



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

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Tell us about a talented student you want to see in the spotlight by emailing us at cpspe-alumni@uakron.edu.

Szu-Hao Cho is currently studying to earn his doctorate in Polymer Engineering under Dr. Nicole Zacharia. Read more about Szu-Hao and his academic journey in CPSPE.

How does your major fit into your life's plan?

Polymers are widely used in our daily lives due to their unique characteristics. From plastic bags, to water bottles, to car tires, polymers are everywhere. We can even call this age the "plastic age". However, plastics also create serious pollution to our world and it is difficult to deal with. My career plan is to become a polymer engineer because I want to contribute to our society by making really useful polymeric products without sacrificing the environment. The polymer engineering program at The University of Akron really helps me toward my goal since it covers not only the fundamental knowledge of polymers, but also the manufacturing process, which is crucial in realizing where the pollution comes from.

What have you learned that makes a difference to you?

I think what really makes a difference to me from what I have learned in my Ph.D. study is "teamwork". Discussion and working with other people is really important because different perspectives or opinions can always give you the new insight to the problem you are dealing with. Two heads are always better than one.

Why did you choose The University of Akron, specifically the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering?

The polymer program at The University of Akron is well-known worldwide. Even in Taiwan, there are so many professors or people in the industry who have graduated from CPSPE at Akron. I want to learn the most cutting-edge knowledge or technology in polymers, and that's why I chose the polymer program at The University of Akron.

Tell us about your experience in an internship or research project.

My research project mainly focuses on making functional surfaces. Functional surfaces are important because they can be applied in many fields such as self-cleaning, self-healing, or antifouling. I really like my research projects because, except for understanding the physics behind the polymer structure and the surface properties, I can really apply my research in a specific area that people truly care about.

Who is your favorite professor (or staff person) and why?

My favorite professor, of course, is my advisor Dr. Nicole Zacharia. She gives me the flexibility to explore my research projects, and she is always willing to listen to my thoughts and ideas and gives me really constructive and useful opinions. We can always go to her if we encounter some difficulties in research or real life because she really cares about her students.

What are your plans after graduation?

My plan after graduation is to work in industry as a polymer engineer. I especially want to work in a Research and Development department because I want to apply my knowledge and skills learned here at UA to produce really useful products for this world.

