

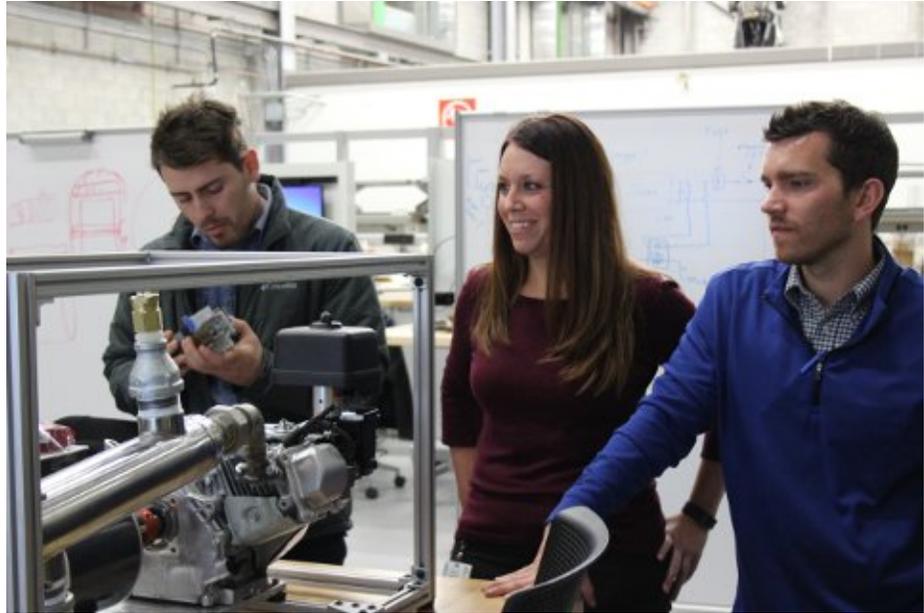
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Engineering student creates scholarship for single parents: 'Any little bit helps'

Oakland University senior Engineering student Taunya Owens understands how important time management can be.

If the senior electrical engineering major isn't in the Engineering Center's design labs working on a project, she's at her career with Delphi Automotive's Engineering team in Warren. If she's not there, she's at home raising her daughter.

Though her job at Delphi pays well and she has worked towards a promising career, things weren't always as secure. At times, Owens has come home from studying at Kresge Library at 2 a.m., only to have to wake up at 5 a.m. for her job. She has lived paycheck to paycheck. She's skipped class because she didn't want to miss a parent-teacher conference.



Taunya Owens works on her ECE 491 Senior Design Project, a micro-combined heat and power unit, with Derek Robson, right, and Calin Rhymer in one of the Oakland University Engineering Center's design labs.

Seeing struggle in her own life, and the kindness of a friend who helped with groceries at a point when the stress was mounting inspired Owens to donate \$3,000 to Oakland University's School of Engineering and Computer Science (SECS) specifically for single parents.

"It's that moment that I draw upon a lot in my life – how some small gesture of kindness can really impact someone's situation for the better," said Owens.

"I created this scholarship because I know what it's like and I've made a great career for myself now. I've hopefully gotten through the rough stuff, and I want to help someone else who might be at the point where any little bit helps. A small act of kindness might make the difference."

But Owens also donated because she's been keeping track of the trends – about 15 percent of the country's college population consists of single parents, and the number has grown steadily since 1995, according to the American Council on Higher Education.

"There have been many challenges, but I am in the home stretch," said Owens, who will graduate in December. "Higher education opens the door to better paying jobs and more financial stability for single parents. If this scholarship gets someone one more class to graduating, then it was worth it."

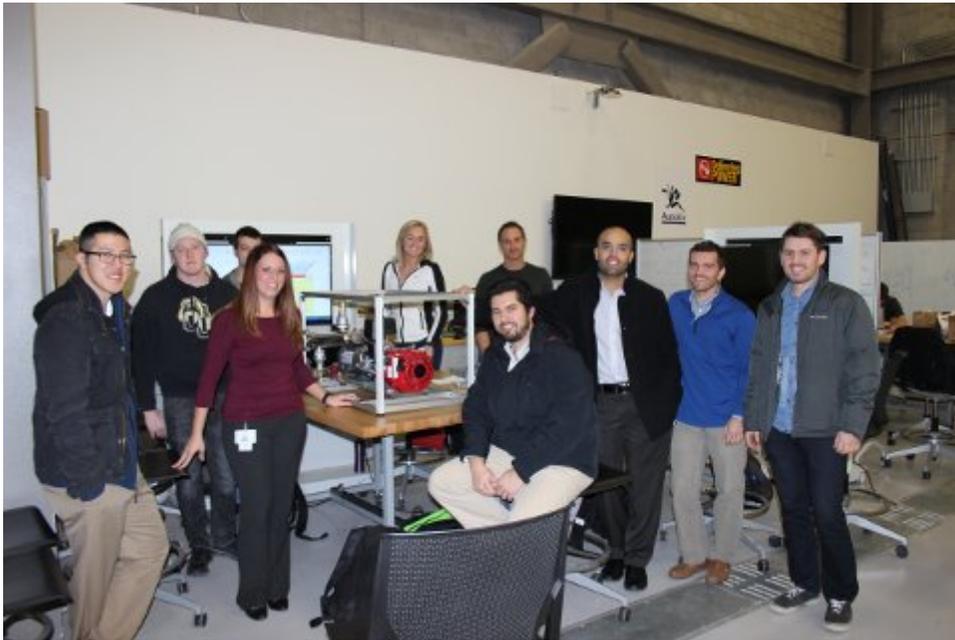
Richard Rachner, director of development for the engineering school, worked with Owens to help make her donation have an impact.

"Taunya is an amazing woman who is paying it forward even before she graduates from OU," said Rachner. "Her willingness to help those that will walk in similar shoes in the future is simply an inspiration."

Owens, who is working as part of an 18-member class on an ECE 491 Senior Design course project this semester to create a micro combined heat and power unit, is in the Engineering Center's design labs often. She was voted leader of one of the groups.

Dean Louay Chamra added he is grateful for Owens' generosity. "This type of scholarship may be the reason single parents will be able to attend Oakland University and transform their lives."

To learn how to create a specialized gift or scholarship, visit isupportou.com. Visit www.oakland.edu/financialservices for a full list of grants and scholarships offered at Oakland.



Taunya Owens, center left, with her ECE 491 class, which is making a micro-combined heat and power unit for a senior design project.