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**Press Release**  
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## **Mi-Light Scholarships are Awarded by Baker College**

Ann Arbor, MI – Mi-Light, the Michigan photonics industry cluster, announces that \$3,000 in scholarships given to Baker College of Flint have been awarded. Roger Fischer and Dennis LaPorte, have each received a \$1,500 scholarship to pursue an associate degree in photonics and laser technology at Baker College.

“We are proud of the interest and dedication that Roger and Dennis have demonstrated in the photonics and laser field and are honored by this support from Mi-Light,” said Anca Sala, Ph.D., Baker College of Flint dean of engineering and computer technology. “New technology brings new career and business opportunities. Photonics will help diversify Michigan’s economy just by the sheer number of industries it influences.”

Michelle Stock, Ph.D., Mi-Light chairperson said, “Having members such as Baker College helps the Michigan photonics industry to foster education and development of the skilled workforce required by photonics technology companies here in Michigan and beyond. We appreciate the effort that has gone into developing the photonics and laser technology program at Baker College, and are pleased to provide scholarships to support its students.”

Mi-Light was established at the end of 2012. One of its goals is to grow the state’s talent pool in order to expand the photonics industry and stimulate innovation.

The recipients were selected based on academic success and a one-page essay in which applicants identified three favorite photonics and laser applications.

**Fischer, of Almont**, was drawn to study lasers because of their growing use in a wide variety of industries. He earned an associate degree in electronic technology at Baker College in 2013 and used the Mi-Light scholarship to complete the photonics and laser technology degree this summer.

“In industrial manufacturing, lasers can cut, drill and mark a variety of materials – wood, plastics, fibers and metals.” he said. “I’m fascinated by their use in holography, and the U.S. military is rapidly discovering new ways to harness the power of lasers for weaponry applications. It’s exciting to be in a field that is relatively new and expanding.”

New uses of photonics and lasers in the medical industry attracted **LaPorte, of Fenton**, to the Baker College program. He works at Animal Health Clinic, Fenton, maintaining the building systems and equipment, including radiography machines and a 20-watt surgical laser.

He personally experienced a non-invasive surgery, made possible by lasers, after which he drove himself home. The alternative surgery option would have required a long, painful recovery period.

“I am continually impressed with their extraordinary applications,” he said, noting a new use of lasers helping in the global fight against malaria. A quick laser pulse directed at the earlobe can detect malaria in the blood. Other areas in which LaPorte is interested are remote sensing by lasers that provides environmental information available on cell phones and the impact of lasers on the manufacturing industry.

Visit [www.mi-light.org](http://www.mi-light.org)

*Growing Michigan’s Photonics Industry*

**Mi-Light: Michigan Photonics Cluster**  
330 E Liberty (lower level)  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104



Sala is a founding member of the Mi-Light consortium. She learned of the shortage of photonics technicians through a survey of more than 50 companies in southeast Michigan that work with photonics and lasers. In response to the research, Baker College launched the photonics and laser technology program 2013 fall quarter.

Sala said that the need for photonics technicians nationally is great, too. In 2012, the estimated number of graduates from existing U.S. educational programs would meet only about one-third of national need through 2017.\* In 2013, graduates averaged between three and four job offers, each with starting salaries of \$40,000-\$50,000.

Photonics is the science of using a photon, a unit of light, to generate energy or to detect or transmit information. Photonics technicians fix machines, manufacture and assemble products, and perform testing. Students in the Baker program learn to build, test, modify, install, operate, calibrate, maintain and repair laser and electro-optic devices and systems.

For more information about Baker College of Flint photonics and lasers program, contact Jodi Cuneaz in the admissions office at 810.766.4000 or [jodi.cuneaz@baker.edu](mailto:jodi.cuneaz@baker.edu).

About Baker College: The largest private college in Michigan, Baker College is a not-for-profit higher education institution accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. It serves more than 28,000 students on multiple campuses and online. Baker grants certificates and associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in more than 150 programs across diverse academic fields, including business, health sciences, engineering, information technology, education and human services. An impressive 97 percent of available graduates are employed. Every Baker graduate receives Lifetime Employment Assistance—free and forever. Baker is a pioneer in distance education and offers students the option of completing a degree 100 percent online, without ever visiting a campus. For information, visit [www.baker.edu](http://www.baker.edu) or follow Baker College on Twitter, @bakercollege, or on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/bakercollege](http://www.facebook.com/bakercollege).

\* Research provided by the National Center for Optics and Photonics Education (OP-TEC), a consortium of two-year colleges, high schools, universities, national laboratories, industry partners and professional societies helping meet the urgent need for technicians in optics and photonics. It is funded by the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program.

*About Mi-Light: Mi-Light is a non-profit organization serving Michigan's photonics industry by bringing together professionals from companies, academia and organizations to mutually support and promote photonics-related business. For more on Mi-Light visit: [www.mi-light.org](http://www.mi-light.org).*

*MEDC Statement: Funds for this initiative were provided by the 21st Century Jobs Fund, a Michigan Strategic Fund program designed to accelerate the growth and diversification of Michigan's economy. The MEDC, a public-private partnership between the state and local communities, provides administrative support for the 21st Century Jobs Fund. The MEDC markets Michigan and provides the tools and environment to drive job creation and investment. For more information on the 21st Century Jobs Fund initiative, visit [www.MichiganAdvantage.org](http://www.MichiganAdvantage.org). For more on MEDC visit: [MichiganAdvantage.org](http://MichiganAdvantage.org).*

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