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Date: July 2011

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Marshall University Students Partner with Toyota

HUNTINGTON, W.Va.—Four Marshall University students have completed an eight-week business problem-solving program with Toyota Motor Manufacturing West Virginia which allowed them an international business experience without ever leaving West Virginia.

Toyota and Marshall University representatives developed the program after an exploratory meeting last fall to discuss the university's relatively new International Business program and internship possibilities. The academic program requires students to complete either a foreign study or a business experience that exposes them to global economic issues.

"Last October, Denise Hogsett and Debby Stoler with Career Services, myself, and two students visited Toyota in Putnam County and met with several executives," said Dr. Harlan Smith, Head of the Division of Finance and Economics in the Lewis College of Business. "Our talks culminated in the establishment of what Toyota calls a 'Problem-Solving Partnership' with our students who then had an incredibly valuable learning experience."

"Career Services has had a long-standing relationship with Toyota and we are pleased this new business-education partnership has developed," said Debby Stoler, Assistant Director of Development and Outreach, Career Services. "Our visit to Putnam County last fall also connected Marshall University to several other international companies who are interested in possible student internships."

Toyota personnel trained the students using a Japanese business concept called **Kaizen** which means "improvement", or "change for the better" which refers to the philosophy or practice that focuses upon continuous improvement of processes in manufacturing, engineering, and business management. The team of students was required to be at the Buffalo plant two days a week for a minimum of 10 hours per week.

The four students who participated are Matthew Lawless, Klaudia Mucharzewska, and Sarah Kay who are students in the Lewis College of Business, and Michael "Chad" McClure who is a student in the College of Liberal Arts.

"The Toyota partnership was a great opportunity to get some hands-on experience in a business setting," McClure said. "We were able to work closely with several members of the Toyota staff, learn from them, and ultimately present our results to the senior management of the plant."

Marshall University students complete international business program with Toyota

*“Mike Lutz, General Manager, stated that education is a matter of building bridges and Toyota is very happy to help build the bridge between Marshall University and industry. This important educational opportunity helped prepare these students to be our next generation of leaders. This exercise was to teach them the concept of going back to basics, exposing the real significance of problems and then making fundamental improvements, which is the foundation of the **Toyota Production System**.*

For more information on this story contact Smith, 304-696-3233 or Stoler, 304-696-6679. For Toyota information please contact Sandy Maynard, 304-937-7403.