



Adopt-an-Academy Program, North Carolina

School Impact Story: North Carolina Central University

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Cisco® Networking Academy® is partnering with North Carolina Central University (NCCU) and Cisco Gold Partner, NWN Corporation, to develop the ICT workforce pipeline in the region through focused initiatives which aim to enrich career development for academy students.

The “Adopt-an-Academy” program is a strategic partnership initiative which enables employers to tap into the entry-level talent pool and cultivate potential candidates while investing in the local community.

This mentoring relationship is part of a larger-scale North Carolina statewide pilot initiative involving multiple organizations, including Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs), community colleges, and a military base at Fort Bragg.

This external mentoring pilot is the culmination of 18 months of effort, overseen jointly by the Cisco Networking Academy and the following Cisco employee network groups (ERGs): Veterans Enablement and Troop Support (VETS), Chicago Black Employee Network (CBEN), and Disabilities Awareness Network (CDAN).

The program got off the ground after two key developments.

First, the NCCU Computer Information Sciences (CIS) Advisory Business Council replaced their MIS, Computer Science and Library Science courses with Cisco Networking Academy curricula to expand student offerings.

Concurrently, NWN was awarded a \$5 million contract to upgrade the NCCU network infrastructure (wired and wireless).

NWN invited NCCU Networking Academy students to gain real-world experience

helping NWN staff rebuild the campus network as part of a student internship.

Eleven NCCU students were chosen to work with five NWN professionals.

In addition, scholarships valued at \$1000 were made available to two students, who will be evaluated for potential summer internships with NWN.

“These students are applying their Networking Academy skills to demonstrate how network theory equates to real-world applications across their own campus,” says Rene Daughtry, Cisco (Advance Services Project Manager), Chairman of the NCCU Computer Information Sciences (CIS) Advisory Business Council, and CBEN lead.

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Meetings associated with this public-private partnership between education and business have included the NCCU CIO, the head of NCCU’s CIS department, NWN systems engineers, a Cisco regional assistant vice president, and human resources team leaders.

NCCU is extremely excited about offering their students extracurricular learning opportunities. The CIO has plans for expansion of the mentoring program into additional Cisco collaborative technologies, such as Cisco TelePresence®.

“This program brings together several pillars of Cisco culture,” states Bill Philbrick, external mentoring program and VETS global lead. “Philanthropically, we are working together to increase the overall pool of qualified talent from an ‘Inclusion and Diversity’ standpoint. As a business development initiative, we are building relationships to enhance Cisco’s business outreach. Finally, we are helping solve the critical talent needs of some of our strategic national partners.”

