

2017 Champion of Engineering Education Award

Chris Parker, P.Eng.



Chris Parker, P.Eng., is the plant manager of Winpak, and in this position has made great contributions to the education of engineering students. Chris has been an engaged, forward-thinking employer who has consistently contributed to multiple areas of engineering education within the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Manitoba, including the Operational Excellence course, as well as providing unique experiential opportunities to Co-op students through our Co-operative Education and Industrial Internship Program.

By creating 11 new Co-op/IIP engineering student positions within Winpak, Chris has provided excellent opportunities for the experiential education of engineering students. All of the positions have provided students with valuable exposure to production engineering and have provided development of students across a wide range of experience levels. The range of positions spanned from hands-on production floor student positions, which provided production experience to those with no previous engineering-related work experience, to student positions that were a key part of the production engineering department. The unique breadth of roles available at Winpak has created great opportunities for engineering students to continue advancing within Winpak, or to gain valuable production experience before moving on to engineering student roles elsewhere in future work terms. The production experience has provided students with great exposure to lean manufacturing and operations management principles. The inclusion of production floor jobs as part of the engineering co-op job opportunities from a company is unique compared to the opportunities typically offered. These jobs offer a valuable introduction to manufacturing and have been demonstrated to have a great impact on the future careers of engineering students. For many students that were having difficulty finding their first engineering-related work term, the production positions at Winpak have proven to be an important step in their development and has enabled them to obtain highly competitive engineering student positions elsewhere in future work terms. Following the innovative example set by Winpak, many other organizations are now also considering expanding their Co-op/IIP job offerings to include production level job opportunities.

Chris has also contributed to the experiential education of engineering students through sponsoring a Winpak project for the Operational Excellence course. The participation of companies such as Winpak within this course is essential to providing students with real industry problems through which the students gain exceptional experience. Chris has taken this project one step further by using Co-op students to continue to work on these projects and implement some of the recommendations made through the Operational Course. This experience has been valuable for our Co-op students to experience and learn lean manufacturing principals.

In recognition of his dedication to providing engineering students with great opportunities for experiential education, through both the Co-op/IIP program and the Operational Excellence course,

Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba, together with the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Manitoba, is pleased to present the 2017 Champion of Engineering Education Award to Mr. Chris Parker, P.Eng.