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# Toyota teaches at Gateway

## New engineers receive training at Gateway

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

**COVINGTON** - One hundred engineering graduates from around the country spent last week at Gateway Community and Technical College's Covington campus. The students, hired out of college by Toyota, were given hands-on instruction on how a Toyota car is put together. Toyota sees this as a way to keep its competitive edge.

"The risk of growing so quickly is that it becomes increasingly difficult for us to maintain the knowledge and skills that have made us unique in the industry," said Latondra Newton, general manager of Toyota's Team Member Development Center. "Currently, we are focusing on developing engineers, a critical role in our organization."

The students are a change for Gateway's automotive technology instructor Sam Collier.

"I've never seen students just want to absorb information like this," said Collier, who has taught at Gateway for three years. "They have a great deal of adventure. You put them to task and they just want to keep on going."

"I'm an old-time mechanic. That's my background. And because they want to know, telling them how it works isn't good enough, they want to know why."

The engineers are graduates of Rochester Institute of Technology, Georgia Tech, Purdue University and the University of Cincinnati, among other schools.

Toyota sees the partnership as an important part of developing a workforce.

"Our partnership with Gateway is a practical part of a strategy to insure that future leaders of Toyota begin their careers with deep knowledge of our products," said Newton. "It's a great prerequisite to the assembly line experience the engineers will have later in the program."

Gateway works with Toyota regularly, but this is the first time that they've taught engineering graduates.

"We're like a live laboratory to them," said Angela Taylor, vice president of business and industry services at Gateway. "It's a place where they can get hands-on experience and direct application. They come to us with a lot of theoretical background but this is a place where they can take apart a car and see how it works."

Gateway recently worked with Toyota's accounting department. The accountants needed to understand the parts that go into a car so they will be able to assign the correct import/export tariff to each component.

"They're tracking part numbers and prices. Knowing where that part is used in a car is an important piece of information," said Taylor.

After their time at Gateway, the engineers will move to the shop floor of various U.S. plants for three months. They will then be assigned a home base plant where they will begin their careers as production engineers.

"We hope this program is just the beginning of 100 successful careers at Toyota," said Newton.

Gateway regularly does training for companies in the Florence Industrial Park including Eagle Manufacturing, Mazak Corporation, Ticona and Aristech Acrylics.

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