

Toyota Plant Partners with Kentucky State University to Develop Top-Notch Mechanical-Engineering Students

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FRANKFORT, Ky. – (March 18, 2014) – A unique scholarship program was unveiled today that matches Toyota’s need for mechanical engineers with that of top incoming students at Kentucky State University in Frankfort.

The Toyota Engineering Scholarship program – made possible via a five-year, \$375,000 grant from the automaker – will tie in directly with its manufacturing operations in Georgetown, Ky., 21 miles from Frankfort. Through this program, Toyota will develop a deeper and richer pipeline to employ students with engineering degrees.

“The auto industry in general has a shortage of talented engineers coming out of college,” said [Wil James](#), president, Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc. “Young engineers need to understand that our Georgetown plant, with its robotics, and cutting-edge technology, is the wave of the future.”

Kentucky State University, beginning next fall, will supply Toyota with up to five engineering candidates. The incoming freshmen, picked from a pool of high-achieving STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) students, will receive full-ride scholarships – the first three years at Kentucky State on a pre-engineering curriculum, the last two at the University of Kentucky. After the five-year period, the students will have an undergraduate degree from Kentucky State and an engineering degree from the University of Kentucky.

The Toyota program dovetails into an existing reciprocity agreement Kentucky State has with the University of Kentucky allowing it to send pre-engineering majors to Lexington to complete an engineering degree. This is the first time a “specific” engineering major will be targeted (mechanical).

“I am very excited about this opportunity for those of our students who want to pursue a career in engineering, and I am excited about continuing our partnership with a company that’s respected the world over for its innovation. Toyota has been an excellent partner over the years and has demonstrated a high interest in the success of Kentucky State University’s students,” said Mary Evans Sias, Ph.D., president of Kentucky State University.

In addition to the full scholarships, students in the program will receive other key benefits:

- Each will work with various Toyota mentors, helping the student in regard to career choices, etc. Also, Kentucky State will provide mentoring on the academic/student side;
- Co-op employment opportunities/internships at the Georgetown plant where they will receive hands-on training/understanding of the auto-manufacturing process;
- Once engineering degree is completed, employment opportunities exist at Toyota’s Georgetown plant in advanced manufacturing roles such as stamping, plastics molding, engine machining, and vehicle-assembly operations, among many others.

Sias noted that the U.S. Department of Labor has projected that by 2018 the U.S. will have more than 1.2 million job openings in the science, technology, engineering and math-related fields. “Increasingly, Kentucky State University is responding to the national need for more qualified graduates, especially qualified minority graduates, to fill those high-tech careers,” she said.

“Toyota and KSU both know that producing knowledgeable and skilled graduates means a more capable workforce, a richer economy and a stronger nation. We appreciate Toyota’s continued support through the Toyota Engineering Scholarship program, and we expect more great things to come as a result of our work together.”