



Oregon Student and Graduate Profile`

For Jeff Swank, being able to live and work in his home community and having the flexibility that comes from running a business of his own is about as good as it gets. Despite earning an associate of applied science degree in engineering from Southwest Oregon Community College in 1998, three years passed before Jeff focused on technology for his livelihood.

Jeff learned about Cisco® Networking Academy® from his grandfather, an electrical engineer who has worked in the telecommunications industry for a number of years. Jeff had always been interested in electronics, but never really worked in the field, pursuing religious studies and working for a short time in the insurance industry instead. Heeding his grandfather's advice to acquire additional skills, Jeff returned to Southwest Oregon Community College in the fall of 2001, this time enrolling in the Networking Academy to learn Cisco equipment and networking principles. While Jeff was studying the Networking Academy curriculum, his "general knowledge of computers, ability to pick things up quickly, and a desire to know the material" served him well. Class time with instructors and hands-on labs also were important. Jeff shares, "It gave a focused environment to learn the material that trying to learn it on your own doesn't give."

"Go for it! Make sure you're ready to focus on the coursework and immerse yourself in the labs. The courses are a great foundation: they give you the networking principles and [the] OSI [model] applies to more than networking."

Jeff Swank

Jeff earned his Cisco Certified Network Administrator (CCNA®) certification in 2002, which was quickly followed by three other certifications: Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP®), CompTIA Network+, and Microsoft MCP Small Business Specialist. When asked about his pursuit of multiple certifications, Jeff commented, "The Networking Academy was my first experience with certifications and something I really enjoyed."

In February 2002, Jeff started his own company, ComputerWorks, which has since been awarded contracts with the City of Coos Bay and a number of local businesses. "For the work I do, including a lot of desktop support and Windows server, I needed a broad knowledge base. There is plenty of work here for those skills" says Jeff. "Until recently it was primarily the general networking principles that were most important; however, we picked up a client that uses Cisco equipment and since then I have been able to put that specific knowledge to good use."



When he is not working, Jeff engages in religious studies and coaches a boys' basketball team. His future career goals include earning his Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer certification and completing a bachelor's degree in Bible studies and possibly engineering. But for now, he intends to "stay where I am and be a part of everything with my family." With a business of his own, a wife and four children at home, and extended family nearby, life is good and Jeff is thankful for his grandfather's good advice.

Jeff learned about Cisco Networking Academy from his grandfather, an electrical engineer who has worked in the telecommunications industry for a number of years.

Jeff's advice to others who may be interested in the Networking Academy is to "Go for it! Make sure you're ready to focus on the coursework and immerse yourself in the labs. The courses are a great foundation: they give you the networking principles and [the] OSI [model] applies to more than networking."

For information on the Networking Academy at Southwest Oregon Community College: <http://www.socc.edu/index.html>

**Americas Headquarters**

Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134-1706
USA
www.cisco.com
Tel: 408 526-4000
800 553-NETS (6387)
Fax: 408 527-0883

Asia Pacific Headquarters

Cisco Systems (USA) Pte. Ltd.
168 Robinson Road
#28-01 Capital Tower
Singapore 068912
www.cisco.com
Tel: +65 6317 7777
Fax: +65 6317 7799

Europe Headquarters

Cisco Systems International BV
Haarlerbergpark
Haarlerbergweg 13-19
1101 CH Amsterdam
The Netherlands
www-europe.cisco.com
Tel: +31 0 800 020 0791
Fax: +31 0 20 357 1100

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