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DENSO gift provides the drive for Formula SAE team

Getting the race car from campus to competition tracks may not be top of mind to students joining, building and maintaining a collegiate Formula SAE race team. However, it is a very important consideration and one Oakland University's Grizzlies Racing team was always struggling with until the recent generosity of the DENSO North America Foundation.

The DENSO North America Foundation provided a \$50,000 gift that allowed School of Engineering and Computer Science professor, chair of Mechanical Engineering and Grizzlies Racing team faculty adviser Brian Sangeorzan, Ph.D. and his student team a chance to purchase a race car hauling truck.

"Needless to say, we were very thankful and excited when DENSO stepped up to help us fill the need for a car-hauling vehicle," Sangeorzan said. "That generous gift led to our team's ability to purchase a new, white Dodge Ram 2500 crew cab truck. Prior to that, we had to rely on the family members of our race team students lending us their personal vehicles to tow the race car. It was a real challenge to get to the tracks."



Sam Vanportfliet, pictured here with the new hauler truck, is one of the drivers on year's Grizzlies Racing team.

And, hauling the race car is not for the faint of heart. It takes some experience towing and lots of practice to master maneuvering the truck, and its precious cargo inside. There are four drivers on this year's team with experience pulling trailers including Sam Vanportfliet, featured in photo above.

"Without supportive sponsors like DENSO, our team members would not be able to apply the theories learned in the classroom and test them in a dynamic real world setting," Adam Delbeke, student president of the Grizzlies Racing team said. "In the past going to events was a logistic nightmare. Now, having the DENSO truck allows us to go to more events and get there with ease. We can't thank them enough."

Now, the race team is turning heads as they arrive at the track even before unloading this year's race car. The entire team is very thankful for corporate partners like DENSO and many others who help shape their college experience and help them develop the tools that will lead to future job opportunities.



School of Engineering and Computer Science Dean Louay Chamra, left, and faculty adviser Professor Brian Sangeorzan unveil the 2018 Grizzlies Race Car.

About Grizzlies Racing:

Grizzlies Racing at Oakland University is a student-run organization which builds a race car for the Formula SAE series. Oakland University has been racing with the Society of Automotive Engineers for decades. In the mid 1990s, the chapter switched to the Formula SAE competition. Formula SAE competition is based around a formula style race car running an engine with a maximum displacement of 750 cc. The vehicle is designed with a student design that follows the guidelines put together for Formula SAE competition vehicles. The competition encourages students to be innovative and develop new ways to come out above competitors. When the design is completed, the car is built and tested by the students to prove their designs.

About The DENSO North America Foundation:

A registered 501(c)3 corporate foundation, The DENSO North America Foundation is dedicated to helping students advance their education in engineering, technology and other related programs. Founded in 2001, the Foundation provides grants to colleges and universities throughout North America, helping our communities prosper through the development of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce.

About DENSO:

DENSO is a leading global automotive supplier of advanced technology, systems and components in the areas of thermal, powertrain control, electronics and information and safety. With its North American headquarters located in Southfield, Michigan, DENSO employs more than 20,000 people at 30 consolidated companies and affiliates across the North American region. In the United States alone, DENSO employs more than 17,000 people in Alabama, Arkansas, California, Iowa, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas.