

Friday, Mar 10, 2017

Oakland University student selected for Continental DRIVE Program

Oakland University student Malek Jaradi has turned a lifelong passion for electrical engineering and technology into a once-in-a-lifetime experience with Continental, a leading international automotive supplier.

The Macomb Township resident recently learned that he has been selected to participate in the company's highly-competitive DRIVE Automotive Graduate Program, which provides insight into the specific work fields and structures of the company's automotive divisions over a 24-month period.

"In terms of how rare it is to be in the program, there were over 30,000 people – outside of Germany – hired between 2012 and 2016," Jaradi said. "Of those, 14 people were accepted into the DRIVE Program in the United States. I am the 15th."

According to Continental, participants in the program are assigned to one of the company's three automotive divisions – chassis & safety, interior, or powertrain.

"I will be part of the Interior Division," said Jaradi, who is currently pursuing his undergraduate degree in Electrical Engineering at Oakland University with plans to graduate in April.

"I will start in May at the Troy, Mich. office. After eight months, I will go to Regensburg, Germany for another eight months. After that, I will either go to Guadalajara, Mexico or Shanghai, China for another eight months."

In Troy, Jaradi will serve as a systems engineer for the company. In Germany, he will be part of the prototype R&D team. In China or Mexico he will be a part of the new product launch team.

"To be honest, I think I'm looking forward to visiting Germany the most," he said. "It is the global hub of engineering, and I can't wait to leave my mark."

Jaradi credited his experiences at OU with helping to prepare him for the DRIVE Program.

"My education at Oakland University has prepared me more than anyone could believe," he said. "Not only have the classes prepared me with my heavy technical responsibilities, but also the soft skills I'll need when I'm in other countries. The diversity of the students and the professors also enabled me to learn the effective approaches in interacting with different cultures. My experience at OU has been amazing, say the least."

Prior to being accepted into the DRIVE Automotive Graduate Program, Jaradi worked as an intern for Continental for over a year. During that time, he performed various duties in the company's Powertrain and Interior divisions.

"I was suggested for the program through multiple managers and finally brought it up to Human Resources," Jaradi said. "They took a look at my transcript and reviews from previous managers, and as soon as they did so, they determined I was well-qualified for the program."

"I eventually received two offers for the program, one for powertrain and another for interior. As far as I know, I am the only student to receive multiple offers."

Jaradi said he's looking forward to continuing his education in the graduate program at OU, and experiencing all that the DRIVE Program has to offer.

"From a professional standpoint, I am looking forward to the executives who I will meet, and the positions that will come after the program," he said. "I am certain I will be able to form lasting relationships with many influential people. I really view this as not only a huge achievement for myself, but also for Oakland University."



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