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From attire to apps, OU's ISE program prepares students for 'magical' experiences at Disney

From the classroom to the Magic Kingdom, the [Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering](#) (ISE) at Oakland University is empowering students to pursue their passions.

"In addition to helping me develop strong leadership skills, my time with the ISE Department at Oakland University equipped me with various technical skills, which I use daily in my data analysis work," said Kimmy Romstad, a 2014 graduate of OU's ISE program who is currently working as a costume inventory manager for Walt Disney Parks & Resorts, which includes Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Fla.; Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif.; and the Disney Cruise Line.

Her team in the Creative Costuming Department performs inventory planning, which includes forecasting, analysis and budget management, to determine what needs to be purchased to ensure that more than 70,00 cast members at Walt Disney World Resort and more than 25,000 cast members at Disneyland are properly attired. She also provides purchasing support for four Disney Cruise Line ships.

"With ISE being a fusion of business and engineering, my current role allows me to exercise both of these principles to drive business results," Romstad said.

Romstad started at OU in 2008 and was involved in several student organizations, including Tau Beta Pi, the Society of Women Engineers, and the Institute of Industrial Engineers. In the fall of 2013, she was selected for an internship with the Industrial Engineering Department at Walt Disney World, where she worked with the Food and Beverage team at the park to try to create a more lean and efficient operating system.

In 2014, she was offered a second opportunity to work at the park, this time in their Creative Costuming and Entertainment division, and in June of 2015 she accepted a full-time position in forecasting and stocking costuming issue locations across the Disney properties.

"My experiences, both in the classroom and through involvement with various student organizations, helped me to hit the ground running once I began a full-time position here," Romstad said. "Within the first year-and-a-half in my current role, I was assigned three hourly direct reports, which have afforded me the opportunity to develop my skills even further."

Emily Coleman, who transferred to OU in the fall of 2015 and plans to return to pursue her ISE degree in the spring of 2018, recently joined Romstad in the Creative Costuming Department after being selected for an internship with the Strategy & Metrics team at Walt Disney World.

"I have various projects that I perform work on, most of them involving creating and/or maintaining tools that our cast members use to make their everyday work easier," Coleman said. "One of my favorite projects that I have been a part of is creating an application for our special events team. They use this app to make sure our characters are dressed in the correct costume, listing all the details necessary for the special event."

Coleman credits OU's ISE program with providing her with the technical skills she needs to perform her new role at Walt Disney World.

"I am thankful for the amount of lab work OU's ISE program has you perform," she said. "I think it gives great practice for the amount of work that is put into my everyday role here."

To learn more about the Industrial and Systems Engineering Department at Oakland University, visit Oakland.edu/secs.



Kimmy Romstad (left) and Emily Coleman in the Creative Costuming Department Walt Disney World Resort.