

## History of the Paper Science and Engineering Department

The UWSP PSE Department had its roots in the Chemistry Department. Eight specialized courses in Pulp and Paper Technology totaling 20 credits were originally offered and taught by Dr. Raymond Sommers beginning in 1969. Because UWSP (then The Wisconsin State University at Stevens Point) was strategically located along the Wisconsin River, which is one of two important papermaking regions in the State, Chancellor Lee Sherman Dreyfus began planning for a Paper Science and Engineering Department in 1970, and Dr. Michael J. Kocurek was hired to lead this effort.

In 1972, the question of where an engineering-oriented program should be located arose. Discussion with the College of Engineering at Madison, UW Central Administration (now UW System), and representatives from the Wisconsin Paper Industry led to the unanimous decision to keep the paper science program at UWSP. Subsequently the Department of Paper Science was created with Dr. Kocurek as its chair in 1973.

Also in 1973, the new curriculum was reviewed by representatives from the entire U.S. Paper Industry. Thirty four corporate executives from the paper industry responded with enthusiastic praise for its excellent design and its balance between academic and practical subjects. This year also saw the program's first graduates.

In 1974, the concept of the minimum undergraduate teaching module required to execute the program was approved by the UWSP and Central Administration (UW System). This was significant because it recognized minimum levels of support required. The agreed to number was 3.0 FTETF.

The University of Wisconsin Stevens Point Paper Science Foundation was organized in 1974 by the Paper Science Department Staff, along with industrial and business leaders. The purpose of the Foundation was to form a tax-exempt, non-profit organization to promote and receive philanthropic gifts to support the Paper Science Program at UWSP.

By 1986, the program had increased the number of its majors from 55 to approximately 200, and a new wing of the Science building was built to house the expanding program. This new wing cost \$2 million and included two labs, six offices and a classroom. During this year, Dr. Kocurek left the program to become the director of the Herty Foundation in Savannah, GA. Dr. Larry Graham assumed the role of department chair.

During 1992, a paper machine was donated to the program by the S.D. Warren Company in Westbrook Maine. This generous gift was accepted and transported to the UWSP campus. Through a WiSTAR grant given to the program by Governor Tommy Thompson and matching funds from the paper industry the machine was refurbished and installed. In 1997 the machine was running and being integrated into the curriculum.

In 2003, upon the retirement of Dr. Graham, Dr. Gerry Ring became interim chair and the chair in 2005.