

# 1998 TAPPI FOUNDATION PAPER INDUSTRY RESEARCH CHALLENGES CONFERENCE

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## *CONFERENCE PROGRAM TARGETS ACADEMICIANS TO PROMOTE PULP AND PAPER INDUSTRY RESEARCH*

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**T**HE NINTH ANNUAL TAPPI FOUNDATION CONFERENCE on Paper Industry Research Challenges occurred Oct. 14–16, 1998, in Seattle. Previous conferences were in Charlotte, NC; Baton Rouge, LA; Green Bay, WI; Portland, OR; Savannah, GA; Mobile, AL; Wisconsin Rapids, WI; and Auburn, AL. The conferences held in various regions to attract local academicians reflect a TAPPI Board of Directors' goal to increase the ability of the pulp and paper industry to meet the challenges of the 21st century global economy. This year's conference focused on the fiber line.

By interesting young professors from prestigious research universities in pulp and paper concerns, the foundation hopes to increase funding supporting research dramatically in areas of industry interest. Young professors are specific targets because the current federal research support system rewards academics for extending work in a given area. Coupled with a "seed money" program that provides crucial early support, the Research Challenges Conferences could help promote a pattern of pulp and paper related research throughout an academic career. This will attract federal funding to the industry and increase the number of graduate students interested in developing basic knowledge about pulp and paper production.

### **PAPER INDUSTRY NEEDS**

Research Challenges Conferences provide an opportunity for leading pulp and paper industry researchers to explain the industry's present technology, perceived needs, and the resulting potential opportunities for research to young professors. Conference co-chairmen Bill Fuller, scientific advisor, Weyerhaeuser, and Bill

McKean, professor of forest resources, University of Washington, with Wayne Gross, TAPPI executive director and COO, and Dale Dill, TAPPI president and TAPPI Foundation chair, welcomed the participants and discussed the purposes and priorities of their organizations.

Carlyle Franklin, director-woodlot forestry, North Carolina State University, discussed the 1996 Research Needs Workshop and summarized the research needs of the industry. David Cooper, consultant to AF&PA, discussed the DOE Agenda 2020 Program, and Barry Crouse, dean of academic affairs, Institute of Paper Science and Technology, discussed academic "seed money" funding opportunities through the TAPPI Foundation Research Funding Program. "Seed money" grants provide sufficient support to permit a young academic to obtain major research funding from federal agencies such as DOE, EPA, or NSF and industry.

### **PLANT TOUR**

The Thursday morning program included presentations of an overview of pulp and papermaking processes by Bill McKean, professor of forest resources, University of Washington. The remainder of the morning concerned fiber line processes. Martin MacLeod, research scientist, Paprican, discussed pulping, and John Leddy, pulp washing product manager, Beloit Pulping, discussed washing, screening, and cleaning. These discussions set the stage for an afternoon tour of the Simpson Tacoma kraft mill, which produces 1300 tons/day of paper and natural pulp. Since acquiring the mill in 1985, Simpson has committed US\$ 250 million to capital expenditures for continuing production and environmental improvements.

The participants toured the fiber line and the No. 14 paper machine complex. Don Johnson, Simpson Tacoma



**Bill Fuller, left, and Bill McKean** conference co-chairmen, relax after completing their efforts.



**Bill Fuller, Wayne Gross, and Martin MacLeod** confer during a social event at the conference.



**Carlyle Franklin** summarized the 1996 Research Needs Workshop results.



Conference attendees heard presentations on a variety of research topics available for academic pursuit.



**David Cooper** offered advice on applying for research grants.

kraft mill manager, welcomed the participants and outlined the tour. Stacie Hashimoto coordinated the tour. Tour guides were Dave McEntee, environmental manager; Ron Stuart, laboratory supervisor; Bob Melkerson, senior process engineer; Bert Buck, senior process engineer; Matt Hinck, process engineer; Ron Silvers, project engineer; and Carlos Henry, technical manager.

Before the Friday morning breakout sessions, Jim Frederick, professor and director, Chemical Recovery and Corrosion Division, Institute of Paper Science and Technology, reviewed chemical recovery, and Tom McDonough, professor of engineering, Institute of Paper Science and Technology, reviewed bleaching. The participants then divided into three focus discussion groups:

- Pulping, washing, screening, and cleaning
- Bleaching
- Kraft chemical recovery.

The breakout sessions provided additional process details of these topics and encouraged one-on-one discussions between academic and industrial researchers. David Cooper concluded the program with guidance for applying for research grants and obtaining help from the industry.

Many academic guests at the conferences have said that, before the conference, they generally had little knowledge of the pulp and paper industry but knew the

industry was under environmental attack. They perceived the industry as slow to change and dominated by old technology. They were unaware of the many technological problems facing the industry and were uncertain of the industry interest in research and development.

### CHANGED PERCEPTIONS

After the conference, the perceptions these guests reported had changed. Typically, they felt the industry was interested in attracting basic science to address its problems, was trying to solve complex problems using a multi disciplinary technical approach, and was concerned about the environment. Most academic participants felt that some relationship existed between industry needs and traditional fields of research. They expressed a willingness to conduct research in these areas if funding were available. The paper industry Research Challenge Conferences with the "seed money" program have increased pulp and paper research. At the time of the conference, the TAPPI Foundation had granted more than US\$ 2 million.

Albert Moore, assistant to the president, Buckman Laboratories, Inc. will serve as the 1999 Research Conference Chair. **TJ**

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