

**SMTA Press Release**

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**2026 Charles Hutchins Educational Grant Winner Announced**

**Minneapolis, MN** – SMTA is honored to announce Waad Q. Tarman, a Ph.D. candidate from Auburn University, has been selected as the winner of the 2026 Charles Hutchins Educational Grant.

The SMTA Grant Committee selected Waad's project entitled "Enhancing Reliability of Solder Joints in Electronic Assemblies: Effects of Composition, Aging, Geometry, and Surface Finish in Ball Grid Array Systems." She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Industrial and Systems Engineering.

The Charles Hutchins Educational Grant was established in memory of past SMTA president, educator, mentor, and industry colleague, Dr. Charles Hutchins. The \$8000 grant has been presented annually since 1998 to a full-time, graduate-level student pursuing a degree and working on thesis research in electronics assembly, electronics packaging, or a related field.

The award is presented at the 2026 SMTA International Conference, October 25-29, 2026 in Rosemont, IL, USA.

SMTA will begin accepting applications for the 2027 Charles Hutchins Educational Grant in early 2027. View details at the website: <https://smta.org/page/hutchins-grant>

Please contact Dan Atwood, [hutchins@smta.org](mailto:hutchins@smta.org) or +1-952-920-7682, with questions.

**SMTA – A Global Association Working at a Local Level**

*SMTA is an international network of professionals who build skills, share practical experience and develop solutions in Electronics Manufacturing (EM), including microsystems, emerging technologies, and related business operations.*

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