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**FPA Announces 2021 Student Flexible Packaging Design Challenge Winners**

*The entries demonstrate a high level of creativity, a strong understanding of the mechanical properties of flexible packaging materials, and the manufacturing processes involved*

**Annapolis, MD, March 10, 2021** – The Flexible Packaging Association (FPA), the leading advocate and voice for the growing U.S. flexible packaging industry, is pleased to announce the winners of the FPA 2021 Student Flexible Packaging Design Challenge. This year's first and second place winners were teams of students from the University of Wisconsin – Stout under the direction of Gary Borges. There were also three honorable mentions awarded for the 2021 competition.

FPA's annual Achievement Awards competition recognizes innovative flexible packaging from across its membership. The industry also believes it is important to encourage and recognize students who are working to become the next generation of packaging designers.

The newly created Emerging Leadership Council (ELC) is now overseeing the Student Flexible Packaging Design Challenge and judged this year's competition. "It was clear that the students put their best foot forward showing out of the box thinking and consumer focused innovation," notes competition judge, Jonathan Quinn, e-commerce Packaging & Shrink Films Market Manager, NOVA Chemicals, Inc., and Chair of the ELC. "All of the students this year deserve extra accolades tackling this contest during a global pandemic. The students were presented with a whole new set of challenges with labs and classes being closed or virtual. The key for me was operational feasibility; there are a lot of great packaging concept ideas out there, but if you can not operationally execute, that package is nothing more than an idea. The first place winners showcased an innovative approach to a consumer challenge while doing so in an operationally feasible format."

The first place winning team is comprised of Caylee Boone, Abbey Dahlseng, Liam Gallagher, and Anna Kent. Their winning entry was for a "Baby Shampoo and a Cup" package. The judges felt that the entry was an innovative concept given the form and function of the design as it reduced the overall footprint of the shampoo package. It would also be easy to pack and the cup functionality provided a unique feature that solved a need for the consumer. The judges also felt this concept would be operationally feasible. The winning team also won an honorable mention for the "Peelable and Resealable Popcorn Gusseted Pouch" they submitted for the competition. The judges thought the pouch would provide an improved experience for the consumer for popcorn vs. the bags used today.



"I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to work on this FPA Student Flexible Packaging Design Competition. It was such a fun and rewarding process to not only see our ideas turn into prototypes but to think of the positive impacts this package could have on the environment and its users," states Boone. "The success our group had would not have been possible without the knowledge and support from our professor, Gary Borges. Our team collaborated well together and we're excited that others viewed our packaging concept as valuable as we did."

According to Kent, "The Student Flexible Packaging Design Challenge was certainly a challenge. But this only encouraged a few other students and me as we brainstormed many ideas and then narrowed our thoughts down and started creating flexible packages and pouches for the challenge. We then researched and understood the logistics and applications of our ideas. Altogether, the challenge encouraged teamwork and innovation and I feel our group had fun doing just that!"

A packaging concept for bandages was the second place winner, also a team of students from the University of Wisconsin – Stout. Connor Erwin, Corey Klatt, and Ben Lindgren, also under the direction of Gary Borges, designed a flexible packaging solution for bandages to improve the current paperboard packaging. The pouch application for bandages was seen by the judges as being highly functional and solving the need for a better travel package for bandages. The team also won an honorable mention for another competition entry they submitted, the "Flexible Travel Shampoo & Conditioner," due to a reclosable feature and that it provided a substitution for rigid plastic.

Team spokesperson Connor Erwin notes, "It was rewarding to win second place in this design competition and receive an honorable mention because we put a lot of time and effort into the Design Challenge. Even though we didn't win first place in this competition, it helped us expand our professional network and knowledge in flexible packaging."

The final honorable mention was awarded to Jai Araujo from San José State University under the direction of Xiaojing (Kate) Liu, Ph.D., for her Running Water — The Water for Runners concept. The judges felt this submission deserved an honorable mention due to its innovative "interlocking" mechanism and saw other applications for the pouches at festivals or hiking.

According to Araujo, "Participating in the FPA competition this year was extra challenging because of the pandemic situation, but with the help of Dr. Kate, I was able to develop and test the prototype. I'm grateful for the honorable mention and pleased that the judges also believe that the concept was a good idea."

The ELC judges for the competition included:

- Jonathan Quinn, e-commerce Packaging & Shrink Film Market Manager, NOVA Chemicals, Inc., ELC Chair
- Adrienne Tipton, Chief Technology Officer, Novolex, ELC Vice Chair
- Evan Arnold, V.P. Business Development, Glenroy, Inc., ELC Advocacy Committee Vice Chair
- Alana Carr, Inside Sales & Marketing Manager, Hosokawa Alpine American, Inc., ELC Education Committee Chair
- Erik Gonring, Director of Sustainability, Novolex, ELC Education Committee Vice Chair
- Simon Hermans, Marketing & Sales Director North America, Südpack Oak Creek Corporation, ELC Leadership Development Committee Vice Chair
- Stacey Isonhood, Product Development Manager, Printpack, ELC Leadership Development Committee Chair

- Mathieu Jeanneau, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, St. Johns Packaging Ltd., ELC Recruitment Committee Vice Chair
- Apurva Shah, Sr. Market Manager, Charter Next Generation, ELC Recruitment Committee Chair
- Clayton Short, Applications Engineer, American Packaging Corporation, ELC Advocacy Committee Chair

For the 2021 competition, FPA received 31 concept outlines from some of the top packaging design programs across the United States. From the concept outlines submitted, 13 were selected to continue to the development phase.

## FIRST PLACE HONORS

	<p><b>Baby Shampoo and a Cup</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Student Team:</b> Caylee Boone, Abbey Dahlseng, Liam Gallagher, and Anna Kent</li> <li>• <b>School:</b> University of Wisconsin – Stout</li> <li>• <b>Professor:</b> Gary Borges, Lecturer</li> </ul> <p>The baby shampoo with a cup alters the way that gussets are seen since they serve a purpose for the product. The flexible material is more sustainable than current shampoo bottles since it would have reduced greenhouse gas emissions during production and transportation, and it is in-store recyclable. This product greatly increases consumer convenience and would reduce clutter in the bathtub area of households.</p>
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## SECOND PLACE HONORS

	<p><b>Band-Assist Bandages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Student Team:</b> Connor Erwin, Corey Klatt, and Ben Lindgren</li> <li>• <b>School:</b> University of Wisconsin – Stout</li> <li>• <b>Professor:</b> Gary Borges, Lecturer</li> </ul> <p>We realized that regular paperboard cartons for bandages were not convenient. We created Band-Assist to improve upon the paperboard design for our consumers. This pouch was designed for easy storage, easy use, and easy traveling. Our pristine design was made with consumers in mind, this pouch can be stored in any small space and even your pocket! Never worry about tearing another old paperboard box, keep everything contained!</p>
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## HONORABLE MENTIONS

	<p><b>Flexible Travel Shampoo &amp; Conditioner</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Student Team:</b> Connor Erwin, Corey Klatt, and Ben Lindgren</li> <li>• <b>School:</b> University of Wisconsin – Stout</li> <li>• <b>Professor:</b> Gary Borges, Lecturer</li> </ul> <p>Have you ever been on a trip but have forgotten either your shampoo or conditioner bottle at home? Well, now you don't have to worry about forgetting one of the bottles at home – you can get them both in a flexible, easy-to-use package. The flexible travel shampoo and conditioner is great for on-the-go by having both shampoo and conditioner in one package and can be easily separated if needed. The package also stands up for easy product pouring when needed.</p>
	<p><b>Peelable and Resealable Popcorn Gusseted Pouch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Student Team:</b> Caylee Boone, Abbey Dahlseng, Liam Gallagher, and Anna Kent</li> <li>• <b>School:</b> University of Wisconsin – Stout</li> <li>• <b>Professor:</b> Gary Borges, Lecturer</li> </ul> <p>The Peelable and Resealable Popcorn Gusseted Pouch drastically improves existing premade popcorn pouches. The flexible package is both innovative and enhanced. The peelable resealable tab allows for easy access and efficient closing. The technical achievement of the package's stand-up rectangular structure allows the package to be shipped more efficiently and accessed easier from a consumer's perspective. The package would require new machinery to be filled and sealed.</p>
	<p><b>Running Water — The Water for Runners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Student:</b> Jai Araujo</li> <li>• <b>School:</b> San José State University</li> <li>• <b>Professor:</b> Xiaojing (Kate) Liu, Ph.D., Assistant Professor</li> </ul> <p>Running Water is a new way to stay hydrated when you go for a run or hike. This innovative pouch has a sports spout on one end and a hole on the other end that can be attached creating a loop that can be grabbed and easily carried. Alternatively, Running Water can be used across the torso or around the waist by attaching the spout of one pouch to another pouch's hole, forming a long ring.</p>

[Click here](#) to download high-resolution photos of the winners.

For more information on the Student Flexible Packaging Design Challenge or the Flexible Packaging Achievement Awards Competition, please visit [www.flexpack.org](http://www.flexpack.org), or contact FPA at 410-694-0800.

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**About the Flexible Packaging Association (FPA)**

The Flexible Packaging Association is the voice of the U.S. manufacturers of flexible packaging and their suppliers. The association's mission is connecting, advancing, and leading the flexible packaging industry. Flexible packaging represents over \$33 billion in annual sales in the U.S. and is the second largest and one of the fastest growing segments of the packaging industry. Flexible packaging is produced from paper, plastic, film, aluminum foil, or any combination of those materials, and includes bags, pouches, labels, liners, wraps, rollstock, and other flexible products. Learn more at [flexpack.org](http://flexpack.org).