

connect THE UNCONNECTED

MCC's computer information systems programs offer Cisco training, certifications

"This should help me land a better, higher-paying job"

David Reeve
— MCC student

Cisco skills and certifications are considered some of the most valuable in the industry, and Montcalm Community College is a Cisco-certified trainer.

At MCC, students learn to set up and manage the systems that serve as the backbone of an organization's operations and communications through programs such as Computer Information Technology Management, Computer Networks & Systems, Web Developer & Programming and Computer Technology.

According to Vice President for Academic Affairs Rob Spohr, the college recently revamped its curriculum to offer more in-depth computer information systems training that can lead to additional employment opportunities.

"MCC is one of very few institutions that is Cisco certified," Spohr said. "Cisco is a worldwide leader in IT and networking and is recognized in most industries. Enhancing our curriculum is all about offering more focused training for students to help them be successful in getting the third-party credential that can lead to high-paying jobs in industries such as health care, manufacturing, education, government, retail, construction and others."

David Reeve, of Sheridan, is pursuing an associate degree in Computer Information



MCC students Bryon Cripps, left, and Caleb Drake work on configuring Cisco switching and routing equipment.

Technology Management at MCC.

"I have always been interested in IT, both support and networking," he said. "Right now, that field is exploding with job opportunities."

Reeve said he appreciates the focus of MCC's programs and the specific training associated with them.

"I like that MCC split the old Computer Support Technology program into two different, more specific degrees. It allowed me to get some in-depth CCNA training and prepare for the CCNA exam," he said.

The 41-year-old said he plans to complete the

MCC student Gabriel Platte works with Cisco hardware during class.

“We do simulations on the computer, actually completing tasks they would do in the workplace.”

Dr. James Brown
— CIS Instructor



MCC students David Reeve, left, and Gabriel Platte talk with Computer Information Systems Instructor Dr. James Brown.

Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) exam and other Microsoft exams.

“This should help me land a better, higher-paying job,” Reeve said. “It also should allow me to have my pick of jobs and opportunities instead of just settling for whatever happens to come along.”

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of network and computer systems administrators is projected to grow six percent by 2026, about as fast as the average for all occupations, with an annual median pay of approximately \$81,100. Demand for information Technology (IT) workers is high and should continue to grow as firms invest in newer, faster technology and mobile networks.

MCC Computer Information Systems (CIS) Instructor Dr. James Brown said the college’s coursework offers specific training using Cisco equipment.

“We do simulations on the computer, actually completing tasks they would do in the workplace,” Brown said. “The training students receive may be a little different from one type of equipment to another, but the concepts are similar, so they can translate their knowledge from one system to another.

“The skills still apply, even if it’s not a Cisco system,” he added.

David Kohn, part-time CIS Instructor and Associate Director of the college’s Information Technology Services department, said the opportunities are endless for students as they learn and earn credentials.

“Their certifications transfer across different types of hardware and are recognized industry wide,” Kohn said. “CCNA is an initial certification and there are tracks off of that. Students can also specialize in a particular area of interest.

“The skills are in demand, regardless of the job field,” Kohn said.

For more information:

Visit www.montcalm.edu/academics

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mcc's Programs

Computer Networks & Systems (A.A.S.)

This program provides hands-on and theoretical knowledge of networking, digital communications, microprocessor systems, real-time software for control applications and electronics. Students gain experience in Cisco Networking and are required to complete the CCNA exam to graduate. Coursework includes lecture, laboratory exercises, and class projects to help prepare students for the workforce.

Students who earn an associate degree will be prepared for entry-level jobs in computer system hardware and network infrastructure, such as system installation and configuration, network administration and Internet support with annual wages beginning around \$51,470. With experience and knowledge, there are opportunities to advance to more senior-level positions, earning an average of \$79,700 per year and more, depending on the position.

Web Developer & Programming (A.A.S., certificate and job training program)

This program is designed for students interested in gaining the skills needed for server-side web design. It focuses on programming and scripting of websites for business and industry by providing hands-on experience in interfacing web applications with legacy applications. Students learn to demonstrate application of GIS, database applications, application of C++, Java applications and HTML.

Students who earn an associate degree will be prepared for entry-level jobs as web developers earning \$35,390 to \$66,130 per year. This degree provides the foundation for continued study at the bachelor’s degree level and can be a stepping stone to landing a career as a computer programmer earning \$45,570 to \$130,360 per year.

Source: Wages from Bureau of Labor Statistics

Computer Information Technology Management (A.A.S.)

This program is designed for people who want to provide technical assistance for computer systems and users. It provides instruction in both business and technology, and can lead to industry certifications from CompTIA, and Microsoft. Students must pass the CompTIA’s A+, Network+, and CCNA to graduate from the program.

Students who earn an associate of applied science degree will be prepared for entry-level jobs providing technical assistance for computer systems. Entry-level positions may include computer user support specialists and computer network support specialists, earning an annual average wage of \$49,390 to \$62,670, respectively.

Computer Technology (Certificate)

This program is designed for those who want to provide technical assistance for computer systems and users. This program provides instruction in both business and technology, and can lead to industry certifications from CompTIA and Microsoft. Students must pass the CompTIA’s A+, Network+, and CCNA to graduate from the program. Students in this program should also consider the Computer Information Technology Management A.A.S. or the Computer Networks and Systems A.A.S. programs.

Students who complete this certificate have the background and skills necessary for entry-level jobs in network and computer system administration that will help them acquire the latest skills in routine maintenance and monitoring of computer systems. Entry-level positions may include computer user support specialists and computer network support specialists, earning an annual average wage of \$49,390 to \$62,670, respectively, depending on the area. With experience and knowledge, there are opportunities to advance to more senior-level positions, such as network and computer systems administrators earning an average of \$79,700 per year.