

Computer networking tends to draw a majority of males, so the Montana team's 3rd place win is exciting for Alandra and Kent. Their team included the only female student among the top ten teams.



Student Skills Competition: Post-Secondary NetRiders Challenge

In addition to focusing on their last year at the Montana State University-Billings (MSU-B) College of Technology (COT), **Kent Savage** and **Alandra Oukrop** took third place in the Cisco NetRiders Skills Challenge against hundreds of other post-secondary level student teams across the U.S. and Canada.

Since October, the number of teams dwindled from hundreds down to the final 45, and at the finale, the COT team from Montana learned of their third place

finish. "Neither of us were expecting better than sixth or seventh place," explains Alandra. "When we got to third, it was a shock at first. It was pretty awesome."

Computer networking tends to draw a majority of males, so the team's win is exciting for Alandra, who discovered networking while attending the career center as a high school student in Billings. Bruce Brumley, instructor at COT, says: "She actually was the only female in the top ten in the competition."

COT preps students for ICT/networking careers with gusto. There are currently 80 students enrolled in its computer net-

working program. Students complete the program in 2 years, compared to students at Montana Tech in Butte who complete it in 4 years. "We take a 4-year program and cram it into 2 years," explains Kent. "So each of our semesters is split in half, and we do a semester's worth of work each half."

Both award-winning students prefer the accelerated program. "I think it's definitely more challenging, but in the same respect, there's a lot of value to it because it's so fast-paced, and the real world is fast-paced too," Alandra says.

See Kent and Alandra's video here: www.cisco.com/web/learning/netacad/us-can/impact.html#~Videos