

Tradition of excellence continues

Cisco Networking Academy students dominate at WorldSkills and Skills Canada 2005



Menno Vanderlist

“The opportunities that arise from doing something like this are worth more than any prize you can get.”

- Menno Vanderlist,
 WorldSkills Silver Medal Winner

The wins keep accumulating. Students from the Cisco Networking Academy Program are dominating Skills Canada like never before. Cisco Systems Canada Co. has sponsored the IT and Network Support contest since 2002. The wins have steadily increased, with Academy students winning two out of six medals the first year, four out of six in 2003 and all six in the next two years.

Competitors at the nationals are already winners having won their regional competition followed by their win at the provincial level. Every second year the national post-secondary winner will represent Canada at WorldSkills.

Graham Males won gold in the Skills Canada post-secondary category while attending Fanshawe College in London, Ontario. He has finished the Cisco Certified Network Associate semesters and wants to get the certification as well as the Cisco Certified Network Professional.

Males found the competition demanding, but in a good way. “It really got you thinking about how to form a solution to the scenario given to us,” he says. The first day was devoted mostly to hardware but the second day was a specific list of tasks for computers and networks.

This was not his first competition. “I had tried previously and won bronze,” he says, “but I wanted to see if I could do better. I went to the nationals and won gold.”

Jon Bennett has the distinction of being the first student to get 100% at a

provincial competition. He went on to Skills Canada while a student at Waterloo Collegiate Institute in Waterloo, Ontario. He sees many benefits to participating. “By running these competitions, Skills Canada gives high school and college students a unique opportunity to showcase their talents, meet talented individuals from all over Canada and create friendships that will last a lifetime.”

Bennett feels Skills Canada promotes the trades as first-choice career options, and in doing so fosters creativity, passion and a drive to succeed in young Canadians.

The WorldSkills competition, also sponsored by Cisco, runs every other year. In 2009 the competition will be in Calgary, Alberta. The 2005 Canadian representative, **Menno Vanderlist**, won the silver medal. All the medal winners were Academy students.

Vanderlist, from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, says the trip to Helsinki, Finland was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. “It was absolutely amazing. The magnitude of what goes on, with people from 13 or more countries, is incredible.”

He was pretty nervous at the competition, but even more so during the time between the competition and the awards ceremony; he thought he had done well but didn’t know how well. They called up the three medallists and then announced their order. Vanderlist says, “I was just a hair away from the gold.”

Although he won some prizes, he says,

Success Story

“It’s not about winning the prizes. The opportunities that arise from doing something like this are worth more than any prize you can get.”

The Cisco Networking Academy is proving that its students are not just the best in Canada, but in the world.

| National Winners: | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Secondary School Division | | | Post-Secondary Division | |
| Medal | Name | Academy | Name | Academy |
| Gold | Jon Bennett | Waterloo Collegiate Institute, ON | Graham Males | Fanshawe College, ON |
| Silver | Michael Mullins | Holy Heart of Mary, NL | Trevor Lysyk | SAIT, AB |
| Bronze | Derek Vermette | Sturgeon Creek Collegiate, MB | Steve Woodin | Holland College, PE |

Cisco would like to thank our partners, Panduit, Fluke and Cisco Press for their generous contribution of prizes for Skills Canada winners. Skills Canada benefitted greatly from the instructors who kindly volunteered their time on the various technical committees. Cisco thanks David Billing, and Steven Kraemer, Networking Academy graduates from Grant MacEwan College, Edmonton, Alberta for their assistance with network operations.



From left to right: Derek Vermette, Mike Mullins, Jon Bennett, Menno Vanderlist (WorldSkills Silver Medal Winner), Jan Sirek (Cisco), Anne Miller (Cisco), Graham Males, Trevor Lysyk, and Steve Woodin