

# Work-life programs focus of internships

**The company:** Denso Manufacturing Tennessee in Maryville is a subsidiary of Denso International America Inc., owned by Japanese-based Denso Corp., which began in 1949 as a spin-off from Toyota Motor Co.

Denso Corp. manufactures high-end technology for the automotive and related industries. With plants located in 32 nations throughout Asia, Australia, South America, Europe and North America, Denso is recognized as one of world's top three suppliers of automotive components and systems.

Denso Tennessee, one of Denso's larger international operations, produces alternators, starters, instrument clusters, display units and electronic products. Currently, the Maryville plant, on 154 acres, employs nearly 3,000 people.

**The internships:** Since 2002, Denso has used interns from the University of Tennessee's human resource development program, part of the College of Business Administration's Department of Management. Currently, Katherine Bunton and Victor Nunes, seniors in the program, are helping coordinate work/life initiatives. Work/life is Denso's program that helps employees balance work and family issues; it also is the department that manages the company's community donations.

**The projects:** Bunton and Nunes have responsibility for several programs, including scholarships, flexible work schedules, associate discount and flower requests.

"Denso has allowed us to take full responsibility of the work/life projects in which we are involved," said Bunton. "The experience is invaluable."

■ **Scholarship Program:** Each year, Denso awards five divisional scholarships to the dependents of associates. Applicants must have a 3.0 grade point average or better, be graduating in May of that academic year and attending a two- or four-year accredited school the following semester. Winners are chosen through a lottery. UT's interns are marketing the program to Denso's associates, keeping track of applicant information, drawing the winners and organizing the event to honor the recipients.

This is in addition to the interns coordinating the awarding of four community scholarships, one each from the four Blount County high schools.

■ **Flexible Work Schedules Program:** Bunton and Nunes are maintaining, monitoring and keeping track of eligibility for the Extended Flex Program. This program is designed to reward associates not eligible to earn overtime pay for their incremental work effort. Instead, associates are offered additional time off for the extra work they do.

■ **Associate Discount Program:** Denso associates are offered discounts from local and national companies. The interns are responsible for contacting interested businesses, negotiating discounts and marketing the discount opportunities to the associates.

■ **Flower Request Program:** In order to show concern and sympathy for associates in certain life events, Denso has a flower request program. Flowers, gift baskets, donations or other gifts are sent when an employee has an extended hospitalization, a death in the family or the birth of a child.

Other programs in which the interns are involved include new hire orientation sessions and the Charitable Contributions Committee, which provides donations to local non-profit organizations. The interns also are helping to implement the Tobacco-Free Workplace Initiative.

Although the company's buildings have been tobacco-free for a decade, Denso's outdoor areas became tobacco-free on April 1.

"Success with work/life issues can be a company's foundation for success, and the more experience we have in seeing the value that these initiatives provide associates and employers, the greater the impact we can have on companies with whom we will work with in the future," Nunes said.



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