Dr. Michael J. Gintert, Chief Engineer, Materials Science, at the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, in Akron, Ohio, discusses his career path since graduating from the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering and how the Polymer Engineering program has contributed to his success.

What is your current position?
I hold the title of Chief Engineer, Materials Science, at the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, in Akron, Ohio. I lead a team of 10 researchers and am responsible for two laboratories, studying the fundamental science and chemistry of interactions between materials combined into rubber compounds for tire applications. Gaining a deeper understanding of these interactions will enable us to develop new materials technologies to meet the ever increasing performance demands of tires around the world.

How has the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering (CPSPE) influenced your career choice?
My studies in the CPSPE opened my eyes to the broad variety of opportunities in the polymer industry, and showed me the value that such a fulfilling career in this field could offer. The extensive network that the CPSPE faculty have built through their research collaborations provide a variety of options for students to explore when seeking a career.

How has CPSPE prepared you for your career?
The experiences that I gained and the contacts that I made through my work as a graduate student in the CPSPE opened doors to many opportunities. The work that I conducted as a graduate student research fellow in collaboration with NASA Glenn Research Center was directly applicable to the work that I was eventually hired to do at Goodyear upon successful defense of my PhD and graduation from the program.

What has your journey been like since graduating from CPSPE?
Since starting at Goodyear in 2007, I have held a number of positions which involved responsibilities such as development of laboratory test procedures, materials processing procedures, manufacturing quality technical support, compound development, defining and driving the company’s global compound strategy, and leading the creation of a new standard process for technology development aligning Goodyear’s three development centers around the globe. I’ve spent time travelling to several manufacturing locations across the U.S., as well as in Canada, Brazil, Chile, and Peru. I’ve also had the opportunity to live in Europe for 6 years, working at development centers in Luxembourg and Germany, which were invaluable experiences both professionally and personally.

What is your career path now?
I’m proud to be a member of Goodyear’s global technology management team, and I look forward to continued opportunities to grow and develop professionally, taking advantage of various positions in the company to bring value to the business, while finding satisfaction and fulfillment in my career.