



Cyber Ops Certification

Case Study Subject

Brittanie Kelley, Augusta, Georgia, USA

Cisco Certifications

CCNA Cyber Ops

Cisco Cybersecurity Scholarship Fuels Passion for Crime Fighting

When Brittanie Kelley's employer expands into cybersecurity, she's going to be right at the front of the line. Her goal-oriented approach is the reason she applied for Cisco's Global Cybersecurity Scholarship. She knew it was the only way that she could afford to obtain the training necessary to put her career plans on the right track.

With her master's degree in justice studies and an emphasis in cybersecurity, plus a previously earned Cisco CCENT certification, Brittanie had been keeping her eye on the target for quite some time. She loved solving crimes, and learning how to do it online coupled her thirst for justice with her interest in IT. She is proud to have emerged from the scholarship program with her CCNA Cyber Ops certification.

"Right now, I'm working with an IT services organization that contracts with the U.S. Army," she says. "We serve thousands of military personnel, which means those serving in the military, civilians working for the Department of the Army, and Department of Defense contractors."

In the course of her work, Brittanie provides call-center IT support, which includes troubleshooting Internet access problems, accessing computers remotely, installing software, managing Active Directory accounts, and providing similar assistance. But it's the passion for cybersecurity that keeps her going.

Until her company moves into that arena, she is keeping abreast of information about growing online threats, but even more important, she is updating her knowledge about the necessary tools to prevent and combat attacks. To that end, she plans to take whatever Cisco cybersecurity classes she can qualify for.

Her ultimate goal is to become a cybersecurity analyst. In that role, she plans to use her criminal justice education to determine how to track criminals, which she says is the hard part because they're becoming more adept at concealing their tracks and becoming more covert in their attacks. Sometimes, she says, criminals are on a site for only a few minutes before disappearing into cyberspace.

For anyone considering a Cisco Cybersecurity Scholarship, Brittanie has a few words of advice. First, she says, if you're serious about security, the Cisco certifications are the right ones to have because they provide the best training and insights.

But she also has a caution. "Be sure you're passionate about this," she says. "Prepare yourself for a lot of work because the course will take

up plenty of your time. I have a job and a child at home, so my studies added a lot of pressure. But I was very serious about getting certified, so I stayed with it.”

She recommends that candidates “put your all into it.” Her degree of passion underpinned her strong desire to succeed, but she admits that it was not easy. So, she set aside the necessary time to successfully complete the course. She even had to give up some of her favorite activities, such as attending plays, visiting museums, playing sports, and even devoting the usual amount of time to her six-year-old child. Without that level of dedication, she believes she could have fallen behind or become discouraged.

“It was all about balance,” she says. “The farther I got into it, the harder it became. But my certification was worth all the effort. It just makes me a lot more marketable.”