

Testimony of Dennis Dio Parker

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“Career Ready Students: Innovations from Community Colleges and the Private Sector”

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES**

Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-AL-04), Subcommittee Chairman
Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT-03), Ranking Member

Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

February 12, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Aderholt, Ranking Member DeLauro, and members of the Subcommittee.

My name is Dennis Dio Parker, and I am a senior advisor on talent development in manufacturing at Toyota Motor North America. I want to thank the Subcommittee for conducting this hearing. Workforce development is an extremely important topic for Toyota¹, and we are actively engaged in meaningful educational partnerships at every level along the education pipeline.

At the K-12 level, we launched Driving Possibilities, a \$110 million career readiness and community engagement initiative across Toyota's operational communities to prepare youth for the careers of tomorrow while addressing root causes that impact learningⁱ. At the post-secondary level, in conjunction with our Toyota and Lexus dealers, we partner with 38 community colleges and vocational schools across the nation to provide state-of-the-art, hands-on automotive diagnosis and repair education through our Technician Training and Education Network (or T-TEN).ⁱⁱ We also maintain a 30 plus year partnership with the University of Kentucky that offers undergraduate degrees in Computer Engineering Technology and Lean Systems Engineering Technology developed in partnership with Toyota.

Today, however, I will focus on a leading example of engagement between industry and education developed by Toyota called FAME, which stands for the Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education. This is a career pathway program whose principal

¹ Toyota has been part of the cultural fabric in the U.S. for more than 65 years and has created a tremendous value chain here, with a \$48.9 billion direct investment in the U.S. We have nearly 1,500 dealerships and more than 189,400 people working across the country.

goal is to produce globally competitive entry-level maintenance technicians for manufacturers.

FAME is revolutionary in many ways. First, it reinvented the 2-year educational experience at the community college level by reimagining the manufacturing curriculum², the education delivery model³, and the classroom setting⁴.

Second, it incorporates a deep engagement with primary and secondary education⁵, as well as a seamless set of continuing pathways leading to industry-relevant bachelor's and master's degrees⁶ for those who wish to go further.

Third, in addition to technical education, FAME focuses on developing the whole person who can be highly successful at work. A robust soft skills component, as well as a highly relevant productivity component, were incorporated into a 24-month curriculum in which students alternate days at work with days at school.

Fourth, FAME is developed by employers and driven by employers. This is an overarching principle that dictates many aspects of the program. Employers, for example,

² A three-pillared core curriculum is an essential feature of the FAME program: (1) technical skills, (2) professional behaviors and (3) manufacturing best practices. Technical skills include electrical, fluid power, mechanical and fabrication. The content is based on a factory task analysis and reflects industry needs and standards. Professional behaviors focus on initiative, diligence, communication and teamwork. There are five manufacturing practices, including safety, problem solving and workplace efficiency.

³ Participating colleges administer the FAME curriculum over five straight semesters (no summer break), an eight-hour instructional day, with two days at the college and three days at work.

⁴ The typical FAME “classroom” is a factory-floor-like advanced manufacturing center, equipped with state-of-the-art machinery.

⁵ A leading example of Toyota’s partnership at the secondary level is the Toyota 4T Academy, a two-year education and manufacturing program that helps high school students discover manufacturing as a career path through customized class curriculum and hands-on production line experience. 4T curriculum includes classes on manufacturing, robotics, artificial intelligence, 3D printing, problem solving, leadership and teamwork, finance, and computer skills.

⁶ The FAME program partners with Northwood University, for example, to offer students a bachelor’s degree in applied management, as well as master’s degrees in organizational leadership or business administration.

choose the college most suited to program success. Employers help develop and approve coursework. Employers visit high schools, recruit students, and interview applicants. Participating employers also structure the on-the-job experience at their companies.

While initially developed by Toyota in 2010 at one school nearby our Kentucky assembly plant, today, FAME has scaled beyond the states where Toyota manufactures. It stretches from North Carolina to California and from Michigan to Florida. It is in 16 states with over 45 participating collegesⁱⁱⁱ and over 450 company partners. States like Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky, and Texas leverage the program at multiple locations within the state. At the national level, FAME USA is led by the Manufacturing Institute, the workforce partner of the National Association of Manufacturers.

The growth of FAME in Alabama is an example of the program's effectiveness in developing a highly skilled advanced manufacturing workforce. With a \$12 million federal grant awarded in 2019, Alabama rapidly expanded its FAME chapters from one to eleven. As companies and colleges witnessed the program's success, participation surged — now involving nearly half of the state's colleges and more than 125 manufacturers.

Alabama also became the first state to pioneer a second FAME training pathway, this one focused on process technicians, broadening the model's application beyond traditional maintenance roles. With a third pathway under consideration in California, FAME's expansion underscores its adaptability and success in addressing workforce shortages across multiple manufacturing sectors.

Strategic federal funding, such as resources allocated through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), plays a crucial role in scaling workforce training

programs like FAME. By allowing employer collaboratives to direct funds toward specific training needs, these resources help institutions acquire equipment, build facilities, and hire instructors — critical elements for launching and sustaining high-quality programs. Additionally, ongoing access to funding for capital expansion ensures that as these programs grow, they can meet increasing industry demand without financial bottlenecks.

Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) funding, traditionally used for equipment purchases in secondary and post-secondary settings, remains an essential resource, and additional federal support through targeted workforce development grants would further accelerate the nation's ability to produce the highly skilled professionals needed to secure America's manufacturing dominance.

As you know, a strong manufacturing industry is fundamental to our nation's economic prosperity. I hope I have demonstrated how U.S. manufacturers can effectively partner with the education sector to generate a robust, world-class workforce pipeline. This committee is uniquely situated to help sustain America's global manufacturing competitiveness and keep our nation's economy thriving. The funding your committee authorizes can, in fact, reinvigorate the foundation required to ensure America's long-term global manufacturing leadership. On behalf of Toyota, I urge Congress to reauthorize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in ways that support the expansion of highly effective employer-led workforce programs like FAME.

I very much appreciate the opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee. I would be happy to take any questions that you have.

ⁱ Through Driving Possibilities, Toyota partners with the following K-12 school districts and universities: Asheboro City Schools; Chandler Unified School District; Clark County School District; Dallas Independent School District; Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation; East Central Independent School District; Fayette County Public Schools; Fulton County Schools; Guilford County School District; Huntsville City Schools; Lee County Schools; Lincoln Consolidated Schools; North Gibson School Corporation; Pontotoc City Schools; Scott County Schools; Tempe Elementary School District; and Ypsilanti Community Schools; Eastern Michigan University; Southern Methodist University; Texas A&M University – San Antonio Institute for School and Community Partnership; University of Evansville; and University of Mississippi.

ⁱⁱ The current list of educational institutions partnered with Toyota through the T-TEN program include: Lawson State CC, Bessemer, AL; Gateway Community College, Phoenix, AZ; Cypress College, Cypress, CA; Citrus College, Glendora, CA; Universal Technical Institute Rancho Cucamonga, Rancho Cucamonga, CA; San Diego Miramar College, San Diego, CA; Ventura College, Ventura, CA; Atlantic Technical Center, Coconut Creek, FL; Robert Morgan Campus, Miami Lakes Educational Center, Miami, FL; Miami Lakes Educational Center and Technical College, Miami Lakes, FL; Orange Technical College, Mid Florida Campus, Orlando, FL; Universal Technical Institute, Lisle, IL; Ivy Tech Community College, Indianapolis, IN; Jefferson Community and Technical College, Louisville, KY; Earle C. Clements Job Corps Academy, Morganfield, KY; Massachusetts Bay Community College, Ashland, MA; Dunwoody College of Technology, Minneapolis, MN; Ranken Technical College, St. Louis, MO; Metropolitan Community College, Omaha, NE; Lakes Region Community College, Laconia, NH; San Juan College, Farmington, NM; Monroe Community College, Rochester, NY; Suffolk Community College, Selden, NY; Forsyth Technical CC, Winston Salem, NC; Stark State College of Technology, North Canton, OH; Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology, Okmulgee, OK; Community College of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA; Collin College Technical Campus, Allen, TX; Tarrant County College District, Fort Worth, TX; Dallas College, Eastfield Campus, Mesquite, TX; San Jacinto College Central, Pasadena, TX; Austin Community College, Round Rock, TX; Tidewater Community College, Chesapeake, VA; J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, Richmond, VA; U.S. DOL Job Corps Program, Clearfield, UT; Shoreline Community College, Shoreline, WA; Spokane Community College, Spokane, WA; Clark College, Vancouver, WA.

ⁱⁱⁱ The current list of educational institutions partnered with FAME USA include: Coastal Alabama Community College, Bay Minette, AL; Gadsden State Community College, Anniston, AL; Bishop State Community College, Mobile, AL; Southern Union State Community College, Opelika, AL; Drake State Community College, Huntsville, AL; Jefferson State Community College, Birmingham, AL; Wallace State Community College, Hanceville, AL; Trenholm State Community College, Montgomery, AL; Calhoun Community College, Decatur, AL; Wallace Community College, Dothan, AL; Northwest Shoals Community College, Muscle Shoals, AL; Reedley College, Reedley, CA; Pueblo Community College, Pueblo, CO; Daytona State College, Daytona, FL; John Wood Community College, Quincy, IL; Richland Community College, Decatur, IL; Vincennes University, Indianapolis, IN; Vincennes University, Vincennes, IN; Ivy Tech Community College, Ft. Wayne, IN; Ivy Tech Community College, Valparaiso, IN; Kansas City Kansas Community College Technical Education Center, Kansas City, KS; Bluegrass Community & Technical College, Georgetown, KY; Bluegrass Community & Technical College, Danville, KY; Jefferson Community & Technical College, Louisville, KY; Gateway Community & Technical College, Florence, KY; Elizabethtown Community & Technical College, Elizabethtown, KY; Henderson Community & Technical College, Henderson, KY; Somerset Community & Technical College, Somerset, KY; Owensboro Community & Technical College, Owensboro, KY; Southcentral KY Community & Technical College, Franklin, KY; Hopkinsville Community College, Hopkinsville, KY; Bossier Parish Community College, Shreveport and Bossier City, LA; Washtenaw Community College, Ann Arbor, MI; Itawamba Community College, Tupelo, MS; Guilford Technical Community College, Greensboro, NC; Oklahoma State University Oklahoma City, Oklahoma City, OK; Jackson State Community College, Jackson, TN; St. Philips College Southwest Campus, San Antonio, TX; Palo Alto College, San Antonio, TX; Richland College, Dallas, TX; Texas State Community College, Seguin, TX; Lamar State College Orange, Orange, TX; Mountain View College, Dallas, TX; BridgeValley Community & Technical College, South Charleston, WV.

FAME BY THE NUMBERS

Over 45 Chapters in **16 States**

450+
Company
Partners



College
Partners for
Every Chapter

1,300+
Students enrolled
2023-2024



2,200
Graduates since
2010

1,800+ hours of on-the-floor experience
for each graduate



90% of graduates proceed to direct
employment with sponsoring company

FAME Students Learn:

- Electrical/mechanical/PLCs/Fluid Power/Fabrication & more
- Lean principles and practices
- Professional skills for long-term impact

BENEFITS OF FAME PIPELINE

- Facilitates employer-led partnerships between your company and local educational institutions
- Initiates investment in your company and the next generation of advanced manufacturers
- Establishes a channel for recruiting diverse, high-achieving and career-oriented students
- Generates a continuous pipeline of global-best, entry-level multiskilled maintenance technicians



DEVELOP THE WORKFORCE OF TOMORROW **TODAY**

- The FAME model leverages a work/learn framework to weave technical knowledge, professional behaviors and distinct manufacturing core exercises into a focused co-op experience
- Graduates will demonstrate mastery in the Manufacturing Core Exercises (MCE's) of Safety Culture, 5S Visual Management, Lean Manufacturing, Problem Solving and Machine Reliability
- In total, students gain more than 1,800 hours of experience over the course of the program, working three days a week and attending class two days a week
- Professional behaviors and practices are introduced and reinforced throughout the program through a “learn it and live it” approach

YOUR GLOBAL-BEST PIPELINE

Join your local FAME chapter! Or,

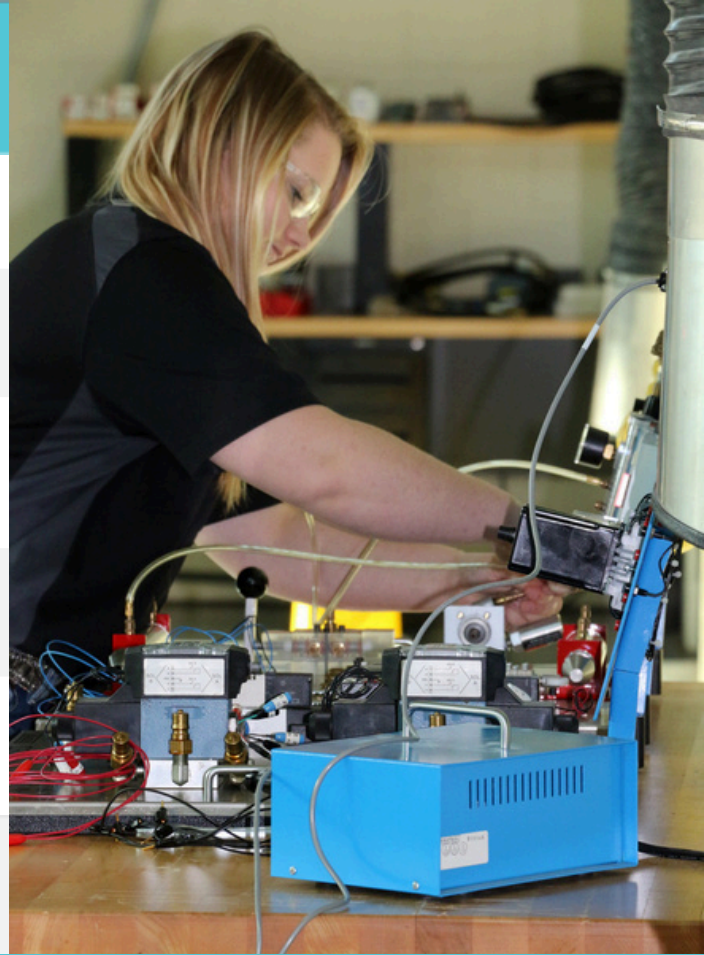
Support a new chapter

FAME Academy prepares local
manufacturing collaborative

Provide FAME students with two years of valuable
work experience and hands-on instruction

Graduate students who are now equipped with the
experience and skills needed to succeed in your workforce

Create consistent stream of global-best, entry-
level multiskilled maintenance technicians



A HISTORY OF DEVELOPING GLOBAL-BEST TECHNICAL TALENT:

- The Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education was founded on June 24, 2010, in Kentucky through a partnership between Toyota and the Bluegrass Community and Technical College
- FAME is the new American model of skills training for modern manufacturers, recognized as the nation's premier manufacturing education program for students launching careers, workers learning new skills and veterans seeking new careers in manufacturing.
- Implemented with a college partner, FAME programs are a conduit between industry and education, providing companies with the skilled worker pipeline they need to remain globally competitive
- Since its inception, FAME has expanded to include chapters across manufacturing sectors and the country, training hundreds of world-class multiskilled technicians each year
- Over the past decade, FAME has become a trusted employer-led talent solution implemented by nearly 500 company partners

www.ApplyToFAME.com