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UMd., UMB officials build case for FBI HQ with new national security partnership

Sep 13, 2016, 1:57pm EDT

Officials from the University of Maryland, College Park and University of Maryland, Baltimore met in Greenbelt Tuesday to unveil a national security partnership between the schools, touted as another resource to help lure the FBI to Prince George's County.

William Braniff, executive director of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) officially announced the creation of the Maryland Academy for Innovation and National Security, a partnership within the University System of Maryland that will bring together research, education and training from the two schools in College Park and Baltimore.

This partnership program will allow interaction between students, researchers, professors and professionals from different programs and specialty schools between the campuses – including START, the University of Maryland, College Park's School of Public Policy, business school, criminology and criminal justice program, Center for the Advanced Study of Languages and Cybersecurity Center and the University of Maryland, Baltimore's School of Law and Center for Health and Homeland Security.

"It's the close strategic partnership of our two universities...where we join our complementary strengths, where we connect our experts and expertise, it's those things that make us such a powerful force for cutting edge innovation and exceptional talent development," said Jay Perman, president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore. "Imagine this academy as a test-bed for the emerging strategies and technologies that will ultimately keep us safe."

Braniff said the Maryland Academy would also provide a resource network for the FBI to tap into to advance its missions, should the organization decide to move to Maryland.

The FBI is relocating from its current home in Washington, D.C. and Greenbelt is one of the locations being considered for the new headquarters. Other cities in the running are Landover and Springfield, Va. Both states are making strong cases and Maryland officials are feeling pressure to get a deal done this year, as Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine could become the next vice president.

Greenbelt Mayor Emmett Jordan and University of Maryland, College Park President Wallace Loh spoke on the features of the city and its surrounding region that make it an ideal candidate for the relocation.



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University of Maryland, College Park President Wallace Loh (right) and University of Maryland, Baltimore President Jay Perman meet at Greenbelt metro station to announce partnership and tout the city as a location for FBI headquarters.

Jordan pointed to the city's proximity to D.C. and access to major state highways, MARC train lines and Metro system as assets in terms of commuter convenience. Perman traveled to Greenbelt from Baltimore Tuesday morning via the MARC train and Loh rode over from College Park on the Metro green line, to demonstrate the region's connectivity and accessibility.

Loh also plugged the great amount of development taking place in Prince George's County, including in College Park, where some 30 projects are already planned or underway.

"In deciding where to relocate, you consider three things: location, location and location," Loh said. "This whole area...is becoming a regional hub for innovation and economic development. It is becoming a hot spot, the most exciting place for development in the state."

Between the College Park and Baltimore universities' partnership and the infrastructure and accessibility Greenbelt has to offer, state and local government and university officials agreed it is an obvious choice for the FBI's new home.

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