The National Security Agency has designated the **Community College of Rhode Island** as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense (CAE-CD) through academic year 2028. This is the second designation for the college following the original designation for the years 2018 through 2023. The CAE-CD designation reflects the college's ability to meet the increasing demands of contributing to the protection of the National Information Infrastructure and addresses the critical shortage of professionals with cybersecurity skills by promoting higher education and research in addition to providing the workforce with a pipeline of qualified cybersecurity professionals.

CCRI, the largest public, two-year, degree-granting college in New England, provides a variety of career, technical, and academic programs at four main campuses in Warwick, Lincoln, Providence, and Newport as well as online and at the Westerly and Woonsocket Education Centers. CCRI’s cybersecurity program is designed to provide students with a strong foundation in the principles and methods of cybersecurity, as well as the fundamental knowledge and tools for applying security measures across a variety of network architectures and settings.

In addition to providing the groundwork for pursuing a bachelor's degree in cybersecurity, this associate degree program provides the educational background and hands-on training necessary to prepare students for entry in the cybersecurity sector and meets NSA and Centers of Academic Excellence core foundational content and standards.

At the core of the associate degree program is the cyber defense path, composed of the critical networking and cybersecurity-based classes that are the courses used in the KU mapping for this designation.

The courses include: Scripting for Systems Administration, Introduction to Computer Ethics, Introduction to Cybersecurity, Database Design and Management, Networking I, Networking II, and Network Security Hardware. Students who complete these core courses are awarded a certificate of completion that recognizes that they have completed the cyber defense path as part of the cybersecurity curriculum at CCRI.