



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.

Brittany Pellegrine is currently studying to earn her doctorate in Polymer Engineering under Dr. Mark Soucek. Read more about Brittany and her academic journey in CPSPE.

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

Polymers are used in many applications, and studying them requires knowledge in various sciences, including chemistry, physics, engineering and even biology. Getting a Ph.D. in a such a multi-disciplinary field means learning a variety of skills that set you up for different opportunities. My plan is to enter into industry in a polymer research and development role. This degree has set me up for this possibility.

What have you learned that makes a difference to you?

A Ph.D. teaches you a lot about persevering. Experiments often don't work, and you don't have time to get hung up on the failure. You just have to move onto the next thing and figure out what went wrong.

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

During my undergraduate research, I realized that I was much more interested in the final properties of a material than in synthesizing that material. This led me to focus on a graduate degree in chemical engineering. I ultimately chose The University of Akron because of the prestige of the polymer program and the ability to work in multi-disciplinary and collaborative environment.

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

Being in Dr. Soucek's group, we have the opportunity to work on many projects partnering with industry, which is an excellent way to learn new skills. One of the projects we're currently working on is starting a small business around a bio-based resin that was created in our lab for use in coatings and composites. The material is a green alternative to more harmful, petro-chemicals that are currently used in this application.

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

Diana Woolf is my favorite CPSPE staff member. Diana truly cares about the students and is constantly willing to go above and beyond the requirements of her job to help students. She keeps our lab areas safe, provides guidance for projects involving hazardous materials, and she does all those crazy triathlons! She's an inspiration with her fundraising for firefighters with PTSD.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan to go on to a job in industrial research and development. My eventual goal is to get into a management role, and lead development of more sustainable and green chemistries.

