



## Alberta Student and Graduate Profile



**Menno Vanderlist** immigrated to Canada from the Netherlands with his parents in 2002. With a South African mother, his English was perfect and he completed high school in Calgary. Rejecting the recommended engineering degree for the time it would take, Menno discovered the Network Engineering Program at **Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) Polytechnic** and decided that's what he wanted.

Menno took his CCNA and CCNP exams. Steve Hosier, an instructor for Advanced Internetworking at SAIT Polytechnic, says: "Menno was an exceptional individual right from the start. Everything seemed to come easily to him, but he also worked hard. When you put the two together, it's easy to see how he went far beyond his classmates." It was for this reason that Menno was selected in 2004 to enter **Skills Alberta** (which he won easily) and **Skills Canada** (which he also won, finishing so far ahead of time, he helped other competitors). In 2005, Menno was selected as Canada's representative for the **World Skills** contest in Finland. "With the exception of one young lady in Singapore," notes Steve Hosier, "this guy's the best in the world!" Menno came in second with a silver medal, saying "I was just a hair away from the gold." Questioned about the part played by the Cisco Networking Academy Program in his success, Menno says, "It's the foundation for CCNA and CCNP. It helped me get those [certifications], and they helped me get where I am now."

WorldSkills Silver Medalist  
Shines Brightly at Bell:  
"With the exception of one lady  
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- **Steve Hosier**, Instructor

Using the skills gained from his Networking Academy program, Menno started Level 2 support with **Bell Canada** in their Support Operation Centre. Today, at just 22, he is the manager of Western Region Security for Bell Canada in Calgary... and also a Canadian citizen, which he happily became in 2006. In his job at Bell Canada, Menno works with Cisco infrastructure on service provider networks, getting new technologies and new applications into operation. "It involves lots of testing," he says. "It doesn't have a lot to do with networking infrastructure, which is what I'm trained for, but I like it and it's a great learning experience". Renata Borello, project manager for the Bell Security Compliance Centre, says "Menno is a talent. He takes complex, undocumented, unstructured, technical problems and diagnoses them. He loves problem solving and fixes things quickly. From a pure tech support standpoint, his logic is his talent, and he gets in deep to find creative approaches. From a managerial perspective, he's youthful, exuberant, focused, and interactive. He has a certain poise and calmness that allows him to work well with the team and be respected by others. He is very centered and he doesn't get emotional about things. I see great potential in Menno."

"The industry and technology change so fast, I'll just go with what happens," says Menno when asked about goals. "But I definitely intend to get my Cisco CCIE."