Changes and continuing activities in the TPS Lab

**Lab Leadership.**
Dr. Andres Carrano, who has been the Director of the RIT Toyota Production Systems Laboratory since its inception in 2006, left RIT in July to take a position at Auburn University. We miss him already, but feel fortunate for all the work he put into creating and improving this excellent facility that our students and many others in the community benefit from. Graduate students that have worked in the lab expressed appreciation for his “oceans full of knowledge”, being a “great advisor and mentor”, how he could “anticipate your mistake, yet have the patience to let you make it, and then show it as an example to help you realize it”, and his way of “making students of different cultural backgrounds feel comfortable”.

**Toyota USA Foundation Grant**
We have made significant progress developing and testing math and science activities to be delivered in the lab and online via the REMS (Relevant Education in Math and Science) program which focuses grades 5 to 12 students. The lab versions of the 3 manufacturing and 3 distribution activities are up and running, along with the online versions of some of these. Our web site is in place. Also, we have started delivering one of the 3 healthcare activities. National Science Foundation (NSF) Grant
The TPS Lab is being used to support a project funded by the NSF that seeks to improve problem solving skills of students who are deaf. Students participate as “workers” in both warehouse distribution and production line scenarios as part of learning the “A 3” approach to problem solving. Though the study is ongoing, preliminary results strongly indicate that the experiential-based approach is resulting in significant improvement in student problem-solving skills.

**Lab operations and other activities**

**Staffing**
Although we are sad when the graduate students who work with us in the lab move on, we are blessed with a continuing group of excellent “helpers”. Our lab alumni list now includes Christian Lopez and Sourabh Jain, as they are on to the next steps in their careers. Our current lab staff is Atul Ghadge, Sean Murnan, Ajith Sharma, and Kshitij Luthria. Also, Arlene Meyer, who helped us get REMS going, left for another position, and Tina Bonfiglio is now working with us in a similar role.

**Conference**
RIT hosted a Material Handling Industry (MHI) conference in June, attended by 29 people, including many educators, from a variety of universities. The conference included experiential activities in the lab.

**Operations**
Some fixture development and other activities are ongoing, but our focus is on the development and delivery of REMS.