



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Three photos sent as attachments

Caption below news release

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BAKER COLLEGE, TIA ENROLLING SECOND COHORT
FOR INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM:
PAID DEGREE, APPRENTICESHIP, JOB AT GRADUATION

Applications now accepted for fall 2016 start

CADILLAC, Mich. – Baker College of Cadillac and the State of Michigan’s Talent Investment Agency (TIA) are partnering to offer the innovative Michigan Advanced Technician Training (MAT²) Program to a second cohort. It will begin Sept. 26, 2016, and is limited to 15 students.

The MAT² Program is a competitive opportunity for students to earn an associate degree in mechatronics at no cost to them. Tuition is paid by sponsoring manufacturers that provide employment for the students while attending college and upon graduation.

“This is a dynamic approach to help address two critical issues facing the manufacturing and technology industries: a widening skills gap and an aging workforce,” said Kelly Smith, Baker College of Cadillac president. “For the student, it is essentially a full-ride tuition scholarship and the opportunity to leverage college work and paid on-the-job experience to become a master of a skilled technical profession. The sponsoring employer gains a well-trained employee who is a known entity and knows the company.”

Students navigate the program as a tight-knit unit, attending college and working at the sponsoring companies in recurring eight- and 16-week intervals. Each selected participant is ensured a steady income throughout the program: a weekly stipend to

assist with personal expenses while attending classes and, when working, an hourly wage that increases annually when the student has met program requirements.

Interested individuals are encouraged to apply early because applications are reviewed and accepted on an ongoing basis. Applications are made through TIA at www.mitalent.org/mat2.

Mark Lagerwey, Baker College of Cadillac dean of business and technology and a member of TIA's MAT² Strategic Steering Committee, said the program has been exceptionally well received by students and sponsoring employers in the campus' first cohort.

"Students have expressed how rewarding it is to apply what they learn in class at their internships," he said. "They also learn from each other when classes reconvene after their work experiences in different industries."

The level of responsibility and competency many of them have attained at their sponsoring employers has been surprising to the students as well as to Baker faculty and the employers. The first cohort began the program June 2015.

"MAT Squared is designed to provide in-depth knowledge in the classroom followed by hands-on experience in the workplace," Lagerwey said. "It's working. One of the companies involved with the first cohort has already committed to sponsor another student this fall."

Students interested in the 2016 cohort must meet certain academic qualifications for this competitive program. Applicants must be high school graduates at the start of the program and provide their ACT scores or take the Compass exam. Once they are approved by TIA for the program, they are interviewed by the sponsoring companies for final selection.

The word mechatronics stems from the combination of the words mechanical and electronics. The mechatronics associate degree focuses on the electrical, mechanical and electronic skills used to identify, analyze and solve manufacturing problems. A mechatronics technician supports engineers by maintaining manufacturing machines and related equipment, including repairing, testing and making minor modifications to them.

The 15 students in the first cohort at Baker College of Cadillac are sponsored by Avon Automotive, Avon Protection, BorgWarner Inc., Cadillac Casting Inc., FIAMM Technologies Inc., Kalkaska Screw Products Inc., Rec Boat Holdings LLC, Rexair Inc. and Skilled Manufacturing Inc.

Baker College and TIA are beginning to recruit companies to sponsor students who will be starting fall 2016. Information is at www.mitalent.org/mat2.

The MAT² Program is administered by the TIA. It was an early initiative of Gov. Rick Snyder based on the German model of an apprenticeship that blends a traditional classroom setting with on-the-job training. It was piloted in Southeast Michigan in 2013.

Lagerwey noted an example of the pilot program's success: A student who entered the program immediately out of high school in 2013 was named one of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers' 30 under 30 in 2014, before she completed the program.

Additional information about the MAT² Program is at www.mitalent.org/mat2, or contact 888.522.0103 or wda-mat2@michigan.gov.

For more information about the Baker College mechatronics associate degree or to sponsor a student in the second cohort of the MAT² Program, contact Cheri Sprik in the admissions office at 231.876.3119 or cheri.sprik@baker.edu, or visit www.baker.edu.

The largest private college in Michigan, Baker College is a not-for-profit higher education institution accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. It serves more than 23,000 students on multiple campuses and online. Baker grants certificates and associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in more than 150 programs across diverse academic fields, including business, health sciences, engineering, information technology, education and human services. An impressive 97 percent of available graduates are employed. Every Baker graduate receives Lifetime Employment Assistance—free and forever. Baker is a pioneer in distance education and offers students the option of completing a degree 100 percent online, without ever visiting a campus. For information, visit www.baker.edu or follow Baker College on Twitter, @bakercollege, or on Facebook, www.facebook.com/bakercollege.

Caption for the three photos sent as attachments:

Mechatronics program students learn about electrohydraulics at Baker College of Cadillac's Center for Transportation Technology, near Lake City. They are in the MAT² Program that enables students to earn an associate degree that is paid for by a sponsoring manufacturer and offers employment while students attend college and upon graduation.