

## **Kentucky education institutions expand efforts with Cisco to benefit students**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (January 15, 2003) - Secondary and postsecondary education institutions in Kentucky are collaborating with Cisco Systems Inc. to offer a broad range of cutting-edge technology programs that prepare students for high-paying jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Colleges in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS), secondary technical schools operated by the Cabinet for Workforce Development (CWD), and high schools under the leadership of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) are serving more than 10,000 students through the Cisco Networking Academy Program.

The Networking Academy is a comprehensive e-learning program that provides students with the Internet technology skills essential in a global economy. The Networking Academy delivers web-based content, online assessment, student performance tracking, hands-on labs, instructor training and support, and preparation for industry-standard certifications.

Cisco Chairman John P. Morgridge visited Kentucky today to participate in a celebration of his company's partnership with community and technical colleges, secondary technical schools and high schools.

"A highly educated and well-skilled workforce is imperative for the U.S. to remain competitive with the rest of the world," Morgridge said. "The nation's education system needs to provide the necessary skills required for students to compete and succeed in the Internet economy."

Launched in 1997 with 64 educational institutions in seven states, the Cisco Networking Academy has spread to 149 countries and all 50 states. Nearly 300,000 students have enrolled at more than 10,000 academies located in high schools, technical schools, colleges, universities and community-based organizations.

The Networking Academy system comprises a layered network of institutions. Cisco trains the Cisco Academy Training Centers (CATCs); the CATCs train Regional Academies; and the Regional Academies train Local Academy instructors, who educate students.

In Kentucky, KCTCS is a curriculum training site for Cisco and includes nine of 10 Regional Academies. Local Academies are distributed among KCTCS campuses, high schools and secondary technical schools.

In fall 2002, more than 6,600 students enrolled in non-introductory information technology (IT) courses at KCTCS campuses and more than 1,500 KCTCS students took Cisco computer-networking classes.

Through the partnership with KCTCS and Cisco, secondary schools are teaching about 4,000 students in such courses. When the students enroll in college, they automatically receive appropriate credit.

"Our collaboration with Cisco illustrates the seamless education system that flows through KCTCS," said Michael B. McCall, KCTCS president. "Information technology is a prime example of a program in which students transition successfully from high school to our two-year colleges, and on to universities."

Three years after the Kentucky partnership began to form, Cisco academies have spread across the Commonwealth, exceeding 120 locations. The academies offer instruction in the following technical fields:

- Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) and Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP) programs
- Fundamentals of web design sponsored by Adobe Systems
- IT Essentials: PC Hardware and Software, and IT Essentials: Network Operating Systems, sponsored by Hewlett-Packard
- Fundamentals of Voice and Data Cabling sponsored by Panduit

- Fundamentals of UNIX and Fundamentals of Java sponsored by Sun Microsystems.

The Cisco Networking Academy Program is the world's largest e-learning community, employing a combination of web-based curriculum and instructor-led learning, as well as hands-on labs to teach students networking and information technology.

Despite the slow economy, demand for IT professionals remains strong. The Information Technology Association of America estimates that more than 1 million such positions will be filled in the coming months.

In the South, IT employees who have the CCNA certification earn an average salary of \$57,000. New employees with the same certification make an average of \$43,000. Employees who attain IT certifications report that those credentials increase job security.

“By teaming with Cisco, Kentucky provides our citizens with opportunities to prepare for high-paying jobs that the economy demands,” said Allen D. Rose, Cabinet for Workforce Development secretary. “At the same time, we're developing a well-trained and well-prepared workforce that is attractive to new and expanding businesses.”

Through the Cisco academies, Kentucky students are receiving invaluable preparation for college coursework in science, math and engineering, or for employment in the IT field. Students have a chance to give back to their communities while still in school by designing, building and maintaining networks for local schools and other civic organizations as part of their project-based learning activities.

“Kentucky's high schools have moved from a 'one size fits all' delivery method to providing individualized instruction to meet their students' needs,” said Kentucky Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit.

“Careers in the Information Technology Cluster are among the fastest-growing occupational areas. Cisco academies provide students a seamless pathway from high school to postsecondary education and high-tech careers.”