



## West Virginia Student and Graduate Profile

Joe Gribble was looking for a challenge when in 2000 he enrolled in the Cisco® Networking Academy® at West Virginia University at Parkersburg (WVU-P) and, as he looks back on his experiences, feels he not only found but also met that challenge. Joe was already in WVU-P's Computer Information Technology program when he learned the university had registered as a Networking Academy. He was eager to enter a profession that would offer new challenges on a daily basis and wanted to enter the workforce at a higher level. Joe knew the Networking Academy would be a great way to achieve both goals. Once he learned about the new curriculum being offered, he enrolled as quickly as he could. "I knew that gaining the hands-on experience on the Cisco devices would be a valuable skill set. I saw this as a rare opportunity to broaden my knowledge base and gain experience that would be extremely valuable when searching for an IT (information technology) job."

Joe helped organize study sessions and, along with other students, created competitive scenarios for classmates using the lab exercises. "A fellow student and I used to go out and buy Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP®) and Cisco Certified Internet Expert (CCIE®) lab books early in the CCNA program and try to work through the labs. We would go in on Saturday mornings and find labs that would work on our devices and work all day to make it through the lab exercises." As he gained more knowledge, Joe found other students started looking to him for help, and once that expectation was placed on him, Joe felt he had to live up to it. Joe's leadership, teaching, and mentoring talents emerged and eventually led to teaching opportunities and job promotions.

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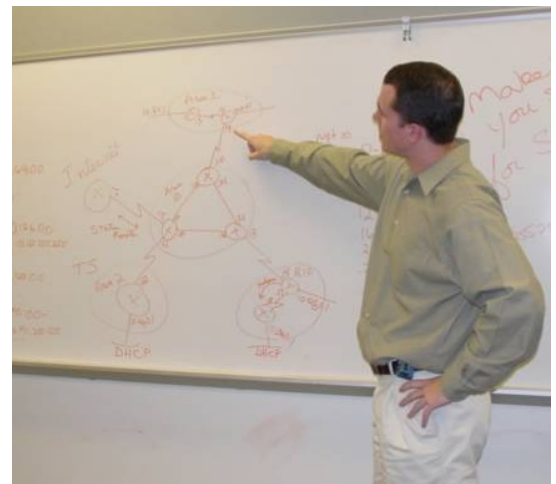
**"I knew that gaining the hands-on experience on the Cisco devices would be a valuable skill set. I saw this as a rare opportunity to broaden my knowledge base and gain experience that would be extremely valuable when searching for an IT job."**

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Joe was already working a full-time PC support job at the U.S. Department of the Treasury when he enrolled in the academy. Working full-time and going to school was demanding; but, true to form, Joe rose to the challenge and worked hard at both. With the knowledge and experience he was gaining in the academy, he was promoted from PC support to a network administrator position while still in college.

Additionally, explaining Cisco course material to fellow students laid the groundwork for gaining a weekend teaching position at a technical college in Ohio. "There was a five-year period where I was stretched pretty thin," remembers Joe, but the challenge to always learn something new kept him going. In 2006, a few semesters after completing his last class, Joe returned to the academy at WVU-P as an instructor.

Looking back, Joe credits the hands-on experience and the CCNA capstone project for helping him succeed. With the hands-on experience, "You knew you could walk into any position working on Cisco equipment and know what you were doing." The capstone project entailed designing a network for a fictitious school system; but, recognizing the opportunity to learn even more about network design, Joe worked beyond the basic project requirements. He explains: "The more I added to my project, the more I wanted to explore. Even after the class was over, I continued to work on the project and used it as part of my job application when I applied for my first systems administrator job."



Joe is currently the project manager and team lead for the Department of Treasury's PKI (Public Key Infrastructure) Shared Service Provider (SSP) program. As a result, Joe says "Treasury now provides a trusted, audited, federally-approved infrastructure that is recognized by and interoperable with other government agencies. Since being approved, we have signed on NASA, Social Security Administration, Main Treasury, and Department of Homeland Security, among other agencies."

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**Although he has taken a few semesters off from teaching, he intends to return to the academy as a Cisco instructor in the near future. "It really is rewarding" says Joe. "You have the opportunity to turn someone on to technology, to shape someone's career, and affect their life."**

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For his work with achieving SSP Status for Treasury's PKI program, Joe was honored as a Mulligan Award Finalist this year. The Patrick J. Mulligan Service Award is a special act award given annually to one Public Debt employee who demonstrates exemplary service to the Public Debt community and customers as demonstrated by a positive "can-do" attitude, productive interactions with customers, and conscientious attempts to provide service.

Joe hopes to continue advancing at the Department of Treasury, expand his scope of influence, and help improve government IT in as many areas as he can. Although he has taken a few semesters off from teaching, he intends to return to the academy as a Cisco instructor in the near future. "It really is rewarding" says Joe. "You have the opportunity to turn someone on to technology, to shape someone's career, and affect their life."

In addition to the Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA®) certification and Cisco Certified Academy Instructor (CCAI®) designation, Joe has earned a number of Microsoft, Dell, and other industry certifications. He has his sights set on Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP®) and perhaps Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert (CCIE®) certifications as well.

When he is not working for the Treasury, Joe provides Web design services and has fun being a dad to his 19-month old son. He also enjoys online gaming and hosts large gaming events for co-workers (including several former Networking Academy students) at his home three times a year.

For more information on the Networking Academy at West Virginia University at Parkersburg, visit: <http://www.wvup.edu/>



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