

Rafael Auras, PhD. Named Amcor Endowed Chair in Packaging Sustainability

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Michigan State University (MSU) [School of Packaging](#) professor [Rafael Auras, Ph.D.](#), has been named the **Amcor Endowed Chair in Packaging Sustainability**. This position will focus on research and teaching in the areas of full lifecycle and environmental modeling and analysis, development of novel sustainable materials and solutions, and provides sustainability through leadership across all stakeholders in the packaging value chain.

“The endowment for a faculty position for sustainability represents Amcor’s shared commitment with MSU to excellence and innovation in the future of packaging,” said [Matt Daum, Ph.D.](#), director of the MSU School of Packaging and assistant dean of corporate relations and strategy for the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR).

Global packaging innovator Amcor established the endowment as part of a [\\$10.8 million commitment](#) to the MSU School of Packaging in 2021. Their investment also supported [renovations to the School of Packaging building](#).

“This investment in the School of Packaging is not only exciting for Amcor, it’s important to the future of the industry and to responsible packaging in the U.S.,” said Amcor CEO Ron Delia. “We’re making significant progress in how we design and how we recycle packaging. The students at MSU’s School of Packaging today will be the packaging leaders that will lead this ongoing push for responsible packaging tomorrow.”

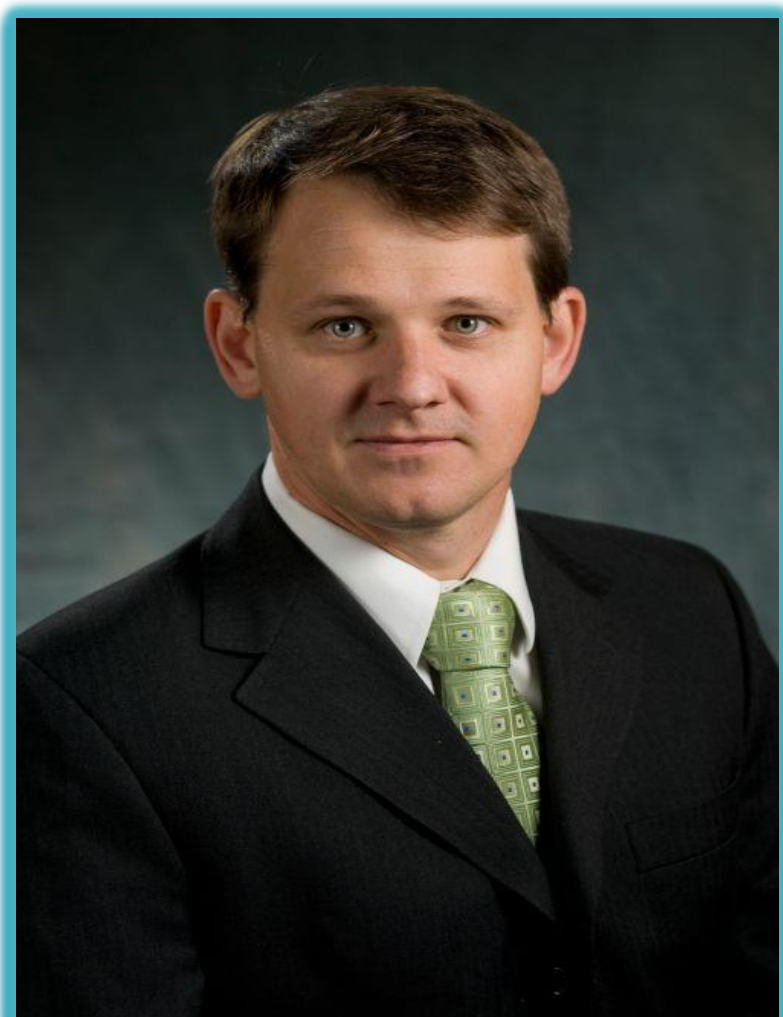
According to Auras, “My research and teaching have evolved to include the development of packaging systems, studying their end-of-life scenario, and trying to understand the decisions people make around packaging. So, when I saw the description of the Amcor chair position, it matched everything I was doing professionally.”

Auras’ research examines the mass transfer in polymers, biodegradable and compostable polymers, life cycle assessment (LCA), packaging waste, and sustainable packaging systems. He has led research projects for Fortune 500 companies and government-sponsored grants. He has also been a featured speaker at national and international conferences regarding the biodegradation and composability of packaging systems, the environmental footprint assessment of packaging using LCA methodologies, and the creation and design of sustainable packaging systems.

Additionally, Auras has coauthored over 150 publications and recently published a book titled *Life Cycle of Sustainable Packaging: from Design to End of Life*.

“I think we need to change the conversation around packaging so we can tackle the real problems of waste in our society,” Auras said. “But there are other things that happen around the world, like malnutrition, scarcity, and food preservation, that also need to be solved, and packaging can be a good vehicle to do that, too.”

Auras earned a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering from the National University of Misiones in Argentina, a master’s degree in materials science and technology from the National University of San Martin in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and a Ph.D. in packaging from Michigan State University.



On behalf of the Center for Community & Economic Development, congratulations Dr. Auras!

Additionally, in collaborative efforts between the Center, School of Packaging, College of Natural Science, Animal Science Department, Department of Political Science, and the School of Engineering, Dr. Auras is also supporting faculty in the development of a Circular Economy Institute at MSU. For more information about circularity and the growth of a more regenerative economy, please see [Circular Economies](#) and check out the faculty forums, videos, webinars, podcasts, other research and more.

To find out more about the Amcor Endowment and School of Packaging, please contact Judi Melena Smelser at smelserm@msu.edu. To connect with Dr. Auras directly, please email aurasraf@msu.edu.

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