

“Many students come to their first class with no idea if they have an aptitude for technology – and they often find a new sense of self-confidence, an entirely new passion, and career opportunities they never imagined for themselves. Networking is the most democratic expertise in ICT. It is wide open to people from all walks of life.”



Hamid Abdollahian has been an instructor for over 22 years. He loves teaching students how to use networks to connect computers. Even more, he loves teaching students how to use an education to connect with jobs. He does both through his role as the director of the Cisco® Regional Academy at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) in Cleveland, Ohio.

In fact, Hamid knows job statistics as well as he knows routing tables. For example, he wants students to know that the Ohio Department of Jobs & Family Services recently reported on the fastest growing positions in the Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor

metropolitan area, and the job rates with the highest growth between 2006 and 2016 will be network systems and data communications analysts. They also predict an increase of more than 4000 jobs in computer and mathematical occupations for five counties, including Cuyahoga.

Hamid also works tirelessly to promote Cisco Networking Academy® courses throughout the region, writing contributed articles that appear online and in local papers. He wants everyone to have a chance at a great career, and knows that people often rule out computers and communications for all the wrong reasons.

“I think one of the biggest misconceptions people have is that they need a background in computers, or they have to be math or science majors. Women often think it’s a field for men, and men often think it’s a field for computer geeks.”

The fact is, none of these stereotypes apply. Hamid has taught an astounding diversity of students, including ex-military, single moms, young adults, and people from all fields who are retraining after losing their jobs.

“So many students come to their first class with no idea if they have an aptitude for technology or not – and they often find a new sense of self-confidence, an



entirely new passion, and career opportunities that they never imagined for themselves. Networking is the most democratic expertise in IT. It is wide open to people from all walks of life.”

Hamid also tells his students that the networking field is constantly evolving, which means that trained and certified graduates are highly desirable in the workplace, and they can compete for higher-paying technology jobs.

“There are 490 million land-based, legacy phone systems, and, as of today, only about 20% have been converted to voice over IP. In addition to voice systems, I tell them about the tremendous need for wireless network and storage network specialists. In the face of the growing threat of cyber-attacks, there is a strong demand for network security experts. Students are often surprised by the number of specializations they can move into within the networking field, and the number of industries and types of companies looking for these areas of expertise.”

The Cisco Networking Academy program at Tri-C provides 10 different certifications, including CCNA® (Cisco Certified Networking Associate), CCSA® (Cisco Certified Security Associate), CCVP® (Cisco Certified Voice Over IP Professional, and CCIE® (Cisco Certi-

fied Internetworking Expert). Students can customize their certification path.

“Within Cisco Networking Academy, we are constantly enhancing the curriculum to reflect real-world customer challenges. We try to equip our labs with high quality equipment. I firmly believe that one of the things that distinguishes the academy is the proficiency and training of our instructors.”

Hamid has pursued his own career certifications to ensure that he stays abreast of changes in technology, including CCNA, CCDA® (Cisco Certified Design Associate), CCNP® (Cisco Certified Networking Professional), CCDP® (Cisco Certified Design Professional), CCAI (Cisco Certified Academy Instructor), and CCSA certifications.

Cisco, Tri-C, and many other local schools with Cisco Networking Academy programs are making sure that the area’s workforce has access to the industry’s best training.

“Our goal is to ensure that the talented labor pool we have in this area can be competitive in an ever-changing field. We do everything we can to tie our academy curricula back to the real-world work environment so that our students can readily compete for jobs. Anything we can do to help this local economy – that is priority #1 for us.”

For example, one of Hamid’s students, Ryan Karg, completed his Networking Academy courses at Tri-C, and was hired by a Fortune 500 company.



“A few short ago, I was looking to find a career in the field of ICT networking. After taking Cisco classes, I found that opportunity. I was hired for an entry-level position that

utilizes all of the technologies I have been studying. After a long series of interviews, I can report that ... these classes played a pivotal role in acquiring my position. I had learned about specific equipment and technologies that made me a viable candidate for the job. The interviewers were impressed that I had set up and used the same equipment they use at their company. The skills and knowledge I have acquired in Cisco Networking Academy courses makes it likely that I can be employed in several sectors of the company as my career progresses.”

