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## SCIA program helps connect OU students, Michigan's small businesses

The **Small Company Internship Award** (SCIA) Program is giving Oakland University students a new way to connect with innovative Michigan businesses seeking interns to work on projects that are both beneficial to the company and academically relevant to the student.

“Last April, OU became an affiliate member of the **Michigan Corporate Relations Network** (MCRN), a state program designed to foster university-corporate interactions,” said Michael W. Long, Ph.D., executive director of The Mobilization Zone at Oakland University. “The SCIA is part of that.”

According to the MCRN, the SCIA program provides funding to help small businesses — particularly those in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) related fields — hire university students to work as interns on projects that are designed to increase students' exposure to innovative processes and products emerging from companies that employ high-skill workers and to encourage student job placements with innovative and dynamic Michigan companies after graduation.

To be eligible for the program, companies must be based in Michigan with significant business operations in the state. Funding for a 12-week internship or co-op position is split evenly between the SCIA and the hosting company.

“How it works is that OU received funds to support student internships,” Long said. “The companies apply to OU either having found an OU student, or Student Career Services helps them find one.”

According to the MCRN, STEM companies (or companies seeking STEM support) looking to hire interns can receive up to \$3,500 per intern as a one-to-one match program, meaning companies will receive 50 percent of what they pay their intern, up to \$3,500.

“The company must fund the student upfront, and they are reimbursed at the end of the summer,” Long said.

Four companies participated in the program this year — AccelerateKids, LLC; KTISIS, LLC; Munetrix, LLC; and Ignite Media.

“This was our first round with the SCIA, and it was very successful,” Long said. “We had five OU student interns — one company split the award between two interns — and at the end of the program one student was offered a full-time job, two were offered part-time jobs and two were offered another (company-paid) internship. Overall, it was a good first year.”

For more information, visit [michigancrn.org/small-company-internship-award](http://michigancrn.org/small-company-internship-award).



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