

**SPE Thermoforming Division  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**SPE THERMOFORMING DIVISION AWARDS TWO SCHOLARSHIPS TO STUDENTS  
SPECIALIZING IN PLASTICS**

**Carol Stream, IL, U.S.A., July 15, 2021:** The Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE) Thermoforming Division has awarded scholarships to one undergraduate and one graduate student to support their continuing studies and active participation in plastics.

The students have been invited to attend the 28<sup>th</sup> SPE Thermoforming Conference<sup>®</sup>, which will take place **September 20-22, 2021 in Grand Rapids, MI**, at DeVos Place, the JW Marriott Grand Rapids and the Amway Grand Hotel. The SPE has awarded both students a trip to the conference which includes the full conference registration.

The scholarship recipients are:

**Olivia Ferki, University of Massachusetts, Lowell**

Olivia Ferki is a graduate student and research assistant, pursuing a M.S. in Plastics Engineering at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell. She is specializing in medical plastics design and manufacturing and hopes to pursue a career in medical polymer research. Her anticipated graduation date is May 2023.

Olivia graduated with a 4.0 GPA from Pennsylvania College of Technology with a B.S. in Plastics and Polymer Engineering Technology and a minor in Mathematics in May 2021. During her time at Penn College, she was an active four-year member of the SPE student chapter and served as Secretary and Vice President (twice). She has also been a member of the Alpha Chi Honors Society since April 2019.

While completing her undergraduate degree, Olivia worked as a resident assistant, a student college relations assistant, a research assistant, and a writing, economics, and mathematics tutor. She enjoyed playing violin in the Lycoming County Community Orchestra and led tours for prospective Penn College students. Olivia was also selected to deliver a speech as the

student commencement speaker.

During the Summer of 2019, Olivia worked as a Research and Development Intern at SEKISUI KYDEX where she executed a product study for an aerospace formulation, conducted material re-formulations to minimize known defects while conforming to ISO low heat release standards for aviation interior specific materials, processed thermoformable sheet using twin conical screw extruders, and performed mechanical and thermal properties tests. During the Summer of 2020, Olivia worked as an Intern and Research Assistant for the Plastics Innovation and Resource Center (PIRC). There she completed her senior project, which consisted of validating and qualifying processing conditions for a new rotational mold. She also assisted in providing educational material and coursework to plastics professionals while also performing materials testing projects.

Olivia worked for the PIRC during the academic school year as a part-time Research Assistant from January 2020 to May 2021. She performed plastics processing and materials testing for the PIRC, supported and assisted in conducting material studies for industry level projects, provided technological resources, and overcame processing challenges to minimize material and part defects. Olivia also interned for Becton Dickinson during the Summer of 2021 as a Materials CoE Intern to explore innovation opportunities and to conduct technology landscaping to improve patient care.

### **Isabella Gayoso, Penn State University**

Isabella Gayoso, from Moon Township, PA, is a rising junior at Penn State University. She is a double major in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering with minors in Entrepreneurship and Innovation and IST for Aerospace Engineers.

During the Summer of 2020, Isabella worked as a Process and Quality Engineering Intern at Brentwood Industries, a thermoforming plastics company in Reading, PA. In Spring 2021, Isabella interned as a Build Reliability Intern at SpaceX in Hawthorne, CA. Isabella is interested in how thermoformed plastics can be used in aerospace applications and hopes to use her experiences to positively impact both industries.

During the school year, Isabella is actively involved in the Society of Women Engineers, Women in Engineering program orientation, Phi Sigma Rho (engineering sorority), Engineering Ambassadors, and undergraduate research. Isabella is passionate about empowering women to pursue and remain in engineering.

“Education is central to all of our activities, from grants and scholarships to the Conference,” said Robert Browning, SPE Thermoforming Division Student Activities Committee Chair. “Supporting the educational endeavors of the next generation of plastics professionals is one of the most important responsibilities that we, as a board, undertake each year. Olivia and Isabella have impressive credentials with bright futures ahead of them.”

Complete information on the Division’s scholarship program and the SPE Thermoforming Conference is available at <https://thermoformingdivision.com> or by contacting Lesley Kyle at 1-914-671-9524 or [lesley@openmindworks.com](mailto:lesley@openmindworks.com).

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THE SPE THERMOFORMING DIVISION is a technical division of the Society of Plastics Engineers, based in Danbury, CT. The Thermoforming Division's mission is to facilitate the advancement of thermoforming technologies through education, application, promotion and research. The Division hosts an annual educational conference and publishes an award-winning technical journal, *SPE Thermoforming Quarterly*®. The Division has also funded over \$275K in equipment grants and tens of thousands of dollars in undergraduate scholarships since it was first formed. For more information, please visit <http://thermoformingdivision.com>.

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