The College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering is proud of the intellectually rich experiential learning environment our faculty provide. Tell us about a faculty member that you want to see in the spotlight by emailing us at cpspe-alumni@uakron.edu.

Dr. James Eagan is an Assistant Professor of Polymer Science. We recently had the pleasure of speaking with Dr. Eagan about his new career at The University of Akron’s College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering. Read more about his life and career below.

Tell us something about yourself:
My hometown is Austin, TX with family roots in New Orleans, LA. As a result, I love spicy foods, hot weather, and live music. Staying in the southern US, I obtained my B.S. at Emory University in Atlanta, GA. I moved north and gave up my love of hot weather in order to obtain my Ph.D. at Columbia University and conducted research as a postdoc at Cornell University. I have worked as a lab scientist at Saudi Aramco and played central roles in two startup companies before joining the faculty at CPSPE this Fall (2019).

What were the driving factors in your decision to join the CPSPE faculty?
My focus on improving plastic sustainability is impossible to accomplish as a single research lab in some academic building. It will require coordinated effort between many groups, departments, and industries. There is no comparable college or city that centralizes the resources needed to achieve these goals like Akron and the CPSPE.

What’s your teaching philosophy or your outlook on higher education?
I believe students’ interests will evolve over time and I encourage everyone to learn in any area they find fascinating. Many revolutionary discoveries and inventions have been made by individuals who utilized their skills in a seemingly unrelated field.

What are some of your favorite things to do when you’re not teaching?
I am passionate about music and enjoy playing guitar, piano, and singing. Having just moved to Ohio I am also enjoying reconnecting with my golf game.

What do you love most about your job at The University of Akron, and your work through your particular department?
All my colleagues are interested in fundamentally the same materials which is exceptionally unique for any department. This opens collaborations and presents me with the opportunity to learn from every professor, researcher, and student within the polymer science department and CPSPE.

What are your goals for CPSPE and your department?
I am dedicating a lot of effort to improving the public perception of plastics. Through my research on sustainable polymers and support from my colleagues with a wide range of expertise I plan to discover pragmatic solutions problems of plastic pollution and recycling. A key goal in my pre-tenure career is to make a fundamental breakthrough in how we reuse plastic and deploy this solution locally.

What is one thing that you hope each of your students learned from you?
The modern world is overwhelmingly complex, but applying their knowledge and investigative skills of the laws of nature they can start to make sense of the challenges we face and play a role in addressing them.