



PPG INDUSTRIES, SPE® CO-SPONSOR ACCE STUDENT POSTER COMPETITION

For the third time in three years, the *SPE Automotive Composites Conference & Exhibition (ACCE)* is hosting a student poster competition showcasing emerging technologies in the area of automotive and ground-transportation composites. This year's competition features separate undergraduate as well as graduate classifications and is being co-sponsored by SPE's Automotive and Composites Divisions (who co-organize the conference) and PPG Industries, which has donated monetary awards totaling \$3,000 USD that will be given to the top three poster topics in both graduate and undergraduate categories.

Judges made up of media, industry experts, and SPE board members will review all posters on the first day of the conference. Students and their posters will be judged on 10 aspects, including **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; there is a logical flow between sections; presenter has a good grasp of the subject; plus poster is understandable and effective even without student being present to explain it); and overall rank vs. other posters and presenters. Kevin Richardson, market development manager, PPG Industries will announce this year's winners on the morning of the second day of the show.

For the last three years, the poster competition has been organized by Dr. Uday Vaidya, SPE Composites Division board member and Education chair, and professor and director-Engineered Plastics & Composites Group in the Department of Materials Science & Engineering at University of Alabama-Birmingham (UAB).



Currently, 13 students from eight universities – the largest pool of entrants yet – have submitted paperwork to participate in this year's competition (Auburn University, Georgia Institute of Technology, Michigan State University, Oklahoma State University, Tuskegee University, University of Akron, UAB, University of Southern Mississippi, and Wright State University).

In 2010, 10 posters from six schools (North Dakota State University, Oklahoma State University, Tuskegee University, UAB, University of Michigan-Dearborn, and University of Mississippi-Oxford) were entered into the competition and both monetary prizes and plaques were donated by SPE. The three winners that year were Alfred Tcherbinateh, Tuskegee University (first place); Shaun Crawford, UAB (second place); and K. Lakshminarayan, Oklahoma State University (third place).

In 2009, the first year of the competition, 11 posters from five schools (North Dakota State University, Tuskegee University, UAB, University of Michigan-Dearborn, and University of Mississippi-Oxford) were entered and the winners were: Michael Fuqua, North Dakota State University and K. Balaji Thattai, UAB (tied for first place); Tiffany Nelson, Tuskegee University (second place); and Shiva Shankaran, University of Michigan-Dearborn. That year, Dow Chemical donated monetary prizes of \$500 USD, which were split among the four winners, who also received plaques to honor their efforts.