Dr. Hoang Pham, Principal Scientist and Technical Leader at Avery Dennison Corporation, discusses his career path since graduating from the College and how the Department of Polymer Science has contributed to his success.

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

The University of Akron’s College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering has always been a premier program worldwide. Being a part of the college was not only exciting, but a privilege. The graduate program offered is designed to prepare students, not only to focus on academia, but to train students for industrial work. My decision to stay with CPSPE was not only influenced by the intriguing topics taught by passionate professors, but their camaraderie, expertise, and enthusiasm for teaching. For example, Dr. Eberhard A. Meinecke was instrumental in my success at CPSPE and my career. He was a great teacher, advisor, and mentor. Working with him allowed me to learn and experience both aspects of the field through conference presentations and my research dissertation, which allowed me to find my fascination for polymer sciences and engineering.

How has CPSPE prepared you for your career?

CPSPE is clearly a strong technology focused college. The academic programs are designed with strengths in research with special focus in applied research. Starting in the classrooms, professors designed courses to focus on new and current technologies using literature focusing on new ideas and trends while teaching the fundamentals through renowned textbooks. The ability to train a researcher to understand the literature, test our learning through cumulative exams, and develop a fundamental knowledge of polymer (macromolecular) science through model derivations and the feeling of dimensions has been a great impact to my career as a technical leader for an institution/corporation. The second part of the training comes from your own research and dissertation. Although you have the freedom for performing your research, working with one of the strong CPSPE mentors challenges you in a new light. It was an honor to have the opportunity to apply my learning to an industrial environment and needs. CPSPE programs provided me with ammunition, such as the ability to understand the scientific methodology for research, which has played a dominate role in succeeding at my career.

What has your journey been like since graduating from CPSPE?

After graduating from CPSPE, I was fixed on continuing research to develop new applied science. I joined Dow Chemical Company as a Research Chemist in Midland, MI. After 8 months and doing 2 short-term projects, I transferred to the Freeport, TX facility. After another two short-term projects, I joined the Polycarbonate Research Department. With the training I received from CPSPE, I was successful in developing several new polycarbonate blend technologies leading to many commercial applications. Examples such as: PULSE 2000EZ, a high flow blend for injection molding applications such as instrument panels in automotive, and CALIBRE, a high flow resin for lighting and optical discs applications. Not only had I done product development, but also successfully implemented process design, such as designing extrusion screws for polycarbonate compounding and profile sheet extrusions. My career also led me to move towards polyolefin based resin development, such as Thermoplastic Olefin (TPO) for automotive applications used in Ford Thunderbird Instrument panels and polyolefin films development for packaging. After 23 plus years, I decided to join Avery Dennison Corporation to be the technical leader in the Films Focused Organization. Here, I was able to develop and commercialized a nine-layer blown film barrier resin, a shrink label film and am now leading the technical development of next generation films for pressure sensitive face stocks. During the course of my career, I am (continued on next page)
a volunteer on the Board of Directors for the Engineering Properties and Structure Division, a division of The Society of Plastics Engineers. Overall, my career as a technical leader has been very fruitful and the trainings that CPSPE had embedded in me is a significant contributor.

What is your career path now?
I currently work at Avery Dennison Corporation in Mentor, Ohio. I lead the technical development for next generation and future films face stock that will be competitive in the pressure sensitive label market. In addition, I participate in the Prime Film Product Line Team to ensure Avery has a sound and competitive product portfolio emphasizing our core manufacturing competency. Furthermore, my responsibilities include developing the science and technologies with collaboration with academia that can enable Avery to be competitive and successful in their future product designs. In my spare time, I enjoy volunteering with The Society of Plastics Engineers as a mentor for young scientists and engineers.