

Education accelerates career for Jwan Smith '17

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From left, Jwan Smith, Driver
Alexis DeJoria, Jim Oberhofer
of Kalitta Motorsports

President Mark Zupan received an email from a young alumnus earlier this week, telling him he owes his success to the education he received at Alfred University.

Jwan Smith, a May '17 graduate with a degree in engineering, joined Kalitta Motorsports, a National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) professional drag racing team based in Ypsilanti, MI, right after graduation.

He wrote, "Immediately after accepting this position I began working for team driver Alexis DeJoria's Patrón Funny Car. So far we have traveled to over 40 different states to participate in nine big races, all the way from New Hampshire to California. It has been the experience of a life time.

"This past weekend in Brainerd, MN, I had my first win since I started working for Kalitta, and the team's first win this season. It was such an exciting and rewarding moment for all of us, since we work around the clock everyday improving the car each time we race. Winning this race puts us in a position to compete for a NHRA Championship. This is a huge accomplishment for our team and the company.

"I wanted to share this exciting news with you, and to give credit to an amazing college which I had the opportunity to attend. I wouldn't have these opportunities that I have today without the excellent professors in The School of Engineering. The education and life lessons learned gave me the 'can-do' attitude I needed to start working in a high-intensity environment just a week after graduation. This knowledge also provided me with the understanding of equipment, programs and networking skills to succeed in the shop and on the road with my team. I am very proud of the work that I am doing today, and the direction in which I am heading."

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