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# First MCC Red Hat Academy student achieves certification

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## **December 14, 2018**

MESA, Arizona – Dec. 14, 2018 - Collin Hicks, 26, Chandler, is the first Mesa Community College student to complete the Red Hat Academy (<https://www.mesacc.edu/departments/business-information-systems/red-hat-academy>) and earn his Red Hat Certified Systems Administrator (RHCSA) certification. Hicks began at MCC in fall 2017, when the college first began offering the Red Hat Academy to help prepare students to take the RHCSA exam and become Linux professionals in demand by business and industry.



Hicks said, “I was tired of working hourly wage jobs and decided I needed to plan my future a bit better. I did some research into the best jobs you could get in two years from a community college because I wanted to start a new career as soon as possible. Also, I was paying for everything myself and a community college was much more sensible than going to a university where the cost is so much higher.”

He explained that he looked into pursuing career areas in which he had some experience and interest. When he was younger, he “played” with computers and coding as a hobby, never considering it as a job. In late spring 2017, he spoke with Network Academy Advisor Jessica Bradford, who helped him put together a plan that included pursuing a career as a Linux administrator.

“MCC offered the computer classes that interested me and the campus is positioned halfway between home and work, so it’s very convenient,” Hicks said. “It’s taken me less than a year to earn the RHCSA. I’ve taken 17 or 18 credits every semester including summer. Next semester I will graduate with two associates -- Associate in Applied Science in Networking System Administration and an Associate in Applied Science in Linux Networking Administration.”

Dennis Kibbe, MCC Business & Information Systems faculty, explained why the Red Hat certification is so valuable, “Facebook, Amazon, Google and Pinterest all run on Linux. More than 90 percent of Fortune 500 companies rely on Red Hat Enterprise Linux and 82 percent of Linux job postings seek Red Hat Certified professionals.”

The Red Hat course is taught by Kibbe, recently nationally recognized as the New Red Hat Academy Instructor of the Year (<https://www.mesacc.edu/news/press-release/professor-receives-2018-red-hat-academy-new-instructor-year-award>). Hicks said that if you apply yourself, the class prepares you for the certification exam, which he describes as “pretty tough.”

Hicks strongly advises new students to apply for financial aid as soon as possible. You don’t need to be registered for classes to fill out the Free

Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), just enroll at MCC, for which there is only a \$15 fee. He did receive a Pell grant his second semester and earned honors scholarships twice.

As he looks to graduation, Hicks says although the RHCSA certification has sparked interest, he needs IT experience, noting some of the computer trouble shooting skills he learned at MCC are moving him into the beginning of the career he wants at his current employer. His future plans are to transfer to the University of Arizona with a scholarship to pursue a cybersecurity degree.

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Red Hat is a registered trademark of Red Hat, Inc. or its subsidiaries in the U.S. and other countries. Red Hat Academy (<https://www.redhat.com/en/services/training/red-hat-academy>) is an academic training program designed to help institutions differentiate themselves by providing an enterprise-ready Linux and open source curriculum. Member institutions receive no-cost instructor training and support, robust lab environments with flexible delivery options and comprehensive printed, digital or online textbooks. Students will develop the in-demand skills employers need and receive discounted certification exams.

Mesa Community College is nationally recognized for service-learning, career and technical programs, civic engagement and innovative approaches to education. The college serves as a resource for career readiness, transfer education, workforce development and lifelong learning. Host to 30,000 students annually, MCC offers more than 195 degree and certificate programs at its two campuses and additional locations. MCC is an emerging Hispanic Serving Institution with a diverse student body that enriches the learning experience. Award-winning faculty are dedicated to student success, providing the education and training that empowers MCC students to compete locally and globally. MCC, located in the East Valley of Phoenix, Arizona, is one of the 10 colleges that comprise the Maricopa County Community College District. For additional information visit [mesacc.edu](http://mesacc.edu) (<http://mesacc.edu/>).

*Mesa Community College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) (<https://www.hlcommission.org/>).*

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