

University of Mississippi

eGrove

University of Mississippi News

5-14-2020

Air Force Veteran to Lead UM Intelligence, Security Studies Center

Shea Stewart

Follow this and additional works at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/umnews>

Recommended Citation

Stewart, Shea, "Air Force Veteran to Lead UM Intelligence, Security Studies Center" (2020). *University of Mississippi News*. 204.

<https://egrove.olemiss.edu/umnews/204>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Mississippi News by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

Air Force Veteran to Lead UM Intelligence, Security Studies Center

Shaio Zerba brings combined military intelligence, academic credentials to position

MAY 14, 2020 BY [SHEA STEWART](#)

FaTvLiErCcSMPrSt



Shaio Zerba is the new director of the Center for Intelligence and Security Studies at the University of Mississippi. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – A U.S. Air Force veteran with degrees in political science and security studies has been hired as the new director of the Center for Intelligence and Security Studies at the [University of Mississippi](#).

Shaio Zerba will join the Ole Miss staff July 1. She retired Oct. 1, 2019, as a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force after serving 22 years. She was most recently a faculty associate with the School of Politics and Global Studies at Arizona State University, where she received her Ph.D. in political science in May 2019.

"After leaving military service, I knew I wanted to continue to strengthen our global security as an educator preparing the next generation of intelligence and security professionals," Zerba said.

"The strength of the intelligence community is built upon recruiting the best people from diverse backgrounds. This diversity brings more eyes and voices in analyzing the complex issues we confront globally."

Zerba was hired after a nationwide search to replace Timothy Russell as head of the [Center for Intelligence and Security Studies](#), or

CISS, which is part of the Intelligence Community Centers of Academic Excellence program.

"Dr. Zerba has unique and impressive qualifications to lead the center," said Rich Forgette, UM associate provost and political science professor who is serving as the center's interim director. "She combines years of experience as a practicing intelligence analyst with strong academic credentials."

Founded in 2008, the CISS prepares students for intelligence and security careers through an 18-credit minor focusing on the critical thinking, writing and briefing skills used by the 17 organizations that form the [U.S. Intelligence Community](#). Beyond the classroom, the center provides students real-world experiences through [simulated national security crises](#) and [invites senior government speakers to campus](#).

Zerba's father also is a retired Air Force officer, and she grew up around the military and spent a portion of her childhood living in Japan and the Philippines. With conversations around the dinner table often revolving around national security and defense topics, Zerba joined "the family business" and was commissioned in the Air Force.

She earned her bachelor's degree in political science from the U.S. Air Force Academy with a minor in Mandarin Chinese in 1997. She was promoted through a series of intelligence positions before becoming chief of the analytic agenda branch with the Department of Defense's Defense Intelligence Agency in Washington, D.C., in 2008.

In this role, she managed large-scale projects requiring collaboration across multiple defense intelligence production centers that involved executive departments such as the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security.

Her intelligence postings spanned the globe, including work at Ramstein Air Base in Germany monitoring the military-political situation throughout Europe, the Middle East and Africa; sensitive reconnaissance missions out of Kadena Air Base in Japan; and two deployments during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, flying combat missions on RC-135 Rivet Joint reconnaissance aircraft as an information integration officer.

Zerba was awarded her master's in security studies from the Naval Postgraduate School in 2008 and

Follow us on social



Campus Briefs

Donations Sought for 25th Annual Books and Bears Program

OXFORD, Miss. – The University of Mississippi is asking the community to help spread a little joy this holiday season by donating to the 25th annual Books and Bears program. Donations such as toys, books, dolls, bicycles and other children's play items are being accepted through Dec. 14. All donations will be collected and sorted

[Read the story ...](#)

More Posts from this Category

Thank You To Our Donors

Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship Aims to Build Leaders

OXFORD, Miss. – Twenty-five inaugural recipients of the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship – a program hosted by the University of Mississippi School of Education in partnership with the Mississippi Association of Coaches and the Mississippi High School Activities Association – are expected to increase their impact on student-athletes and their communities. The coaching fellowship

[Read the story ...](#)

More Posts from this Category

Ole Miss In the News

Clarion-Ledger: New Essay Collection Tells the Story of Meredith's Enrollment

Essays celebrate 60th anniversary of James Meredith's enrollment at University of Mississippi By Lauren Rhoades Oct. 1 marks the 60th anniversary of James Meredith's 1962 enrollment at the University of Mississippi as the school's first African-American student.

began working as an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at the Air Force Academy in 2011. She taught more than 400 officer candidates in courses such as the politics of Asia and U.S.-China relations.

In 2014, she was named commanding officer of the 306th Intelligence Squadron based at Beale Air Force Base in California. She led the special operations squadron, overseeing more than 200 military and civilian personnel operating the MC-12W Liberty intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft, and training airborne cryptologic operators for overseas contingency operations.

"In my 22-year career in the U.S. Air Force, I have served in a variety of assignments where I led teams, managed budgets and oversaw comprehensive interagency projects," Zerba said. "With this compilation of experience, I am eager to help UM students find a good fit in the intelligence enterprise."

In August 2019, she began teaching at Arizona State University, instructing a graduate-level course in cybersecurity. Her research interests include security studies and comparative civil-military relations.

"Teaching at both the U.S. Air Force Academy and Arizona State University exposed me to the other side of education," Zerba said. "For 20 years or so, I sat on the student side, consuming knowledge.

"At these two institutions, I presented knowledge and created knowledge, which I found to be both challenging and fulfilling. Moreover, I discovered the most rewarding part of teaching: mentoring and advising entry-level and mid-career security professionals.

"It's gratifying to have a former student call you years after graduation to ask for professional advice. These duties also gave me an appreciation for developing courses for a diverse student body while helping individual students meet their goals."

Zerba plans to bring that personal touch to the CISS with an initial goal of meeting with students one-on-one to discuss their professional ambitions.

"This personal engagement will help me determine how CISS can help them succeed beyond the university," she said. "I also want to build relationships across the university, with other Intelligence Community Centers of Academic Excellence programs and intelligence community partners to further the excellent work of the CISS staff and my predecessors.

"These relationships will ensure CISS continues to adapt to the changing requirements of the intelligence industry and keep UM students competitive on the job market."



FILED UNDER: **COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS, NEWS RELEASES**

"James Meredith: Breaking the Barrier," a collection of essays edited by UM professor of journalism Kathleen Wickham, honors this historic milestone with

[Read the story ...](#)

[More Posts from this Category](#)