

NICE Community Coordinating Council

Meeting Minutes

July 28, 2026 | 3:30-4:30PM ET

I. Introduction and Ground Rules –Susana Barraza, NICE Program Manager

- a. The NICE Community Coordinating Council was established to provide a mechanism in which public and private sector participants can develop concepts, design strategies, and pursue actions that advance cybersecurity education, training, and workforce development.
- b. Members are encouraged to participate in the meeting via the platform chat space. We will also be introducing polls throughout the meeting.
- c. Reminder: The meeting is not intended for marketing or other commercial purposes.

II. Opening Remarks

- a. Government Co-Chair – Karen Wetzel, Director of NICE, NIST
 - Karen mentioned the [NSF AI Education Act of 2026](#) which would extend and expand the authority for the National Science Foundation (NSF) to support education in the field of artificial intelligence (AI).
 - Karen shared that Arvind Raman was confirmed as the 18th NIST Director on June 30, 2026. Read full NIST announcement [here](#).
 - She shared that the recording to the July NICE Webinar titled, “Shaping the Future of the Cyber Workforce in the Age of AI” is [now available](#).
 - The next NICE Webinar titled, “Preparing Today’s Students for Tomorrow’s Cyber Careers” will take place on September 16, 2026. Registration is [now available](#).
 - Karen mentioned that the registration for the FISSEA Fall Forum taking place on September 15, 2026 is [now available](#).

III. Featured Content

- a. Framework Feature – Applications and Uses of Workforce Framework for Cybersecurity

*From Course Outcomes to Workforce Skills: A Practical Method for Mapping
Cybersecurity Curriculum to the NICE Framework*

Presented by Syed Ali, Acting Assistant Professor of Cybersecurity Computing, Utah Tech
University

URL: <https://computing.utahtech.edu/>

- Dr. Ali addressed the translation gap between traditional academic course learning outcomes (CLOs) and measurable workforce readiness, noting that traditional course descriptions do not always prove what work a student can actively perform.
- He explained an evidence-first mapping method that connects CLOs, instructions, activities, assessments, Tasks/Knowledge/Skills (TKS), and Work Roles to ensure mapping is based on observed performance rather than simple topic coverage.
- He shared how this framework was applied across three senior-level courses at Utah Tech University: IT 4510 (Ethical Hacking & Network Defense), IT 4600 (Senior Capstone: Cybersecurity), and IT 4700 (Enterprise Security Architecture).
- Karen Wetzel noted Dr. Ali's leadership as co-chair of the [NICE Skills-Based Learning Community of Interest \(COI\)](#) and highlighted potential strategic planning efforts surrounding best practices for NICE framework mapping.

IV. Community Progress Reports

a. Project Progress Reports

i. NICE Conference and Expo

Presented by Vanessa Leker, Florida International University

URL: <https://niceconference.org/>

1. Vanessa shared conference composition metrics, including 18 exhibitors/sponsors, 29 breakout and community of interest (COI) sessions across four tracks, 5 plenary panels, 2 keynotes, 6 featured speakers, 2 story showcases, and 4 pre-conference workshops.
2. She reported a total attendance of 400 participants, representing academia (186), industry (101), non-profit (51), government (39), and students (23) across 375 domestic and 25 international attendees spanning 9 countries.
3. She highlighted positive attendee feedback regarding session content—including the sports panel, post-quantum discussions, and networking—and noted that media updates and details on the next conference location will be posted to the NICE website.

ii. US Cyber Games

Presented by Jessica Gulick, Katzcy

URL: <https://www.uscybergames.com/>

1. Jessica provided a progress update on Season V and the launch of Season VI of the US Cyber Games.

2. She celebrated the U.S. Women's Cyber Team placing second overall at the Women's International Cybersecurity Challenge (WICC 2026) in Dublin, Ireland, in July 2026.
 3. She detailed the Season V Pipeline Program results, where 32 elite cyber athletes completed nearly 900 combined training hours across 6 technical disciplines, with 50% of the top performers coming from high schools.
 4. She highlighted the Season VI US Cyber Open (June 4–14) and the ongoing US Cyber Combine national scouting camp (July 1 – September 7, 2026), which evaluates athletes through technical challenges, live attack/defense scrimmages, autonomous cyberbot engineering projects, and interviews.
 5. She announced upcoming events, including US CyberCon on August 6, 2026, in Las Vegas, NV during Black Hat/DEF CON, the Season VI Draft Day on October 22, 2026, and the European Cybersecurity Challenge in Bochum, Germany in October 2026.
- iii. NICE K12 Cybersecurity Education Conference
December 7-8, 2026, New Orleans, Louisiana
Presented by Felicia Lamb, iKeepSafe
URL: <https://www.k12cybersecurityconference.org/>
1. Felicia provided planning updates for the 12th annual NICE K-12 Cybersecurity Education Conference scheduled for December 7–8, 2026, in New Orleans, Louisiana.
 2. She announced keynote speakers, including a keynote duet by Dhivya Balasubramanian and Raven Wilson from Southwest Airlines, and a student keynote solo by DJ Wang, a high school senior and developer of the GoldenGuard scam prevention platform.
 3. She noted that nominations for National Cyber Signing Day are closed, with selected students to be announced by August 15.
 4. She outlined key upcoming dates: full agenda release on September 1, early bird registration launches on September 9, and the next planning committee meeting on August 27, 2026.

V. Featured Topic

Multidisciplinary Pathways to Cybersecurity Professionals

Presented by Honglu Jiang, Professor, Miami University

URL: <https://miamioh.edu/>

- The initiative focuses on four primary goals: addressing evolving knowledge and skills gaps, coordinating multidisciplinary pathways across K-12 schools, higher education,

and industry, enhancing the talent pipeline via diversity and equity initiatives, and enhancing workforce capabilities while improving talent retention.

- Key activities include conducting K-12 summer camps, providing summer training for high school STEM teachers, offering free online courses and virtual labs, and aligning programs with Center of Academic Excellence (CAE) Knowledge Units and CAE standards.
- The program collaborates directly with industry partners to design customized work roles and competencies, refine job descriptions, incorporate internships and co-op programs, and align curriculum with national standards such as the NICE Strategic Plan, the Department of Commerce Strategic Plan, Good Jobs Principles, and the National Cyber Workforce and Education Strategy.
- Highlights were shared for student engagement events, including a Cyber Merit Badge event at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, a Cybersecurity Careers Networking Night, a Cybersecurity Career Fair hosted at Nippert Stadium (UC), and specialized industry events such as an Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) talk by Ross Flynn and a Checkmarx application security talk.

2026 Cybersecurity Career Week event held by SANS in coordination with NICE

Presented by Brian Correia, Director of Business Development, GIAC|SANS

Registration is coming soon.

- SANS is co-hosting a Capitol Hill Forum with NICE and the Senate Cybersecurity Caucus tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, September 22, 2026, from 3:30 PM to 6:00 PM at the U.S. Capitol Visitors Center (SVC 212-10).
- Registration opens the week of August 3, targeting Congressional and Senate staff, government officials, industry leaders, and professional associations as a preview event for NICE Cybersecurity Career Week.
- SANS will host a complementary webinar on Tuesday, October 20, 2026, titled “Breaking into Cybersecurity: Real Stories from Recent Graduates” as part of Cybersecurity Career Week (October 19–24, 2026). Registration is coming soon.

VI. Closing Remarks and Next Meeting Reminder

The next NICE Community Coordinating Council Meeting will be on **November 17, 2026**, at 3:30PM ET.

Upcoming Meetings:

- [NICE K12 Cybersecurity Education COI](#): August 13, 2026, 3:30 – 4:30 PM ET
- [NICE Cybersecurity Career Ambassadors COI](#): August 14, 2026, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

Upcoming Events:

- [NICE Webinar Series](#):
 - [Preparing Today’s Students for Tomorrow’s Cyber Careers](#): September 16, 2026, 2:00-3:00 PM ET
- [Cybersecurity Career Week](#): October 19-24, 2026

- [NICE K12 Cybersecurity Education Conference](#): December 7-8, 2026, New Orleans, Louisiana
- NICE Events [Calendar](#)