



**WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**

Paper Technology  
Foundation

# Paper Trail

## Summer 2025 Newsletter

### Foundation Updates

Greetings from Kalamazoo!

I'm honored to begin my term as President of the Paper Technology Foundation. It's been 25 years since I graduated from the Paper Engineering program, and reconnecting with fellow alumni has reminded me just how special this community is. Like many of you, I was initially drawn to the program for its scholarships, internships, 100% job placement, and strong starting salaries. But what truly set it apart was the sense of community—students, faculty, alumni, and industry professionals all coming together in a meaningful way. Between the approachable professors and the student mentors who gave insight into internships and classes, I always felt supported during my time at Western. The gathering place was the McCracken Hall “Coffee Room”—the heart of the department where people met, shared ideas, and played Euchre (the state card game of Michigan). While that space has been replaced by the new student center, its spirit lives on.

Today, the Paper Engineering program is thriving. Enrollment has grown from 84 to 117 in just three years, with more growth on the horizon and our Foundation is full of passionate trustees who want to see our industry succeed. Sustainability is driving student interest, and we're investing in the future with two named endowed professorships and increased scholarship funding. If you'd like to support the next generation—through mentorship, financial gifts, or by reconnecting—please reach out. Our students value hearing from those who came before them, and we'd love to see you at an upcoming alumni event.

Tom David, PTF President

### Giving Day Update

On April 16, the Foundation raised  
*\$28,655*  
in scholarship support

Each of your gifts contributed to a strong representation of the paper program across WMU's campus. Thank you to all who participated and invested in the next class of WMU paper engineers!





# Recruitment Success

We're making solid progress toward our goal of 120 students in WMU's Paper Engineering program! So far, 36 are registered for Paper Engineering, with 19 confirmed for Fall 2025. Last fall, we expanded outreach to Project Lead the Way schools, visiting Oswego and Oswego East High School STEM classes and sending 100 targeted mailers to schools across MI, OH, IN, and IL. We also connected with schools alongside some of our PTF partners—Billerud, Graphic Packaging, and Solenis. These in-person visits, along with campus tours and events, remain our most effective recruitment strategies.

I'm continually inspired by the energy and dedication of WMU's paper engineering students. Their excitement for the field—and their eagerness to share it with others—is truly remarkable. Just this past spring semester, students volunteered over 350 hours across 25+ high school outreach events and 11 campus events to support recruitment efforts. That kind of commitment speaks for itself. Their energy, leadership, and dedication are a true reflection of the strength of WMU's paper engineering program. These future engineers aren't just learning—they're leading.

Thank you to all who have supported and celebrated their efforts. The future of paper engineering is in great hands!

Cindy Gleaton, PTF Recruiter

## Follow Along with Us!

Stay up to date with all of the latest Foundation news by following our LinkedIn page! Then hop over and catch up with our students on Instagram to see what they are doing on campus & in their work experience.



## Student Summit 2025

In January of 2025, forty-eight WMU Paper Engineering students attended TAPPI Student Summit in St. Petersburg, Florida. The weekend began with a social mixer, sponsored by industry leaders, where students networked over appetizers and casual conversation. It was a packed weekend with presentations on sustainability, career development panels, and TAPPI Trivia Night, where WMU students were able to connect with peers from other schools. Roundtable mentoring sessions focused on emerging technologies, and students tested their skills in an Engineering Escape Room Challenge. Our very own WMU senior, Ashley Randall represented the program on a student panel, sharing insights from her industry experience! Between their programmed activities, our students took advantage of their free time to explore St. Petersburg beaches on scooters—sunshine included!

Everyone returned energized, inspired, and equipped with new connections for their future careers!



CHECK OUT A  
RECAP OF DAY 2!



# Spring 2025 Graduates

It is always a highlight when we get to recognize our outstanding graduates. Our Spring 2025 graduate placements include:

**TYLER COYNE**

USG  
Otsego, MI

**ALEX HAMANN**

Nalco Water-An Ecolab Company  
Appleton, WI

**EMMA PERRIN**

Domtar  
Hawesville, KY

**ELISHA EWING**

Smurfit Westrock  
Cottonton, AL

**CARTER HOARD**

NSK  
Ann Arbor, MI

**AUSTIN VANDER WEG**

Smurfit Westrock  
West Point, VA

**SHEILA GUBACHY**

Domtar  
Plymouth, NC

**PARKER LANGELLIER**

USG  
Otsego, MI



## Ts'ai Lun Update

It's been a busy and rewarding year for Ts'ai Lun! Most of our spring semester was aimed at revitalizing the Paper Engineering mentorship program. By improving our mentor matching system and introducing mentor groups, we fostered more meaningful connections between students. These groups participated in a semester-long competition that concluded with our first-ever Mentor Group Olympics—a fun and memorable event that set the stage for future engagement.

We also hosted a variety of events that blended new ideas with beloved traditions. Highlights included attending the Student Summit for valuable networking and professional development, a reimagined Galentine's Day featuring pancakes, painting, and pajamas, and a new event called Real Life 101, where upperclassmen shared life skills like budgeting, car maintenance, and how to find housing with underclassmen.

This year's success is thanks to our dedicated leadership team. Parker, Jackson, Katelyn, Paige, Tyler, Ashley, Toby, and Caleb—your hard work made everything possible. I'm beyond grateful to have worked alongside each of you.

Elisha Ewing, Ts'ai Lun President

## Looking Ahead

September 12 WMU Paper Alumni Dinner

September 26 Third Annual Ts'ai Lun Golf Outing

October Paper Tailgate

January Student Summit Luncheon

