

## New Dean Named to the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering

By Millie Pearson



Dr. Stephen Z.D. Cheng

**To Our Alumni...** We are proud to present Professor Stephen Z.D. Cheng who, since August, has taken the helm as the new dean of the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering. He has been a faculty member at The University of Akron since 1987, entering as an assistant professor who worked his way up through the ranks until he was made a full professor of polymer science in 1995.

In 1998, Cheng was named the Robert C. Musson Trustees Professor of Polymer Science. He later served as chair of the Department of Polymer Science from 2001 until 2005. Cheng received a B.S. in Mathematics at East China Normal University in 1977, an M.S. in Polymer Engineering at Donghua University in 1981 and a Ph.D. in Polymer Chemistry at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1985.

In giving the following interview for the "Connect with DPE" newsletter, the dean showed great enthusiasm and clarity with a vision for the future and involvement with our alumni that we are pleased to convey to you, our readers.

### Dean Cheng, what would you like to say to our students and alumni as you begin your new leadership role with the college?

"We are amazed at the successes and the impact that our students and alumni have had. Our students are the most important part of this college and are our best proof of this program's value, while our alumni are the college's greatest asset. We continue to want our students to enter the workforce with the best training and to excel as the most effective people in all of their endeavors. With that perspective, we are in the midst of an historical opportunity to expand our college's strategic focus. This will broaden our students' skill sets, enabling them to impact a larger set of technical communities and making them more valuable employees as a whole. To successfully accomplish this expansion, we need to better understand the experiences of our alumni throughout their careers and learn from their successes. To this end, we want to enhance our relationship with our alumni by

reaching out more. We are getting better at this, but more work still needs to be done."

### Would you like to describe to our alumni any plans for expansion of the polymer engineering program with the thought that we'll be celebrating our 25th anniversary next year?

"The Department of Polymer Engineering fills a vital role in the world. The advances made in this department – with its distinctive focus on engineering – bridge the technically complex gap between scientific knowledge and industrial commercialization. The culture, goals and skill sets embedded in the Department of Polymer Engineering are unique compared to any other polymer program and, as such, make it an invaluable asset to the college. To broaden the impact of this unique environment, we plan to expand the focus of the polymer engineering program from mainly plastics to actively include nano-, bio-, energy and environmental technologies linking our extensive polymer engineering expertise with these emerging technologies. In doing so, we hope to bring the department's technical expertise to bear on high value-added areas that will benefit society. When I visit the polymer engineering complex, I want to feel the excitement and enthusiasm for new inventions, technologies and fabrication techniques that will improve the way we live. To be globally competitive, I see four Cs: communication, cooperation, collaboration and competition. We want to be at the forefront constantly utilizing these four Cs to create new, high-value technologies that can be translated into high margin products in this extremely competitive business environment."

Continued On Back Cover

## Dr. Jake Mulligan: Polymer Engineering Alum in the Spotlight

By Mark Soucek

As many of you may know, Dr. Jake Mulligan is a recent graduate of the polymer engineering program. He graduated from Dr. Miko Cakmak's group in spring 2004. Afterward, Mulligan took a postdoctoral position at North Carolina State University in the Department of Food Science. He recently started in a new position as an assistant professor at the University of Georgia in the Department of Food Science.

Mulligan's background in polymer engineering was an ideal training for food science, which is largely based on food processing. He evidently has always had a secret passion to be a food scientist — he has five graduate students and one technician working for him on three main research areas: online monitoring of food processing, nanocomposites and biomaterials, and the third is application of polymer engineering to food science.

For example, Mulligan is using online monitoring for a cereal extrusion project, and is modifying an extruder to more effectively process pectin. During an interview, he said his experience in polymer engineering was very applicable to his new career.

In addition to his research with Cakmak, Mulligan cited his job as lab manager of the extrusion and blow molding machines in the polymer institute as particularly useful in creating his skill and knowledge base. Also, he said that his knowledge of polymer science was crucial in aiding his understanding of the complex reactive mixtures often found in food science.

According to his former adviser, Mulligan's accomplishments are no accident. The UA alum has a strong work ethic that served him well during his graduate program and will serve him well in the future.

Mulligan returned to his alma mater recently to present a seminar on his clay nanocomposite work. We all wish him the best in his new post.



Dr. Jake Mulligan with his Alaskan Malamutes Petra and Buddy.

SPORTS

## Mark Your Calendar 2007

**Nov. 8-9** Bayer Lectureship by Dr. Buddy Ratner, Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of Washington

## 2008

**May 4-8** ANTEC 2008  
Midwest Express Center,  
Milwaukee, Wis.

**May 6** Alumni Reception at ANTEC,  
6-7:30 p.m.  
Location TBA

**May 20-21** Waterborne and Innovative Coatings: Sink or Swim 2008, Annual Technical Symposium  
The University of Akron,  
Student Union

**Aug. 6-8** 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the Akron Polymer Engineering Center (now known as the Institute of Polymer Engineering)  
Details forthcoming.

### We Want to Hear From You!

Alumni, we would like to hear from you — new jobs, new degrees, family announcements. Please send us your information and/or updates by contacting Sarah Thorley, coordinator of academic programs. We welcome your news, photos and any other items you would like to share with your fellow alums!

#### Please direct correspondence to:

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#### Editors

Mark D. Soucek; Sarah Thorley

**Connect With DPE** is published by the Department of Polymer Engineering at The University of Akron for DPE alumni, students, faculty, contract professionals, staff and friends.

## Message from the Chair

By Sadhan Jana

I remember you all at this exciting time of the year when I see many new faces on the campus, in libraries, the bookstore, Student Union and in our classrooms. They appear somewhat lost, somewhat in awe and somewhat wary of what is yet to come, but all full of enthusiasm. This sight of our future also reminds me that we had an exciting past that revolved around you and that gives me assurance that our future will be as rewarding as our past. At this exciting moment, therefore, friends, I share with you some new and positive developments in the department, in the college and in the University.

We are very excited that 10 new graduate students have joined us in fall 2007 and have brought with them a wealth of diversity. We have three from China, one from India, one from Korea, one from Peru, two from Turkey and two from the U.S. Of these 10 students, three are female. All are interested in working toward a Ph.D.

The total number of students in the department is currently 75 — 72 are pursuing Ph.D.s and three are in M.S. programs.

Dr. Stephen Z.D. Cheng started his term as the second dean of our college on Aug. 1, 2007. If you have not done so, please send him a congratulatory message about his new responsibility (scheng@uakron.edu). You will enjoy reading about his plans for the college and the growth of the polymer program at The University of Akron in a separate section of this newsletter.

President Luis M. Proenza has recently reported that the enrollment of the University has grown again — to 24,700 for fall to 2007, a nearly 5 percent

increase over last fall. This is a strong indication that The University of Akron has created a place in the minds of young and talented students as the coveted landscape of learning. Many new buildings and lines of green trees have been added to our beautiful campus. This reminds me to inform you that we will be celebrating 25 years of the polymer engineering program at The University of Akron Aug. 6-8, 2008. Please mark your calendar and plan to join us with your family.

Dr. Clive Bucknall of Cranfield University has joined us this fall as the Harold A. Morton Visiting Professor. He is an authority on rubber toughening and is giving a series of lectures on "Fracture Resistant Polymers: Performance and Evaluation." Many of our senior students are enjoying his class and his company.

Dr. Buddy Ratner from the Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of Washington will deliver the second Bayer Lectureship on Nov. 8 and 9, 2007. Please see if you can attend this lecture series as well.

I wish the best of times for you and your family in the coming months.



Sadhan C. Jana  
Department Chair

## Sink or Swim Coatings Symposium

By Mark Soucek

This year's Annual Coating Symposium, "Sink or Swim," sponsored by the Cleveland Coating Society, was held at The University of Akron Student Union. It was the third consecutive year that UA has hosted the event. This year the honor was particularly special, since it was also the 50th anniversary of the symposium. Co-sponsors with the University were RPM, NorthPack and XIM, Inc.

There were 21 technical presentations from industry and academics, with most of the established coatings programs in the United States represented. Several presentations were made by members of Dr. Mark Soucek's research group, including Jamie Hasseman and Dr. Mrunal Thatte. Soucek coordinated two short courses — Fundamentals of Coatings and UV-curing of Coatings.

The event was well-attended — more than 150 coating scientists, in addition to more than 50 industrial exhibitors — were on campus. Attendance was more diverse this year, drawing not only the usual regional attendees, but national and international attendees as well.

There was much praise for University facilities, in particular the state-of-the-art theatre where the technical presentations were held, the ballroom that housed the exhibits and the overall ambience of the campus.

Since the participants were very happy with the resources here at The University of Akron, it has been decided that the Sink or Swim Coatings Symposium will be held here May 20-21, 2008.

#### Exhibit Hall at Sink or Swim



**ALUMNI**

**Dr. Camilo Cano (Ph.D. 2005)  
Erika Pedraza (M.S. 2006)**

The couple announces the birth of their first child, Nicolás Cano Pedraza, on April 9. Cano is senior engineer in the Materials Development Group at Pactiv Corporation in Canandaigua, N.Y.



*Umberto Catignani receives the Gold Pinnacle Award from Tim Womer at ANTEC 2007.*

**Umberto Catignani (M.S. 1996)**

*May 2007* – Received the Gold Pinnacle Award on behalf of the Southern Section of the Society of Plastics Engineers at the Annual Technical Meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio. Catignani is president of Orbital Plastics Consulting in Atlanta; co-founder, partner and principal instructor for the Paulson School of Molding; and president of the Southern Section of SPE.

**Dr. Michael Gintert (Ph.D. 2007)**

*February 2007* – Won the Best Oral Presentation Award in the Polymeric Materials Section for his work “Optimum Clay Organic Treatment for PMR-15 Organoclay Nanocomposites” during the Conference on Undergraduate and Graduate Student Research held at the University on Feb. 15. Gintert is senior compounder with The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company in Akron.

**Dr. Andrew Guenther (Ph.D. 2000)**

*March 2007* – Was selected in March to be one of two U.S. Navy civilians participating in the 2007 U.S./U.K. Exchange of Early Career Scientists. The four-week program involves touring approximately 10 Department of Defense laboratories in the United States and 10 Ministry of Defense laboratories in the United Kingdom to help form collaborative networks.

*May 2007* – Guenther was promoted to a DP-4 (equivalent of a senior engineer) while serving as the head of the Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering Branch at the U.S. Naval Air Warfare Center in China Lake, Calif.

*July 2007* – Received the Michelson Laboratory Award for outstanding technical accomplishments in service to the U.S. Navy.



*Dr. Carla Martins with husband Julio Azevedo and son Gonçalo.*

**Dr. Carla Martins (Ph.D. 2004)**

Dr. Carla Martins and husband Julio Azevedo announce the birth of their first child, Gonçalo, on Nov. 5, 2006. Martins is an assistant professor of polymer engineering at the University of Minho in Portugal.

**Dr. Shane Parnell (Ph.D. 2002)**

Dr. Shane Parnell accepted a position as senior polymer scientist in R&D at Callaway Golf in June. He and his family now reside in Carlsbad, Calif.

**FACULTY**

**Dr. Mukerrem Cakmak**

*Fall 2006* – Received \$29,400 in continued funding from Texchem-Pak for the “T-Sigma Eco Research Program.”

*May 2007* – Received \$25,000 from Kent State University (subcontract of NorTech) for “Development of Electroopticgoggle System Through Injection Compression Process.”

*July 2007* – Awarded \$75,000 in unrestricted monies by Procter & Gamble for research in the field of ISMB process.

**Dr. Chang Dae Han**

*May 2007* – Published a two-volume research monograph: Rheology and Processing of Polymeric Materials. Vol. 1: Polymer Rheology (707 pages). Vol. 2: Polymer Processing (579 pages) published by Oxford University Press.

**Dr. Hendrik Heinz**

*April 2007* – Awarded \$3,300 from Sika Technology for “Computational Services for Data Acquisition.”

*September 2007* – Received \$67,721 from ETH Zurich for “Molecular Modeling for Construction Chemicals.”

**Dr. Avraam Isayev**

*July 2007* – Received \$333,134 from the National Science Foundation and an additional \$20,000 match from the Ohio Board of Regents for “Theoretical and Experimental Studies of Novel Process for Compounding of Carbon Nanotubes and Nanofibers in Polymer Melts.”



*Dr. Sadhan Jana giving the plenary at Chemtech 2007.*

**Dr. Sadhan Jana**

*April 2007* – Awarded \$40,000 in funding from Parker Hannifin for “CMPND – Low Permeability Materials for LPG Hose Applications.”

*April 2007* – Received \$1,000 from Add Specialties, Inc. dba Beantown Marketing & Promotions for “Testing of Latex Balloons.”

*May 2007* – Delivered keynote address “Studies on the Mechanisms of Nanoparticle-induced Morphology Development in Immiscible Polymer Systems” at the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Polymer Processing Society in Salvador, Brazil, May 28-31.

*June 2007* – Delivered plenary lecture “Shape Memory Thermoplastic Elastomers and Their Nanocomposites” at Chemtech 2007, International Conference in Colombo, June 20-23, hosted by the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon, Sri Lanka.

*June 2007* – Awarded \$3,000 by Diamond Innovations for “Testing of Feasibility of Diamond Nanoparticles for Dental Implant Formulations.”

*September 2007* - Received \$211,464 from the National Science Foundation for “GOALL: Collaborative Research: Processing of Self-assembled, Bottom-up Polymeric Nanocomposite Materials.” An additional \$14,897 in funding from the Ohio Board of Regents was also awarded to support this research.

*September 2007* - Awarded a \$30,000 training grant (GSRP Fellowship) from NASA to support the work of doctoral student, Jason Randall, on “Shape Memory Silica Aerogel Composites for Lightweight Thermal Insulation.”

**Dr. Thein Kyu**

*April 2007* – Received an additional \$108,000 in continued funding from the National Science Foundation for “Photopolymerization Induced Phase Transitions & Evolution of Morphology Landscape in Holographic Polymer Dispersed Liquid Crystals and Photonic Crystals.”

**Dr. Kyonsuku Min**

*March 2007* – Awarded \$25,000 from eVionyx, Inc. for “Education Materials for Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) Education Center.”

**Dr. Mark Soucek**

*Fall 2006* – Received \$136,771 in continued funding from Toyota Technical Center, USA, Inc. for “Inorganic/Organic Hybrid Coatings and Stratification of Two or Three Phase Coatings (Phase II).”

*March 2007* – Awarded \$130,000 by the BASF Corporation for “New Usages and Understanding of Unique Performance Properties of Specialty Polyols.”

*May 2007* – Co-authored with Dr. Jianyun He an article titled “UV-Curable Vinyl Functionalized Siloxane Colloids,” for the May/June issue of RadTech Report. The cover of the issue also featured the renowned sculpture by artist Dale Chihuly that is located on campus in front of the Goodyear Polymer Center.

**CONTRACT PROFESSIONALS**

**Sarah Thorley**

*July 2007* – Was one of two national fellowship recipients to attend the Summer Institute of the National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals in Las Vegas July 11-13. NAGAP and School Guide Publications sponsored the fellowship.

**STUDENTS**

**Feina Cao**

*March 2007* – Received third place in the poster competition during the 2007 PolyImpact Northeast Ohio Conference held at Case Western Reserve University. Cao was recognized for her work, “Nano-clay Tethered Shape Memory Polyurethane Nanocomposites.” She is a fifth year doctoral student studying with Dr. Sadhan Jana.



Adviser Dr. Thein Kyu with Ticona award recipient Neelakandan Chandrasekaran.

### Neelakandan Chandrasekaran

June 2007 – Received an Excellence in Engineering Plastics Award from Ticona at a luncheon ceremony June 12. Chandrasekaran is a third year doctoral student studying with Dr. Thein Kyu.

### Sedat Gunes

March 2007 – Attended the Polymer Nanocomposites 2007 conference organized by the Society of Plastics Engineers in Bethlehem, Pa. Gunes won second place in the poster competition with his presentation titled "Evaluation of Nanoparticulate Fillers for Shape Memory Polyurethane Nanocomposites." He is beginning his fourth year of doctoral study this fall with Dr. Sadhan Jana.

### Byoung-Jo Lee

February/March 2007 – For his work on "Strengthening of Polyolefins by Bottom-up Self-assembly of POSS Nanoparticles," Lee won a Best Poster Award during the Conference on Undergraduate and Graduate Student Research held at The University of Akron Feb. 15. In March, his research received second place in the poster competition during the 2007 PolyImpact Northeast Ohio Conference held at Case Western Reserve University. Lee is a fourth year Ph.D. student studying with Dr. Sadhan Jana.

### Polymer Engineering Student Organization

March 2007 – Awarded the 2007 Outstanding Student Chapter Award by the Society of Plastics Engineers. The award was presented to PESO president, Sylvain Seif, during SPE's Annual Technical Meeting May 6 in Cincinnati, Ohio.



Ticona award winner Sylvain Seif and his adviser, Dr. Miko Cakmak.

### Sylvain Seif

June 2007 – Received an Excellence in Engineering Plastics Award from Ticona at a luncheon ceremony June 12. Seif is a third year doctoral student studying with Dr. Miko Cakmak.

# ANTEC 2007



Umberto Catignani (M.S. 1996) and current Ph.D. student Shanshan Wang.



Hoang Pham of Dow Chemical with Byung-Hwa "Elliot" Lee (Ph.D. 2001) and Eung Kyu Kim (Ph.D. 2000).



Parimal "Perry" Vadhar (M.S. 1985), Sadhan Jana, Kalpesh Patel (M.S. 1994), Ramprasad Halthore (M.S. 1999), Amrutheswar Puttarudraiah (M.S. 2003), and Karnav Kanuga (Ph.D. 2006).



Sadhan Jana, Michael Gintert (Ph.D. 2007), current doctoral students Sedat Gunes and Feina Cao, Kwang-Jea Kim (Ph.D. 1998), and Hao-Wen Chiu (M.S. 1995/Ph.D. 1998).



Jatin Panchal (M.S. 1999) and Sirarpi Bicakci Jenkins (Ph.D. 2000)



Current doctoral students Todd Lewis and Antonio Carrillo.

# ANTEC 2007

# Polymer Engineer's 25th Anniversary By Sarah Thorley

On Aug. 6-8, 2008, the Department of Polymer Engineering at The University of Akron is planning a three-day celebration in honor of the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Akron Polymer Engineering Center, the forerunner to today's Institute of Polymer Engineering. The program will include a number of events as outlined below.

## WEDNESDAY, AUG. 6, 2008

Attendees and their families will be welcomed to the celebration with a family picnic at Munroe Falls Metro Park. There will be plenty of opportunities to relax and enjoy games and entertainment. Complimentary shuttle service will be provided between campus and the park.

## THURSDAY, AUG. 7, 2008

The day will start in the Student Union with registration and a continental breakfast, followed by a symposium of alumni presenters. During lunch, the 2008 Distinguished Alumni Award will be presented. The afternoon will showcase a student poster session and building tours. The day's events will conclude with a cocktail mixer, banquet and entertainment.

## FRIDAY, AUG. 8, 2008

The day will again start in the Student Union with registration and a continental breakfast, followed by a lively roundtable discussion by several well-known individuals in the polymer industry. The celebration will conclude by late morning, offering attendees the opportunity to enjoy other activities in the Akron area, including museums, athletic events, concerts, zoos, botanical gardens, amusement parks and more!

Please mark your calendar now to join us for this celebration! You will receive specific details and registration information in the spring. Any questions may be directed to the chair of the event, Dr. Avraam Isayev at [aisayev@uakron.edu](mailto:aisayev@uakron.edu).

Additionally, if you would like to contribute to the department for this event or other areas, please return the form below as indicated.

# Alumni Support

## Department of Polymer Engineering Alumni Support

Name

Address

City  State  ZIP

Country

Year of Graduation  Degree

### Yes, I would like to contribute to the department.

I have enclosed my contribution of \$  (please make checks payable to The University of Akron).

I have submitted my contribution online at <https://www.uakron.edu/development>

Please charge my gift of \$  to:

Card number (VISA, MasterCard or Discover)

Expiration Date

Signature

Date

### I would like to designate my contribution to:

- Polymer Engineering's 25th Anniversary Celebration
- Polymer Engineering Scholarships
- The University of Akron (in general)
- Other (please specify):

### Please return this form and your contribution to:

David Day  
Department of Development  
The University of Akron  
Akron, OH 44325-2603, USA

## Fall 2007 Graduate Student Demographics

### Degree Program

72 Ph.D.

3 M.S.

### Gender

52 Male

23 Female

### Enrollment

62 Full time

13 Part time

### Race

48 Asian

2 Black

4 Hispanic

21 White

### Residency

11 Native U.S.

2 Permanent Residents

62 Foreign

### 16 Countries Represented

Brazil

Bulgaria

China

Colombia

India

Iran

Japan

Malaysia

Mexico

Nigeria

Peru

South Korea

Taiwan

Thailand

Turkey

United States

### Year in Program

11 First Year

13 Second Year

14 Third Year

11 Fourth Year

12 Fifth Year or More

14 Part time as near graduation

## Years of Dedication Honored

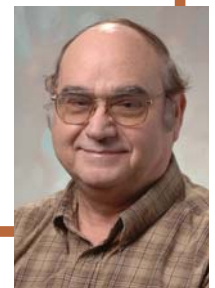
The Institute of Polymer Engineering said goodbye to a very familiar face in June.

Karl Gissinger, who well served the institute as an engineering technician,

and later engineering technician senior, retired

in June. He had been employed with the University since 1986. His wife, Penny, and members of the department and college faculty, contract professionals and staff attended a farewell party in his honor at Martin University Center. Congratulatory remarks were given by Drs. Avraam Isayev and Sadhan Jana.

We wish Karl all the best in this new chapter of his life and thank him for his service and contributions to the department and institute.



Alumni Support

## How would you like to reach out to the more than 390 alumni of the Department of Polymer Engineering?

"Our alumni are essential to our continued development, and we ask for their support as we work to continuously improve our program. We rely on our alumni who have entered industry, as well as academia, to provide their feedback concerning the skill sets that the current and future workforce needs to be successful and about how the program can better equip our students. This communication with people at the forefront is critical to our relevance in this rapidly changing environment. We hope that you will also view this relationship as a valuable resource for new ideas and opportunities."

## Highly Cited Researchers

By Sadhan Jana

The Department of Polymer Engineering is very proud to announce that Dr. Chang Dae Han and Dr. James L. White represent The University of Akron in the list of highly cited researchers compiled by ISI Web of Science.

As per ISI (<http://portal.isiknowledge.com/portal.cgi?DestApp=HCR&Func=Frame>, accessed Aug. 31, 2007), highly influential and scholarly researchers during the 1981-1999 period "in 21 broad subject categories in life sciences, medicine, physical sciences, engineering and social sciences" make this list of highly cited researchers. It is also known that the list of highly cited researchers contains less than 0.5 percent of all researchers who published their work. This makes inclusion in this list even more coveted.

Both Han and White are highly cited researchers in the category of materials science.

## Recent Polymer Engineering Graduates

### SPRING 2007

#### Pratyush Dayal, Ph.D.

"Dynamics and Morphology Development in Electrospinning of Polymer Solutions"

Adviser: Dr. Thein Kyu

#### John Jenkins, M.S.

"Ultrasonic Decrosslinking of Crosslinked Polyethylene"

Adviser: Dr. Avraam Isayev

#### Guillermo Jimenez, Ph.D.

"Characterization of Poly(methyl Methacrylate) and Thermoplastic Polyurethane-Carbon Nanofiber Composites Produced by Chaotic Mixing"

Adviser: Dr. Sadhan Jana

#### Ximei Sun, Ph.D.

"The Devulcanization of Unfilled and Carbon Black Filled Isoprene Rubber Vulcanizates by High Power Ultrasound"

Adviser: Dr. Avraam Isayev

#### Jianguo Zhou, Ph.D.

"Processing of Generic Circuits by Conductive Adhesives: Geometrical and Rheological Considerations"

Adviser: Dr. Erol Sancaktar

### SUMMER 2007

#### Michael Gintert, Ph.D.

"A Novel Approach to Obtain High Performance Layered Silicate Thermoset Polyimide Matrix Nanocomposites"

Adviser: Dr. Sadhan Jana

#### Jaein Suh, Ph.D.

"Comparative Structure Development of Various Polyolefins in Injection Molding Process"

Adviser: Dr. James L. White

#### Zhiyi Yang, Ph.D.

"Rheology of Miscible Polymer Blends with Hydrogen Bonding"

Adviser: Dr. Chang Dae Han

## PESO

By Todd Lewis, 2007-08 PESO President

The Polymer Engineering Student Organization (PESO) is committed to providing a strong link between students of different social and academic backgrounds. Through technical and social events, students are encouraged to interact with their peers and with industry to make their time here at The University of Akron enjoyable and fulfilling.

To add to a renowned academic program, PESO promotes professional growth by hosting career-building seminars and student presentations, sponsoring student participation in technical conferences and by organizing plant tours. We work to provide a number of opportunities for students to acquire the necessary skill sets that cannot be taught in the classroom, but that are required in today's global market.

PESO also engages in community services. The first ever PESO Polymer Awareness Day was held in the fall of 2006 with more than 10 area high schools attending. Polymer engineering faculty and students worked with local schools to provide a hands-on experience to promote the study of science, and more specifically, that of polymers. By building a link between our students and future generations, we are sharing the knowledge we've gained and the enthusiasm we have for this field.

While the University provides the setting for vigorous academic advancement, PESO organizes social events throughout the year to promote department and campus unity. Events include a yearly welcome picnic for incoming students, bowling/pool night, ice skating, paintball, Christmas party, camping, movie nights and opportunities to play sports. PESO also hosts events that pair its members with other graduate departments. These events allow us to interact with like-minded individuals who are also seeking to further develop their knowledge and their lives.

Polymer Awareness Day

