Toyota Investing $1.7 Million to help Diversify Engineering Workforce

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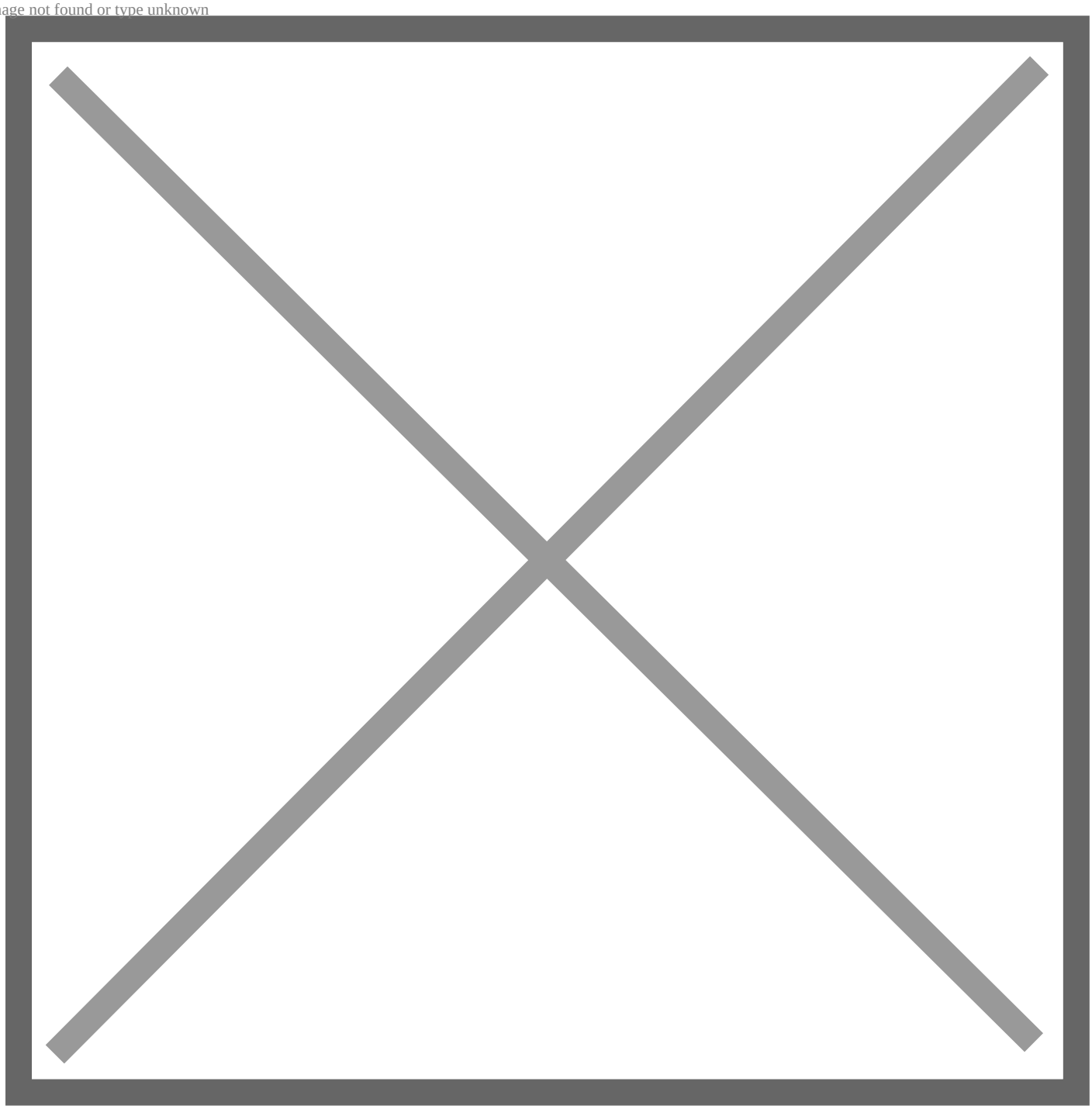

GEORGETOWN, Ky. (April 21, 2021) –

One of the world's largest automakers is teaming up with three institutions of higher education in Kentucky to help change the face of engineering. Today, Toyota announced a $1.7 million investment to increase opportunities for underrepresented students and assist them in earning engineering degrees.

The program will provide full-tuition scholarships to female and minority students, along with needed resources to earn an engineering degree from either the University of Kentucky (UK) or University of Louisville (UofL). ?Bluegrass Community & Technical College (BCTC) is also part of the collaboration with students first acquir ing a two-year associates degree before enrolling in an engineering program in the commonwealth.

"Building a stronger Kentucky will require deliberate and sustainable efforts to provide equal access to quality education," said Susan Elkington, president, Toyota Motor Manufacturing Kentucky. "This program will give more people a chance to build great careers in fields like engineering.? Toyota is committed to providing resources, time and knowledge to help build stronger communities in which we operate. We're thankful for great education partners that have the same mission."

Beginning Fall 2021, 35 students over a five-year period will be selected to receive full–tuition scholarships. The students will also be mentored by Toyota engineers and participate in a paid co-op opportunity with the company earning $17 – $21 per hour. Additionally, students will complete two to three co-op rotations that will provide critical hands-on experience in multiple areas of the field.

"Toyota has been a long-time partner of UK since locating in Kentucky nearly 35 years ago," said Rudolph Buchheit, UK College of Engineering Dean. "This is another example of Toyota seeing a need and stepping up to do something about it. It's imperative to increase gender and ethnic diversity among our faculty, staff and students."

Emmanuel Collins, dean of the University of Louisville's J.B. Speed School of Engineering also highlighted the program's focus on increasing diversity and inclusion in engineering.

"There is a critical shortage of women and minorities in the engineering workforce," said Collins. "Toyota's investment and partnership to help diversify our talent pipeline perfectly aligns with the university's goals and we are grateful to be a part of this collaboration."

Stephen Brennen, vice president of production engineering at PEMC, agrees that strengthening the industry's talent pipeline and staying ahead of customer demands will require new ways of thinking. "Not only for the continued growth and innovation of the field, but also to help Toyota move forward as we work toward our mobility vision for the future."

BCTC's provost, Greg Feeney, echoed the others and added that "diversity creates rich and productive workplaces and communities. We are pleased to join Toyota and our university partners to create opportunities for students."