



L&C Automotive Technology Alum Tara Rodgers Thriving at General Motors

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GODFREY – Thanks to an astute teacher who recognized and encouraged her ability, Tara Rodgers found the right program at Lewis and Clark Community College to fuel her career with one of the world’s largest automobile manufacturers.

While still in high school, Rodgers took an automotive class for “personal bettering.” Teacher Rusty Rayburn, an L&C alum, noticed her interest.

“He saw my passion and aspiration to learn more about automotive,” Rodgers said. “He informed me of my potential in the industry.”

Rodgers explained there’s more to the automotive industry than wrenching on cars.

“The automotive industry is ever-growing and evolving and there will always be countless opportunities within it,” Rodgers said. “It can encompass different fields that most people wouldn’t expect.”

Rodgers, 24, of Belleville, earned an Associate in Applied Science in Automotive Technology from Lewis and Clark in 2016.

“Tara's presence in the Automotive Technology program was extremely beneficial, as she demonstrated the ability to progress, being a female in a male-dominated industry,” said L&C Associate Professor of Automotive Technology Chris Reynolds. “She also played a critical role in the development of the automotive student club.”

After L&C, she earned a Bachelor of Science in Automotive Technology from Southern Illinois University Carbondale and is currently working on a Master of Science in Technology, with an emphasis on Automotive Technology, from Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kansas.

Rodgers’ connection to the L&C Automotive Technology program led her to an internship at V8 Speed & Resto Shop in Red Bud, which turned into a part-time job.

“I was learning so much about every aspect of auto restoration, from mechanical and electrical repairs, to paint, fabrication and body work,” Rodgers said. “It was truly a great experience that I would not have sought out if not for L&C.”

Rodgers took her experience and education and earned a summer internship with General Motors while still a junior at SIUC. She became a part of GM’s Customer Care and Aftersales (CCA) sector and was later offered a full-time CCA position in May 2018.

After relocating to Michigan, she began participating in the company’s Technical Rotation and Career Knowledge Program (TRACK). TRACK allows her to rotate to a new position every year for three years and will give her the opportunity to choose one of the previous positions or choose a new permanent position within CCA.

Rodgers' goal is to become a team leader at GM.

“L&C's Automotive Technology program has given me a lot of real-life, hands-on experiences in a shop environment,” Rodgers said. “This initially helped me earn my internship (turned part-time job) at V8 Speed & Resto Shop, which is where I feel I learned the most and applied what I already learned from L&C.”

Accomplishments for which Rodgers is the proudest include recognition as a three-time GM Women's Retail Network Scholarship winner. She was also elected president of JumpStart, an employee resource group (ERG) within GM, which focuses on engaging, developing and connecting GM's newest talent.

L&C's Automotive Technology program is Master Certified by the ASE Education Foundation and focuses specifically on the service side of the transportation industry. The program maintains a strong articulation agreement with the highly-ranked baccalaureate program at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, further enhancing student opportunities.

L&C is enrolling now for Summer 2020, Fall 2020, Spring 2021 and Summer 2021. Call (618) 468-2222 or visit www.lc.edu/admissions to get started.

For more information about the Automotive Technology program, contact Reynolds at (618) 468-4915 or creynolds@lc.edu.