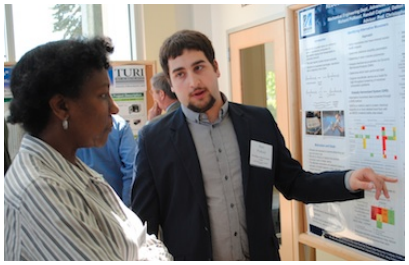
Greener Materials Take Center Stage

TURI Symposium Brings Together Industry and Academia



Mechanical engineering master's student Richard Poillucci discusses research of safer alternatives to styrene with Donna Staker of Tetra Tech.

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By Karen Angelo

Finding green alternatives to toxic chemicals is more successful when researchers and industry work together. To foster that collaboration, the Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI) recently hosted a symposium for UMass Lowell researchers and Massachusetts businesses, including Raytheon Corp., Teknor Apex, Tetra Tech and Alpha Chemicals.

The afternoon included a tour of the new Mark and Elisia Saab Emerging Technologies and Innovation Center, a poster session presented by faculty and students and round-table discussions – all intended to foster connections between industry and faculty.

Each year, TURI awards grant funding to UMass Lowell researchers to help companies find alternatives to toxic chemicals. The grant requires that researchers partner with Massachusetts companies.

"Our academic research program is a powerful way for TURI to match the real-world needs of Massachusetts manufacturers to develop and use safer materials and chemicals with the cutting-edge research interests of UMass Lowell faculty," says Pam Eliason, industry research program manager for TURI. "Our faculty and the future scientists and engineers collaborate with Massachusetts companies to ensure that they are addressing specific applications and challenges faced by companies that want to reduce or eliminate their use of toxic chemicals."

UMass Lowell researchers kicked off the event by presenting the results of their recent research projects, including:

- Safer bio-derived surfactants – Assoc. Prof. Ramaswamy Nagarajan of plastics engineering;
- Safer disinfectants and real-time assessment of efficacy – Asst. Prof. Nancy Goodyear of clinical laboratory sciences;
- Safer adhesives and resins – Assoc. Prof. Daniel Schmidt of plastics engineering;
- Safer coatings for cosmetic nail applications – Asst. Prof. Emmanuelle Reynaud of mechanical engineering;
- Alternative processing conditions for nano-based coatings – Asst. Prof. Margaret

Sobkowicz-Kline of plastics engineering;
- Alternatives to styrene in polyester resins – Asst. Prof. Christopher Hansen of mechanical engineering.

UMass Lowell faculty interested in submitting proposals for TURI grants should download the request for proposals.

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