



Your Name: Stephanie Sikorski

Job Title: Designer

Employer: General Motors (GM)

Degrees awarded: Product Design Engineering Technology (PDET)

How would you describe your current position? My current position involves all of the design work that goes into developing the vehicles we drive on the road today or will drive in the future. I am a designer in the Upper Body Structures sub group of Vehicle Engineering-Design, meaning that I am responsible for designing and developing the structural components for the upper part of different GM's vehicles.

What do you see as your biggest challenge? My biggest challenge going forward is adjusting to the working "adult" life, and learning all the GM vehicle jargon.

How has your education supported you in your job thus far? My education has prepared me for my career by giving me the tools and knowledge to be successful. The PDET curriculum and professors, gave me a wide range of information and experiences that I could apply to my field of work now, and in the future. Being a member of the Ferris State Volleyball Team taught me hard work, time management, leadership and teamwork, as well as self awareness. All of which are necessary lessons and traits to take with me as I begin my career.

Your senior capstone project was especially unique. Tell us about it. Yes, my capstone project was a great combination between what I love — sports and engineering. I designed a device that could be used in training the sport of volleyball. The device was a blocking aid device that was to attach to the volleyball net, that would act as a volleyball player blocking. The hitters could use the device to simulate a game-like block in front of them, to train and learn how to hit around it in a game. Volleyball is a team sport, requiring other people to adequately play and train in the sport. This makes individual training frustrating and almost impossible. I created a device that incorporated adjustability and could be lone standing on the net, allowing an individual hitter to train and practice alone. I was using the 3D scanners and printers in the makers space to print my very own hands to be used on my product. The prototype came out pretty well, and was even tested by some of the Ferris State Volleyball players. It was an awesome learning experience.

How was the job search process? The job search process for me was quite easy. I started looking for internships during my sophomore year for that summer, as I knew that I wanted some real life experience in the field. I went to the career fair on campus just looking for any and all the opportunities that I could. I was able to interview for a few positions and ended up accepting an internship with GM. After enjoying and completing that summer internship, I was offered another internship with them the following summer. At the conclusion of my final summer internship with GM, I happily accepted my full time position. I was able to go into my senior year at Ferris State, with a great career secured in my future.

What is your favorite Ferris memory? My greatest Ferris memories mostly relate to my time as student athlete and a member of the volleyball team as it was so special to me. Aside from the championships we won and the fun we had on the court, most of my fondest memories were off the court. Whether it was at hotels for away games, or going to other sporting events to cheer on the other athletes, my teammates became family and so many amazing memories were made.

What do you do in your spare time? In my spare time I obviously enjoy playing volleyball, but also enjoy other sports too. I also love spending time with friends and family.

What advice would you give to current students? My advice to future students is to stay open-minded and work hard. If you would have told me five years ago that I would be an design engineer at General Motors, I would have never believed it. But I was open minded about my future and all of the opportunities in front of me. I was open minded about what I could accomplish. I truly believe if you work hard enough and trust your abilities, anything is possible.