Selemon Bekele is currently a Ph.D. student pursuing his degree in polymer science with plans to work in the field of computational polymer science. He came to The University of Akron after a long discussion regarding the vast subject of polymers. Read more as Selemon shares his story as a student in the Department of Polymer Science.

What have you learned that makes a difference to you?
My background before coming to The University of Akron was in physics in an area far from polymer science. However, the skills and expertise I had as a physics student have been quite helpful in my research involving polymers. I appreciate very much the efforts of all the professors I took classes with for their patience and time in guiding me through some of the courses which were completely new to me. The lesson for me, and maybe for others, is that there are always people around to help you achieve what you want, and become successful even in a field of study far removed from your prior experience. The friendships I developed with students from different cultures and backgrounds will remain with me for a lifetime and I greatly appreciate the help I received from many. Thanks to Dona Foster for helping me through my self-study of organic chemistry which was alien to me during the summer before I first started classes and all my study partners for the cumulative exams.

Why did you choose The University of Akron, specifically the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering?
I came to UA after a yearlong discussion with a friend on the subject of polymers, from what they are, to the endless applications they are used for. I just got excited and wanted to be part of the tremendous investment in human intellect for the benefit of mankind.

What are your plans after graduation?
After graduation, I plan to continue working in the field of computational polymer science. I have always been interested in academic positions that involve both research and teaching. I am also open to industrial positions that have a research component to them as well. Above all, I would like to be in a position where I can help others become the best they can be through mentoring and the promotion of science education.

Anything else you would like to share?
It is a joyful experience to be able to study chemical and physical processes at a molecular level using computer simulations. It is becoming more evident than ever that experiments and computer simulations complement and guide each other, and I very much enjoy interacting with experimentalists and learn how they do things in their labs.