



# Academy Student Becomes Cisco Systems Engineer, Pennsylvania

## Student Impact Story: Pennsylvania College of Technology

“I love to give back, working with schools to deliver the technology their students use today. We enable services for [state and local governments] and their constituents—in some cases, services they never expected to be able to afford—because we design cost-effective solutions.”



Dan Clarke is a systems engineer with Cisco's Public Sector team in Pennsylvania. How did he get here? Let's take a look at his journey from Cisco® Networking Academy® student to success in industry.

Dan was always interested in technology. In his early teens, he learned how to change codes to customize video games. A few years later at the Pennsylvania College of Technology in Williamsport, he discovered courses from Cisco Networking Academy. He decided to pursue a dual major in networking and computer secu-

rity. He took IT Essentials, CCNA® (Cisco Certified Networking Associate), CCNP® (Cisco Certified Networking Professional), and security courses.

Dan worked 40 hours a week while going to school full-time. It took three semesters before he could fit an academy class into his schedule. Cisco CCNA 1 and 2 turned out to be the best classes of his college experience, enabling him to review material he already knew while adding theory and application. The hands-on portions and troubleshooting exercises were particularly vital.

One of Dan's biggest inspirations was Professor Jeff Weaver. “Jeff has a very inspiring communication style. He makes complex material understandable, and takes extra time to make sure everyone understands completely. He also teaches how to break things down into simple segments. I use that approach daily on the job, and continue to collaborate with Jeff today.”

Another inspiration was the Cisco Network On Wheels (NOW) van, which paid a visit to academy students to demonstrate the latest Cisco communications and networking technology. Later, Jeff Weaver spoke about opportunities to work for Cisco in various capacities. Dan wanted to pursue it,



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and Jeff put him in touch with Marie Zwicker, the Area Academy Manager for that region.

Marie put Dan in touch with the Cisco NOW van team. Immediately after graduation, Dan applied for opportunities with the NOW van and the Associate Sales Engineer/ Associate Sales Rep (ASE/ASR) program. He was hired for both, filling an open spot in the NOW van for 7 months, and then transferring to the ASE program in North Carolina. He trained there for a year before going out into the field.

During that time, Dan also earned his CCNA certification, but he didn't stop there. With support from his colleagues in the NOW van and the ASE program, he eventually achieved the CCNP® (Cisco Certified Networking Professional), CCDA® (Cisco Certified Design Associate), and CCDP® (Cisco Certified Design Professional) certifications.

Today Dan is a systems engineer for Cisco, working in a pre-sales role supporting the Cisco Public Sector team in Pennsylvania. He supports networking design and con-

figuration and customer solutions for K-12 and universities, as well as for state and local government.

“Working with education is great. I love to give back, working with administrative and networking folks at schools to deliver the technology their students use today. We implement wireless networks so students can use their iPads and download content, video-on-demand, etc. The same thing applies to working with state and local governments to enable services for them and their constituents— in some cases, services they never expected to be able to afford— because we are able to design cost-effective solutions.”

“One of the things I like best about technology is its ability to bring about change. Every day it is changing the way we work, live, play, and learn, to use a Cisco phrase. Right now, I can start a call on an office phone, and step outside and drive away on the same call. What will it be like 10 years from today? New technology, and new customers with different problems that require unique solutions – it's dynamic!”

Today Dan participates in promotional events for Cisco Networking Academy, and speaks to current students and instructors to give back some of the inspiration he received. His recommendation for new students is:

“Just do it. Take the time to enroll in a class, learn the material, and try it out. I still talk to a few of my fellow classmates, and those who are in the networking field, as well as those in other fields, say the material still applies and helps them compete in their careers.”



NOW van

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