Greetings, I’d like to start off with a huge THANK YOU for all of the support and encouragement from our great students, faculty, WMU Leadership, PTF members and Officers, and the PTF staff! Coming from 25+ years of papermill operations to the PTF has been an adjustment but also a chance for me to explore and share my passion for WMU, CEAS, and the Paper Engineering program! It is truly a thrill to share with potential students and parents the benefits of our program and what we can offer in terms of scholarships, mentoring, internships and co-ops, job placement, and starting salaries. I’ve had quite a few parents ask if they can come back to WMU and get a Paper Engineering degree as well.

We are having a great start to the fall 2019 semester and there’s been a ton of activity around the PTF office. First, we welcome Stefany Tule to our team as our recruitment and outreach specialist! Stefany and I traveled to many Michigan and national college fairs this fall to help get the word out about Paper Engineering and the other great programs that the CEAS offers. Partnering with Scot Conant, CEAS Manager, has proven to be beneficial and we will continue to coordinate our efforts to reach more high school students. The Fall PTF Meeting in October was well attended and exciting as we welcomed three new officers to the Board of Trustees (Steve Myers—Pres.-Elect, Chris Eaton—VP, and Chris Wetherford—Secretary) and it was also my first meeting as the managing director! We also extend congratulations to Steve Myers on receiving an Outstanding Alumni award in October; congratulations Steve! At the banquet we were joined by WMU President Montgomery and his wife Kari. The WMU Advanced Jazz Ensemble provided the entertainment for the evening and our keynote speaker was Beau Groover of The Effective Syndicate. Beau spoke to us about the character traits of some difficult manager stereotypes and also methods and tactics on how to effectively work with them. He also ended up challenging us to “find our pony” and please ask anyone who attended what this refers to! Additionally, we honored and recognized Dr. Richard Hartman ’77, CFO of New-Indy Containerboard for his dedication, contributions, and leadership as PTF President with the Hall of Fame Award and PTF Presidential Gavel Award. We also congratulated all of our scholarship award recipients and sent off our five graduating seniors by sharing their memories of their time at WMU. Two seniors, Geoffrey and Stephen, were presented the Outstanding Senior Awards for their exceptional contributions to the Ts’ai Lun student organization and paper students. Finally, we arranged for a surprise Robert A. Welborn scholarship award to Australia Weatherall (transfer paper engineering student) by department chair, Dr. Kecheng Li and Mr. Chris Welborn. The 60th PTF Annual Banquet was a delightful evening for all who were able to attend!

The PTF is partnering with Tiana Gee, director of corporate and foundations with University Advancement to finish our final fundraising effort for the Endowed Professor campaign. We are super excited to have her support as we look to finish strong! We currently have $1.5 million pledged with only $1 million to go. Please consider partnering with us for this great opportunity to have a Professor of the Practice in the WMU Paper Engineering program!

Jen, Stefany, and I are excited to continue to grow our program and to also provide guidance and mentoring to our future Paper Engineers! Despite WMU declining enrollment trends for several years, Paper Engineering has been continuing to grow! Additionally, this year’s freshmen class includes two Medallion winners—congratulations to Rowan and Sophia!

It’s a great day to be a Bronco and it’s even a better day to be a Paper Engineering Bronco!

Tim ’94
DR. ABDUS SALAM

Dr. Abdus Salam joined the Department of Chemical and Paper Engineering in August 2019 as an assistant professor. Dr. Salam has a PhD in Paper Science and Engineering from the Department of Forest Biomaterials at North Carolina State University in 2015. Dr. Salam worked in the paper and paper chemical research and development division at Georgia Pacific-Koch Brothers from 2015 until joining WMU in 2019. He also served as a post-doctoral research fellow, visiting scientist and research assistant professor at North Carolina State University and University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) from 2004–11 and 2015. Prior to joining UNL, he was a technical director in the textile and paper chemical industry in Bangladesh. Dr. Salam has published 30 research articles, one book chapter, six patents, and provided several oral presentations at technical conferences. His research has been internationally recognized by receiving the Valmet Tissue Technology Award 2015 at the Tissue World Conference in Barcelona, Spain.

Dr. Salam's research areas include paper strength additives, paper coating additives, pulping and bleaching, paper recycling, wet end chemistry-papermaking, air and wet laid paper processing, carbohydrate based natural binder, and biomaterials and biofuels.

STEFANY TULE

We welcome Stefany Tule as the new recruitment and outreach specialist for the Department of Chemical and Paper Engineering. Tule comes with experience as an admissions recruiter at a local community college. She is particularly interested in bringing diversity into the program and plans to expand recruitment efforts to include underrepresented communities. Her strategic plan involves increasing awareness by effectively using social media, and recruiting via college fairs, classroom presentations and WMU/community events. Additionally, she will focus on bringing prospective students to campus to tour the Paper Pilot Plant; a critical factor in the yielding process. Please contact Stefany at stefany.tule@wmich.edu to wish her a warm welcome and share your ideas for how to reach more students and families.
The 2019 Fall Field Trip was a huge success with 44 students attending. This year, students visited Ahlstrom-Munksjo’s integrated mill in Kaukauna, WI on Friday, Sept. 13 and their De Pere mill on Saturday. The students marveled at the substantial operations, cleanliness of the non-union facility and shared that it is the largest machinery they have ever seen.

After the Friday tour, students attended the Third Annual Alumni Dinner at Pullman’s restaurant in Appleton. Nineteen alumni were able to provide valuable mentoring by sharing their different career experiences. The evening included a scavenger hunt game in which alumni told their craziest college class stories for student and alumni prizes.

Additionally, travel time on the bus is filled with bonding, fun and games. However, the time is also utilized effectively to provide resume reviews, mock interviews, and presentations on what to expect at the placement events occurring the following week.

The fall field trip and alumni dinner are important for retention purposes, allowing students to learn more about industry and connect with their peers as well as the alumni. A special thank you to our generous host and sponsor-Ahlstrom-Munksjo! Thank you for an unforgettable experience!

The calendar year is ending in a flurry of activity in the paper pilot plants. The recycling plants remains busy thanks to the continued sustainability efforts of major brands and manufacturers, as well as our new connection to GreenBlue and the How2Recycle label. Our coater has also seen a nice bump in activity from being part of the NextGen Cup Challenge and a recent change in North American capacity. The new paper machine has been running consistently and we are preparing for our first major multi ply trial in December. Busy and exciting times!

Our 2019 Fiber Recycling Course was once again a rousing success. The registration more than doubled in year two and we filled out a medium sized lecture hall! The attendees were once again a great mix of mill personnel, brand owners, and paper purchasers/brokers/recyclers. We are already planning the 2020 Fiber Recycling Course; to be held here Aug. 11–13, 2020. We will also hold our Paper and Paperboard Coating Course next summer; scheduled for July 28–30, 2020. These courses serve the important role of getting people onto our campus to get familiar and comfortable with our equipment and services. They also bring in subject matter experts in from across the country (as speakers) to play an important role in the knowledge transfer our industry needs. Please consider attending or sending someone from your company to one of these great offerings.

Lon ‘99
The Third Annual Paper Industry Networking Fair was held on Wednesday, Sept. 24. Increased demand continued for this valuable event in which invitations are only extended to PTF membership companies. Eleven employers and 60 paper engineering students packed the fair space. Employers appreciate the targeted paper engineering placement event and the ability to schedule interviews in advance of Expo.

Engineering Expo was held the following day on Sept. 25. Expo 2019 demonstrated an overwhelming increase in paper and allied industry employer attendance with 26 companies registered out of a total of 141. The interviewing event on Thursday included 21 paper companies out of 42 registered interviewers. PTF is grateful for the interest in our paper engineering talent. Internship and co-op placement opportunities are the greatest retention tool for students in this specialized engineering discipline. A complete placement report will be shared next June after the academic year reporting concludes.

**Geoffrey Mallet** has accepted a position with WestRock in Battle Creek, MI as a shift supervisor; **Tyler Jones** has accepted a position with Domtar at their Kingsport, TN mill as an entry-level engineer on the K1 Paper Machine; **Austin Gray** is currently evaluating his placement options; **Stephen Bussa** has accepted a position with Novel/Axchem as a Technical Sales Engineer; **Brennan Augst** has accepted a position with Voith as a engineering regional graduate—a rotational position in the South and Midwest regions.

These students have completed an average of three internships and one co-op placement while in school, and they have received PTF scholarships awards averaging a total of nearly $25,000 each. Well done and congratulations!