

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-19-529](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

A trusted, diverse workforce with the right expertise is critical to ensuring the IC achieves its mission of delivering distinctive, timely insights with clarity, objectivity, and independence. ODNI established the IC CAE program in 2005 to educate highly qualified students of diverse backgrounds and encourage them to pursue careers in the IC. ODNI and DIA have provided 29 colleges a total of 46 IC CAE grants through fiscal year 2018, totaling approximately \$69 million through fiscal year 2021.

This report evaluates the extent to which (1) DIA has planned and overseen the IC CAE program since 2011 and (2) selected IC elements are participating in the IC CAE program and have clearly defined roles.

GAO reviewed IC CAE documentation related to DIA program planning and oversight from 2011 through 2019 and applied key practices of sound planning to evaluate DIA's management of the program. GAO interviewed selected IC elements and IC CAE college officials and reviewed related documentation to assess program planning and implementation.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making seven recommendations to the Director of National Intelligence, including that ODNI establish and document results-oriented goals and strategies for the IC CAE program; define, collect, and report comprehensive performance measures; and clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the IC elements for participation in the program. ODNI concurred with the recommendations but did not identify steps it plans to take to implement them.

View [GAO-19-529](#). For more information, contact Brian M. Mazanec 202-512-5130 or mazanecb@gao.gov.

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INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

Actions Needed to Improve Planning and Oversight of the Centers for Academic Excellence Program

What GAO Found

The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) has not sufficiently planned and overseen the Intelligence Community (IC) Centers for Academic Excellence (CAE) program—intended to create an increased pool of culturally and ethnically diverse job applicants for the IC—after the program transitioned from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) to DIA in 2011. Specifically, DIA has not applied most of GAO's key practices of sound planning in overseeing the program (see table), thus challenging decision makers' ability to determine the program's return on investment.

Defense Intelligence Agency Application of Key Practices of Sound Planning

Key planning practice	Application of key planning practice
Mission statement	Maintained original program mission statement.
Results-oriented goals	Did not establish results-oriented goals.
Strategies to achieve goals	Developed documentation and awarded grants, but did not document an overall strategy.
External factors that could affect goals	Identified some external factors, but did not develop a process to evaluate these factors.
Use of performance measures to gauge progress	Did not consistently define, collect, or report comprehensive performance measures.
Evaluations of the plan to monitor goals and objectives	Did not comprehensively assess the performance of colleges' programs or overall program success.

Source: GAO analysis of Intelligence Community element documents and GAO key practices for sound planning. | GAO-19-529

Specifically, while DIA has developed some short-term goals and plans for the program, DIA has not established results-oriented program goals or an overall strategy that details the agency resources and processes required to achieve the program's mission. Similarly, DIA collected some data for the program and required colleges to provide reports on significant program accomplishments, but these data are not complete or reliable and have not been used to comprehensively evaluate the program's success. As oversight responsibility for the IC CAE program transitions back to ODNI in fiscal year 2020, ODNI will not be able to determine the extent to which the program has been successful in achieving its mission without establishing and documenting goals with targets and milestones; developing strategies to achieve those goals; and defining, collecting, and reporting comprehensive performance measures.

Selected IC elements are participating in the IC CAE program to varying degrees, but DIA has not established a process for monitoring and assessing IC elements' participation or clearly defining IC elements' role in the program. The IC CAE program is a collaborative effort that allows IC elements to participate in college events, such as IC CAE recruitment events. However, not all IC elements participate in the program. As IC CAE program manager, DIA has engaged with IC elements in a variety of ways, but this engagement has not resulted in consistent participation among the IC elements. Moreover, program documentation has not clearly defined IC elements' roles and responsibilities for participation. Without a process for monitoring and assessing IC elements' participation and clearly defining roles and responsibilities, ODNI will neither be able to identify reasons for the lack of IC element engagement nor ensure that IC elements are taking advantage of the IC CAE program and its goal of creating a diverse pool of applicants for the IC.