



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. Mike Makowski**, Senior Research Associate at PPG Industries, 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?

My time at CPSPE was instrumental in helping me recognize my curious nature, and validated my desire for continuous learning. The interactions, mentoring and scholarship provided by such a diverse faculty helped me realize the importance of understanding the big picture in approaching novel solution spaces for most problems we encounter. CPSPE was unique in encouraging students to embrace, understand, and then leverage, concepts across many classical disciplines including chemistry, physics, material science and engineering. The collaborative philosophy and broad interests of the faculty within CPSPE certainly influenced my career, leading me to seek creative ways to innovate across a broad spectrum of applications and markets.

How has CPSPE prepared you for your career?

CPSPE provided an invaluable foundation in the fundamentals of polymer science, soft matter physics, synthetic methods, characterization of materials, structure-property relationships, and even process engineering. Exposure to so many sub-disciplines has allowed me to bridge the gap between subject matter experts across many, often diverse, functions, and to effectively facilitate communication to help nucleate and drive collaboration and innovation.

What has your journey been like since graduating from CPSPE?

Since leaving Akron, I have enjoyed the opportunity to contribute to a very broad range of technology platforms, application spaces, and end-use markets including: high performance structural composite materials, water treating, paper processing, and mining applications, polymer stabilizers, novel coatings crosslinkers, nano and micro composites, rubber reinforcement and compounding, corrosion mitigation, controlled release technologies, protective and decorative coatings technologies, functional coatings, self-assembled materials, engineered transparencies, and novel OLED and photochromic materials. The solid foundation received at CPSPE has allowed me to explore a broad landscape of technologies and applications with confidence, and I believe that CPSPE remains a leader in providing such a unique context across disciplines.

What is your career path now?

My sincere desire, at this point in my career, is to facilitate the success of our next generation of innovators through teaching and mentoring, and to continue to identify emerging technologies to accelerate the development of solutions for important challenges and needs, which seemingly evolve, and present themselves, at a faster pace each day.

