In a recent survey of four-year higher education institutions across the United States, Cisco® Networking Academy® Program curricula was found to have been integrated into a variety of degree programs.

Making Inroads into Degree Programs at Institutions Nationwide

Of the 31 colleges and universities surveyed, 26 responded that they were now offering Networking Academy courses as part of their degree programs in science, technology, engineering, and business. Some of these programs had also secured accreditation for engineering and technology programs (ABET), information technology programs (NAIT) and business programs (AACSB).

Four of the institutions surveyed (Cal State Los Angeles, University of Illinois-Springfield, Ft. Hays State University, and Ball State University) were offering Networking Academy courses as part of master’s degree programs. Moreover, 36 bachelor’s degree programs now included Networking Academy courses.

This initial survey is a snapshot of the Networking Academy program’s integration into degree programs and represents a 20 percent return rate on a survey sent to four-year Networking Academies this summer. Responses about the degree programs came from twenty states. While the survey is not comprehensive, it does indicate that Networking Academy curricula is gaining wider acceptance and making inroads into degree programs at institutions nationwide. An in-depth follow-up survey is currently underway to build on these initial findings.

The Networking Academy at Purdue: an Important Component of the Department’s Offerings

Among the universities that have integrated Networking Academy courses into their degree programs is Purdue University’s Calumet campus. So far, the university has been extremely pleased with the Networking Academy offerings. “I’ve been through many different vendors, company and private, who offer network training,” notes university instructor Bill Robinson. “None of them have come close to the quality and robustness of the Cisco curriculums.”

Located in Hammond, Indiana, Purdue-Calumet currently has 9303 students, of which 1329 are enrolled in its School of Technology. Of these students, 451 students are taking classes in the Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology (ECET) Department and 199 are enrolled in the ECET degree program, which received ABET certification in 2005.

The ECET department at Purdue-Calumet offers these Networking Academy courses as part of its degree program:

- CCNA® courses 1, 2, 3, and 4
- IT Essentials I course
- Fundamentals of Wireless LANs course
- CCNA 1 and IT Essentials I courses are core required courses, while the remaining courses are elective courses.

The ECET Department began offering Networking Academy courses in 2002. “The Cisco curriculum provided a more thorough coverage of network topics than previous textbooks did,” recalls Robinson. “The online curriculum, assessments, and available teaching resources were also major factors in switching to the Cisco curriculum.”

Since the Networking Academy courses were first introduced, enrollment numbers have climbed. “We have also seen an increase in enrollment in the CCNA and IT Essentials courses by students from other departments,” adds Robinson.
Down the road, the ECET department is planning to add the Networking Academy voice over IP (VoIP) course. But no matter what the future holds, Networking Academy curricula will continue to be an important component of the department’s offerings. “We have found that the Cisco courses have been an outstanding learning tool with which to provide the knowledge and skills needed to successfully function in the computer networking field,” states Robinson.

For additional information on Purdue’s program, contact Bill Robinson at wcrebi66@yahoo.com.

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