MassBay’s Auto Tech Program Receives National Award from Toyota

ASHLAND – MassBay Community College officials, students, faculty and alumni were on hand this week as officials from Toyota Motors USA presented the school with a School Recognition Award for being among their two highest performing Automotive Service Technology programs concentrating in Toyota “T-TEN” programs, in America.

In addition to receiving the Award, MassBay received a new Toyota FJ Cruiser to be used for promotions and recruitment efforts, a Lexus audio navigation simulator and a tech stream diagnostic computer.

“This prestigious honor is very important to us,” said MassBay President Carole Berotte Joseph at the special Award ceremony held at Toyota’s regional headquarters in Mansfield. “I am proud Toyota has recognized our T-Ten program for being among the finest in the nation. Our program faculty, administrators and students have worked very hard for many years, and their efforts have helped to make MassBay great.”

The T-TEN program originated at MassBay in 1986 and has since grown to more than 44 sites in the U.S. and 23 countries. MassBay students earn an Associate in Science Degree in Automotive Service Technology with a concentration in Toyota (T-TEN) at MassBay’s state-of-the-art Automotive Technology center in Ashland, with a curriculum that includes technical training and education.

One of only two programs in the nation to achieve this award, MassBay was judged on graduate objectives, placements at Toyota dealerships, the maintenance of instructor and program certifications, compliance with Toyota training requirements, and other quality measures such as ASE completions and internship management.

“MassBay has been one of our T-TEN pioneers,” said Richard Lester, Technician Development Manager of Toyota Motor Sales, USA, who traveled from Toyota headquarters in California to present the Award to MassBay. “They helped create the T-TEN program in the eighties and took a chance on a little known Japanese company. Today MassBay is helping meet the need of dealers all over the region by producing outstanding entry level technicians. MassBay should be proud of their accomplishments and for maintaining their academic excellence.”

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Sakara Dorn, 18, entered MassBay’s T-TEN program this year after graduating from Greater Lowell Technical High School, and he hopes one day his Associates Degree from MassBay will someday lead to his goal of owning his own business.

His classmate, Joel D’Ambrosio, 19, wants to go into business and move up the ladder in a dealership. “MassBay has a great reputation among dealerships, so I think I’m on the right track.”

Among the key aspects of MassBay’s program is its co-op. Students spend a minimum of five months of the 20 month program in local dealerships under the guidance of a mentor technician.

Andrew Stalker, 19, is working in Toyota of Braintree while he studies at MassBay. “The hands-on part of it is what I like best,” he said. “Hands-on is how I learn.”

“Having technicians in the dealership directing and guiding us helps us so much with the stuff we don’t know,” echoed Raul Ramon, 21, of Waltham. “This is definitely the best program because you get paid and you get credit. It also helps you get jobs.”

MassBay’s Board of Trustees Chairman Jonathan Bower praised Toyota for being a “resolute partner” over the years. Chairman Bower thanked Toyota for the Award and praised Dean Howie Ferris and Professors Will French and George Panagiotou, who, he said, “Built this program.”

“We are grateful to Toyota for this prestigious honor,” said Dean Ferris. “I am glad to see they recognize the quality of instruction and dedication to excellence we are instilling in our students.”

One lesson that is instilled early among the students, according to Carlos DeLeon, 21, who is in his first year of the T-TEN program. “Stay away from the orange cables,” he said. Given the complexity of the vehicles, especially the hybrids, it is important to be mindful of the orange wires that contain the high voltage. “Beginning in the very first lesson, they talk about safety,” he said.

The Award is now hanging in the foyer of the Automotive Technology Center in Ashland, and reads: “In recognition of outstanding dedication as an educational partner to Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc., And in appreciation for professionalism in the development of the next generation of Automotive Service Technicians.”

More information about MassBay’s automotive technician programs in Toyota, General Motors, Chrysler and BMW can be found on its website: www.massbay.edu.