

# ASU's role in national security, helping veterans praised by congressman

## Abe Hamadeh spoke as part of Congressional Dialogue Series

By Scott Bordow, ASU News  
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When Arizona Congressman Abe Hamadeh travels across Washington, D.C., he is struck by the presence of Arizona State University.

"You can't escape ASU," Hamadeh said with a smile Monday at the Congressional Dialogue Series event held at ASU's West Valley campus. "They have a campus at Washington, D.C. They're all over the world. So many of the ambassadors who visit my office, they all know what Arizona State University is. They all want to visit soon."

Hamadeh was the third invited guest for the Congressional Dialogue Series, hosted by ASU's Office of Government and Community Engagement.

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Sally Morton, executive vice president of the Knowledge Enterprise, thanked Hamadeh for the work he's done on behalf of students and veterans, and the work being done at ASU to strengthen Arizona's role in national security and defense innovation.

"This event is an opportunity to showcase what we do here," Morton said. "We're trying to be real responsive in real time as events are happening so quickly. The last one we did with Congressman (Andy) Biggs was about energy for artificial intelligence, which is a huge issue for the Valley and state, as well as the nation. Today we're talking about national security and some of the ways ASU answers the nation's call."

Todd Sandrin, vice provost of the West Valley campus, said having Hamadeh on campus was meaningful because ASU's mission and District 8, the district in the West Valley Hamadeh serves, are "deeply connected."

"Through our workforce development initiatives, from defense industry training to STEM education, cybersecurity and veterans' career pathways, we are committed to helping build the talent pipeline that sustains Arizona's security, innovation and prosperity," Sandrin said.

In addition to his address, Hamadeh participated in a fireside chat with Danny Seiden, president and CEO of the Arizona Chamber of Commerce. Seiden earned his Juris Doctor from ASU's Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law and is an adjunct professor in the college.

Hamadeh praised ASU's work with veterans and, in particular, the Pat Tillman Veterans Center, which assists nearly 25,000 active-duty, veteran and military-connected students with their military education benefits and supports their transition to the civilian workforce and daily life.

"You want to see the university systems embrace our veterans to help them upskill, re-skill and get back out in the workforce," Hamadeh said. "I think ASU does a great job with veterans."

Hamadeh said he would encourage his fellow congressmen to visit universities to see how their research and innovation intertwines with national security.

"Sometimes universities operate as a silo, and some generals might not know what could be available for them in 10, 15 years from now, and what investments are going towards," he said. "I think a delegation would be a good way to understand the university system, which has a direct link to so much of the advanced technologies."

Hamadeh was introduced by Nadya Bliss, executive director of ASU's Global Security Initiative.

At the beginning of her speech, Bliss asked a question:

"Internet, GPS, Siri, the computer mouse, autonomous vehicles, radar mapping — what do these all have in common?"

The answer, Bliss said, is that they all were developed with funding from the then-Department of Defense for national security purposes, with involvement of America's universities.

"Our nation's story of technological advancement over the last 60 years can largely be traced back to these and other defense research programs," Bliss said. "And there is no one in this country who has not been impacted by that research, by the ideas developed on campuses like (the West Valley campus)."

Bliss noted that ASU is in the top 8% of universities for defense research.

"I have spent much of the last quarter century working in national security research and development, helping deliver new technology for the warfighter and people supporting them," Bliss said. "And I can tell you, ASU truly is a unique organization, not just because of its size ... but because of its culture, because of the people who believe in our mission, because it is unafraid to take risks or responsibility, because we want to move at the speed of relevance and have impact. Real impact on the problems our country is facing today and will face in the future."

Bliss said part of that mission is to support and advance U.S. national security. She showed a slide that detailed many of ASU's efforts in that regard.

Among them:

**Developing the next-generation national security workforce:** The Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering created a new School of Integrated Engineering, aimed at helping students enter the microelectronics industry, which is critical, Bliss said, to national security.

**The Center for Cybersecurity and Trusted Foundations:** The center hosts research internship experience for local high school students, giving them the chance to participate in university-level research on cybersecurity issues. "And," Bliss said, "they have developed an online learning platform that provides access to cybersecurity skills-building challenges across the nation, regardless of experience level."

**A [team](#) from ASU is working directly with Marines at 29 Palms Marine Corps Base in California,** developing entirely new systems to rapidly measure and provide feedback on team performance. Another team, Bliss said, has developed novel AI-infused cybersecurity systems to more quickly identify vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure.

"There is so much going on that I could not possibly cover it all here," Bliss said. "Universities are the seedbeds for our country's new ideas and breakthroughs. No other type of organization can match the breadth of expertise and the depth of knowledge that exists at large-scale research universities like ASU.

"That combination can lead to incredible ingenuity. And when that ingenuity is coupled with mission needs and the types of problems we are trying to solve in areas like defense and national security, you can get world-changing ideas."

*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

## Main image



U.S. Rep. Abe Hamadeh (left) and Danny Seiden, president and CEO of the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry, speak during a congressional dialogue event at ASU's West Valley campus on Nov. 10. Photo by Emma Fitzgerald/Arizona State University

**Text image(s)**



Sally Morton, executive vice president of ASU's Knowledge Enterprise, speaks about ASU's role in national security research during a congressional dialogue event at ASU's West Valley campus on Nov. 10. Photo by Emma Fitzgerald/Arizona State University