Meet the Next Generation of Automotive Composites Engineers

The SPE® ACCE is once again hosting a student poster competition, which showcases emerging composites technologies for automotive and ground-transportation applications. This year’s contest is the largest in the conference’s history with 30 graduate students (nearly double last year’s 16) representing 18 universities in the U.S., Canada, and the Republic of Korea (nearly double the 10 schools participating in last year’s competition). Students of winning posters judged to be in the Top 3 of the show will receive plaques at a formal recognition ceremony during lunch on the second day of the conference, and all students will receive monetary prizes to help defray travel expenses, courtesy of competition sponsor, INVISTA Engineering Polymers.

Explaining why the company decided to support this year’s competition, Kurt Burmeister, executive vice-president, INVISTA Engineering Polymers said, “Inspiring future leaders to innovate with passion and find fulfillment in everything they do are core principles at INVISTA. As the auto industry continues to seek innovative solutions to solve today’s challenges, we look forward to seeing the students’ great ideas and creativity throughout this competition.”

Judges made up of media, industry experts, and SPE board members will review all posters with student authors on the first day of the conference. Any attendee of this year’s conference may participate in the judging (please inquire at the front desk for more information on how to become a judge). Students and their posters will be ranked according to 9 criteria:

• Content (student and poster demonstrate clarity of topic, objectives, and background);
• Motivation for research and technical relevance to conference theme;
• Methodology and approach to problem;
• Quality of proposed research results/findings;
• Conclusion are supported by information presented;
• Presentation (display aesthetics are pleasing and there is a logical flow between sections);
• Knowledgeable (presenter has a good grasp of the subject);
• Understandability (poster is effective even without student being present to explain it); and
• Overall rank vs. other posters and presenters.

Since 2008, the SPE ACCE poster competition has been organized annually by Dr. Uday Vaidya, SPE Composites Division board member and education chair, and professor and director-Engineered Plastics & Composites Group, Department of Materials Science & Engineering at University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). This year he is joined by Dr. Leonardo da Costa Sousa, Venkatesh Balan, Michigan State University: Green Composites from Cotton-Gin Waste for Structural Applications
Please join us in welcoming the students and taking a good look at their hard work, which will be on display throughout the conference in the Crystal/Onyx Ballroom. This provides the students with an excellent opportunity to meet and talk with members of the automotive composites community and learn what it is like to work as an engineer or scientist in this field. It also provides OEMs and their suppliers with the opportunity to meet the next generation of automotive composites engineers and scientists and potentially to hire them.