

College of Technology  
Commencement - May 10, 2008  
Teamwork for Success

David. L. Eisler, President

There is something truly magical about what we will witness today. For those of us fortunate to have the opportunity to work with students here at our University, we know it and feel it. In the daily experience of college we don't often have the opportunity to step back and to see what our students have become. However, today provides the opportunity to pause, reflect and celebrate the truly life-changing difference education can provide. We know firsthand the difference that education makes, and commencement shows how it has transformed our students.

Over the past few years we have seen our faculty and students collaborate together to take part in regional and national competitions. These projects, which involve intense amount of work outside regular classroom hours, teach students teamwork and the kind of interdisciplinary learning that business and industry expect in our graduates. Each of our graduates today has a story. While I wish that I could tell them all to you, I would like to share this one as an example.

This graduate first attended Ferris in 2001 in the automotive engineering program. After a year he earned his ASE certification and left school for a year to be a drummer in his rock band, using his repair skills to help pay the bills. When that group broke up and he planned a return to school, he spoke with faculty member Peter Alley who asked him what he really wanted to do. The answer - design and innovate. He met professor Chuck Drake and was hooked on the Mechanical Engineering program. In 2006 he joined the SAE formula one race care team, working on suspension development. That year they finished 38<sup>th</sup> of 140 competitors in this national competition, an impressive achievement for a second-year team.

For this year's team he is the technical director and head of engineering. Working on this team has allowed him to take things learned in class and immediately apply them to a major project. The project even influenced his course selection, when he took a class in CNC machining so he could help fabricate parts for the car. He describes the team effort as pushing him further than he would have gone alone. Faculty member Bruce Gregory opened the shop two evenings a week from 6 p.m. until midnight so the team could use those facilities. This new graduate also wants to thank faculty members Chuck Drake and Gary Gage for their support of the team's efforts. Next week formula one team will compete against entries from around the world at the Michigan International Speedway.

The story doesn't stop there. In January the Honda corporation contacted Formula One and Baja racing teams throughout the country, asking them for resumes of their engineering leaders. The top 5% of the names submitted were invited to interview with Honda in Ohio, and the top 2% were offered positions. This outstanding young man will begin working with Honda in Raymond, Ohio, in June.

I am honored to present to you Kevin Gregory and would ask that he stand and be recognized. I would ask that his family also stand and be recognized.

In presenting this story I also want to pause and salute our faculty for their commitment to creating these extraordinary learning opportunities. Thank you for the difference you make for our students.

Graduates, on behalf of our University I wish you great success and fulfillment. As each of you sets out on the next step on your life and career you will face times of challenge and uncertainty. Kevin Gregory is a wonderful example of the success we can achieve when we persevere through those times and work together toward a common goal.

Congratulations and best wishes

and One of developments in the College of Technology Education is about knowledge and about people and about life. Education is a calling, something that must be experienced to be appreciated. It is also the story of personal achievement, and how talent, hard work, dedication, and sacrifice can create remarkable opportunities. Each of our graduates today has a story. I wish that I could tell you each one, as each is special and meaningful. I would like to share these few with you.