scott.

There is strong potential, Scott adds, to continue providing international students at NPS with this unique Silicon Valley outreach experience, with organizers open to expanding the experience to additional partners.