



**Homeland  
Security**  

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Science and Technology

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**Arctic Domain Awareness Center Opens at University of Alaska Anchorage**  
*Center Puts Alaska on Forefront of Solutions to Challenges in the Arctic*

**ANCHORAGE, AK** – The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced today the launch of its Arctic Domain Awareness Center (ADAC) at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). ADAC is led by UAA and resides in its ConocoPhillips Integrated Sciences Building. The center is a new effort that enhances the DHS and U.S. Coast Guard’s capacity to respond to and prepare for emergencies and to better understand the Arctic environment and its challenges.

“Some of our nation’s best and brightest minds reside in our university system and we need to tap into those resources of innovation and fresh ideas,” said DHS Deputy Under Secretary for Science and Technology Dr. Robert Griffin. “The DHS Centers of Excellence are vital partners in conducting critical research and developing solutions to some of the most complex challenges we face in our Homeland Security mission.”

“Alaska is on the forefront of change in the Arctic, so naturally Alaskans have an important role to inform decision-making,” UAA Chancellor Tom Case said. “We are honored to host ADAC on our campus and see our work, in partnership with the other institutions, as critically important for the future of our State and the Arctic.”

“ADAC has already begun developing systems and partnering with rural Alaska communities to improve maritime situational awareness and crisis response in the Arctic

environment,” said ADAC executive director Dr. Helena Wisniewski. “The systems we are developing can be replicated nationally and exported to serve as a benchmark for other nations.”

On August 31, 2015, President Obama visited Alaska and set out an agenda to address climate change issues. Increases in navigation, tourism and oil exploration, along with more variable sea ice, coastal erosion, storms and changing geopolitics demand immediate attention. ADAC will play an important role in tackling them. Not only will ADAC provide more educational opportunities in terms of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) scholarships, it also will expand research and student opportunities in the areas of arctic modeling, data fusion and navigation simulation. ADAC development of critical Arctic data – ranging from weather, ship traffic, search and rescue capability, subsistence activity, offshore drilling and more – can be integrated through a system that allows decision makers with the Coast Guard and DHS to analyze, anticipate and better prepare for a range of scenarios that they will inevitably face.

“The Coast Guard is excited about the relationship the Department of Homeland Security has formed with UAA,” said Rear Admiral Daniel B. Abel, Commander, Seventeenth Coast Guard District. “As the Department’s lead in the Arctic, we have a critical need for the best, most accurate and timely information from the far latitudes. ADAC will fuse the best of the academic community, industry, fellow DHS components, plus local, state, tribal and village sources for equipping the response decision maker. It is only armed with the clear ‘what is’ that the Coast Guard can best decide on the ‘what next’ ensuring the safety, security and environmental stewardship of our Arctic waters and coast.”

More than 100 dignitaries gathered at UAA Wednesday afternoon to officially launch ADAC. The ceremony included remarks from the Dr. Griffin, Admiral Abel, Case, Wisniewski and Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz. Congressman Don Young spoke via video and representatives from U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski and U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan's offices read letters from the Senators. Also in attendance were Alaska First Lady Donna Walker, several members of the Alaska State Legislature and senior university officials including members of the Alaska Board of Regents.

ADAC works with 16 other university, institutional and industry partners in four research areas: maritime domain awareness, maritime situational awareness and response support, maritime technology research and integrated education. ADAC also collaborates with community observers in the Native Village of Gambell, and will expand its Community Based Observer Networks (CBONS) across the region. Learn more at <http://adac.uaa.alaska.edu>.

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