



The University of Akron
**College of Polymer Science
and Polymer Engineering**

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

The College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering is proud to recognize all of our successful and exceptional alumni who are doing exciting things both personally and professionally. Do you know who our next alumni spotlight should feature? Email us at cpspe-alumni@uakron.edu.

Dr. John Swanson, Senior R&D Engineer with PolyOne Specialty Engineered Materials, discusses his career path since graduating from the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering and how the Polymer Science program has contributed to his success.

How has the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering (CPSPE) influenced your career choice?

From my first experience with polymer science as an undergraduate in Dr. Phil Costanzo's research lab at Cal Poly SLO, I was hooked. However, I was largely ignorant of potential career paths after graduate studies.

I chose to study at the CPSPE due to its reputation as a multidisciplinary polymer powerhouse. It combines state-of-the-art facilities, experienced and connected faculty, well-crafted curriculum, and lectures by visiting scientists in government, academia, and industry. By taking advantage of these opportunities, my career path as a product development scientist was set.

How has CPSPE prepared you for your career?

Without the breadth of experience, knowledge, and guidance offered by the CPSPE faculty and staff, it would have been extremely difficult to find where I "fit" in the polymer world and how to prepare myself for the next stage of my career. From Dr. Hamed's first lecture on the glory days of Akron rubber research, to Dr. Dhinojwala's discussion of the intricacies of sum frequency generation spectroscopy, to my love/hate relationship with column chromatography in Dr. Joy's lab, every lesson taught the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for launching my career in the right direction.

What has your journey been like since graduating from CPSPE?

I was recruited out of CPSPE to join the first class of PolyOne's R&D Leadership Development Program in Avon Lake, OH. Since then, I have been working as a product development scientist at PolyOne, learning the ins-and-outs of thermoplastic composite formulation, compounding, and processing. I'm fortunate to live close enough to Akron to attend CPSPE Polymers Appreciation Day for Alumni & Industry every year and catch up with the college and research.

What is your career path now?

I am still early in my career, celebrating three years with PolyOne in June. The first two years were spent in the rotational R&D Leadership Development Program, and for the last year I have worked for the Specialty Engineered Materials business unit. I am responsible for North American R&D for our LubriOne™ lubricated and wear-resistant formulations, as well as assisting with R&D for Gravi-Tech™ density-modified formulations. I love showing off examples of our materials — the products I've worked on range from lead-free thermoplastic ammunition to next-generation consumer speakers.

Is there anything else you would like to share about yourself or your family?

I met my wife not long after graduating CPSPE in 2016. She teaches high school physical science and chemistry

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in Cleveland – I knew she the one when she suggested we dress up as Ms. Frizzle and the Magic School Bus for Halloween. We tied the knot in June at Squire’s Castle. We were so happy to celebrate the day with friends and family, many of them CPSPE alumni (including my advisor, Dr. Joy!)

