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SMTA Wisconsin Chapter selects FitzGerald for scholarship

PLATTEVILLE, Wis. – Austin FitzGerald, a sophomore software engineering major at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, is the recipient of the 2018 Surface Mount Technology Association Wisconsin Chapter Scholarship. He is the third UW-Platteville student in the past four years to receive the \$1,000 scholarship.

The Surface Mount Technology Association (SMTA) is comprised of an international network of professionals who build skills, share practical experience and develop solutions in electronic assembly technologies. These technologies include microsystems, emerging technologies and related business operations. The scholarship is for a student who is pursuing a degree in an engineering or technical discipline at a university, college or technical college. Although he is not a member of the SMTA Wisconsin Chapter, FitzGerald qualified for the scholarship because of the relationship of his major to the electronics industry.

“My favorite part of the field would be the room for innovation,” FitzGerald said. “Software engineering is a very broad field; its definition grows side by side with all technologies. There will always be a need for innovators.”

Tammy Salmon-Stephens, director of the College of EMS Student Success Programs, is proud of the success students have had with this scholarship and with their academics. Salmon-Stephens, who has embraced the opportunity to serve the students of UW-Platteville for over 20 years, assisted SMTA in setting up this opportunity to support students.

“An alumna’s mother contacted me, and she was a part of the SMTA,” Salmon-

Stephens said. “SMTA wanted to establish a scholarship, and I gave them several ideas of how to make this opportunity possible. SMTA chose to administer the scholarship themselves, and they reach out to me and a few other institutions to spread the word each year.”

The annual SMTA Wisconsin Chapter scholarship campaign has been a way for the local chapter to give back to the community and recognize students with a passion for the technical field of electronics. This organization promotes collaboration and professional growth for members of their industry.

“The scholarship selection committee has been impressed with UW-Platteville’s students in regards to academics and involvement with organizations like STEM and Society of Women Engineers,” Mike Gerner, account manager at NEO Technology Solutions, said. “In addition, the students’ essays describe examples of hobbies and passion for the technical field. I also feel that UW-Platteville’s faculty does a great job communicating to students about the industry and giving opportunities for growth beyond the traditional academics with the use of social media and student organizations on campus.”

By granting scholarships, organizations outside of UW-Platteville have the opportunity to connect with emerging graduates and help future professionals with financial assistance. Students can browse scholarship opportunities online, and the UW-Platteville Financial Aid Office lists opportunities and strategies for scholarships at www.uwplatt.edu/financial-aid/privateoutside-scholarships.

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