Faculty Focus: Dr. Xiong Gong  by Cheryl Slusarczyk

We give a warm welcome to our newest assistant professor of polymer engineering, Dr. Xiong Gong. Prior to joining The University of Akron, he served as a research scientist at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he had the privilege of working with Professor Alan J. Heeger, a Noble Laureate, and his group. Gong also served as senior scientist and manager of advanced materials and devices at CBrite, Inc., in Goleta, Calif.

“In the past three years, we have worked on polymer photo detectors,” says Gong of his time at CBrite. “We were able to develop polymer photo detectors, which are better than any photo detectors made by inorganic materials, in terms of spectroresponsibility and detectivity. I was very proud that we were able to advance our project from Phase I to Phase II, six months in advance, and receive $10 million to support this project.”

Born and raised in Dunhuang, China, a famous tourist city located in the northwest area of China, Gong earned an undergraduate degree in chemistry at Northwest Normal University, a master’s degree in chemistry at Lanzhou University and a Ph.D. in physics at Nankai University, all in the People’s Republic of China.

During his career, Gong’s research has primarily focused on materials and devices of semiconducting polymers. He holds 20 pending/filed patents and has more than 100 scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals and five book chapters to his credit.

Gong also has served as a guest professor at the South China University of Technology, where he says, “I particularly enjoyed working with Professor Yong Cao, one of the greatest scientists in China.”

When asked to share something we might not otherwise know about him, Gong says, “I like sports very much, particularly beach volleyball.”

Gong’s advice to the doctoral students in our department is to work hard, be self-motivated and willing to learn from others. He credits his own parents, elder sister and wife as influences in his education.

He and his wife, Lei, have one son, Keven, 3. “He brings a lot of happiness into our family,” Gong says.
We have covered a lot of ground in the last six years.

First, we have established communications with almost all our graduates. We have instituted Alumni Day at The University of Akron and an alumni reception at ANTEC to meet and greet you.

Second, we have grown to become the largest faculty in our history with 15 full-time faculty members (two are in the search process).

Third, our research has evolved dramatically in the last five years. We are no longer a program with a heavy reliance on extrusion and injection molding. Our up-to-date curriculum prepares our graduates to serve the needs of both present and future industries. We are a leader in innovation and defining new, future research areas. A number of faculty members have become entrepreneurs and are offering unique solutions to novel industrial problems.

Fourth, our faculty members are consistently receiving visibility in national and international societies with fellowships, research and education awards, and editorships of technical journals. The department is now home to two highly respected journals of our profession – Polymer Engineering and Science, and Advances of Polymer Technology, both published by Wiley.

Fifth, our faculty members are prolific writers and fundraisers. A series of research monographs and books have been authored by our faculty, in addition to about six peer-reviewed journal articles being produced per faculty member per year. The research expenditure also tripled over the last six years. Our research and educational infrastructures have seen gradual uplift, although more is needed in coming years. The new National Polymer Innovation Center, a landmark facility in the University’s effort to cement a long-standing relationship with industry, opened in fall 2010.

Sixth, the contract professionals and staff have dramatically changed the working environment in the department office with teamwork, efficiency, professionalism and proactivity. As an administrator, I could not have asked for more.

As I recount these successes, let me inform you that it is time for a change in leadership. I will quietly enjoy my experience leading this wonderful department. Most pleasing to me are the numerous personal interactions I have had with some 400 alumni during the last six years. Our next newsletter will carry a message from our new chair. All my colleagues are confident that we will be able to make positive strides in several strategic areas in coming years. For the time being, I wish you and your family a very happy time.

Best wishes,

Sadhan C. Jana
Department Chair
“And the Winner Is...”

**ALUMNI**

**Dr. Sunil Acharya (Ph.D. 2005)**
Works as an independent consultant for engineering and energy services in the greater Philadelphia area.

**Dr. Juan Adams (Ph.D. 2007)**
Has accepted a position as process engineer with Tyco Electronics in Menlo Park, Calif.

**Sunil Advani (M.S. 2003)**
Sunil and wife, Renu, announce the birth of their first child, a daughter, Ananya, on July 7, 2010. Advani is self-employed in the manufacture of rigid and flexible PVC pipe, tubing, hoses and floor mats, in Jalgaon, India.

**Dr. Ravishankar Ayyer**
**Dr. Ravishankar Ayyer (M.S. 2003/Ph.D. Case Western Reserve University 2009)**
Is technical manager of plastics with Lehigh Technologies in Tucker, Ga.

**Lan Bai (M.S. 2001/M.S. Statistics 2003)**
Serves as senior product development engineer at Advanced Composites, Inc., in Sidney, Ohio.

**Dr. Vardhan Bajpai (Ph.D. 2005)**
Vardhan and wife, Minakshi, announce the birth of their second child, a daughter, Yashi, on Sept. 16, 2010. He serves as project leader at Seldon Technologies in Windsor, Vt. Bajpai recently received a $490K Phase II SBIR award from the National Science Foundation for continuation of his work on multi-walled carbon nanotube based fuel-water separators.

**Adam Beers (M.S. 1999)**
Is technical service engineer at Belzona, Inc., in Miami, Fla.

**Dr. Feina Cao**
**Dr. Feina Cao (Ph.D. 2008)**
Serves as senior research chemist at Lubrizol Advanced Materials in Brecksville, Ohio.

**Dr. Jae Hyug Cha (Ph.D. 2001)**
Works at Dong Yang Rope Manufacturing Company in Busan, South Korea.

**Dr. Neelakandan Chandrasekaran**
**Dr. Neelakandan Chandrasekaran (Ph.D. 2010)**
Is senior product development engineer with the Personal Care Division of 3M Company, in St. Paul, Minn.


**Dr. Do-Hoon Chang (Ph.D. 2000)**
Serves as principal research engineer at Samsung/Chel Industries in South Korea.

**Abdulaziz Asiri (M.S. 2003)**
Received a certificate of appreciation from Saudi Aramco leadership for heading a project that implemented the first composite piping in hydrocarbon service for Saudi Arabia. In addition, he was recognized for actively participating in implementing nonmetallic material companywide. Asiri is on temporary assignment for Saudi Aramco with Arkema and the Institute of French Petroleum in France.

**Abdulaziz Asiri (center) with senior vice presidents of Saudi Aramco.**

**Pritam Das**
**Pritam Das (M.S. 2004)**
Is project manager at Milgard Vinyl Extrusions in Tacoma, Wash.

**Dr. Pratyush Dayal (Ph.D. 2007)**
**Mehmet Demiray**

*Mehmet Demiray (M.S. 1996)*
Serves as sales manager TMENA at DuPont Türkiye,
DuPont Performance Polymers, in Istanbul.

**Swati Deshpande**

*Swati Deshpande (M.S. 2000)*
Is a product engineer at Morgan Ceramics, Certech,
in Wood Ridge, N.J. She is completing an MBA in
Management at New Jersey Institute of Technology.

**Dr. Taner Dirama**

*Dr. Taner Dirama (M.S. 2002/Ph.D. Polymer Science 2005)*
Is a scientist with Procter & Gamble in
Cincinnati, Ohio.

**Newlyweds Jason and Krystle Drum.**

*Krystle Dziens Drum (M.S. 2010)*
Krystle Dziens and Jason Drum were married
Aug. 14, 2010, in Akron, Ohio. She is a research and
development scientist with Ovation Polymers in
Medina, Ohio. He is completing a doctorate in
polymer engineering at UA.

**Dr. Ayca Ertekin**

*Dr. Ayca Ertekin (Ph.D. 2008)*
Has accepted a position as senior development
engineer at Tyco Electronics in Menlo Park, Calif.

**Dr. Wonlai Feng (Ph.D. 2004)**
Is an associate at First Solar in Perrysburg, Ohio.

**Dan Festa with youngest son, Dillon.**

*Daniel Festa (M.S. 1993)*
Daniel and wife, Debbie, welcomed the birth of their
fourth son, Dillon Michael, on Feb. 2, 2010. He joins
older brothers Danny, 7; Damian, 5; and Dante, 3. Festa
is product manager at Associated Materials/Alside in
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

**Dr. Atanas Gagov (Ph.D. 2007)**
Is a research engineer for Corning, Inc., in
Corning, N.Y.

**Sanjeev Gaikwad (M.S. 1994 /M.B.A. Cleveland State University 1997)**
Serves as market segment manager at Cytec
Engineered Materials in Arlington, Texas.

**Dr. Tito Garza-Lopez (M.S. 2000/Ph.D. Arizona State University 2009)**
Is an instructor in the Department of Chemistry and
Biochemistry at Arizona State University.

**Dr. Keshav Gautam**

*Dr. Keshav Gautam (M.S. 1999/Ph.D. Polymer Science 2002)*
Is a research and development manager with
Georgia-Pacific in Decatur, Ga.

**Dr. David Gerrard (Ph.D. 2000)**
Serves as engineering manager at Baker Hughes
in Houston, Texas.

**Dr. Sayata Ghose Belcher (Ph.D. 2004)**
Has been selected as one of 12 recipients of the 2011
Outstanding Young Manufacturing Engineer Award
given by the International Awards and Recognition
Committee of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers. She was recently promoted to senior
research scientist at the National Institute of
Aerospace in Hampton, Va., and continues to be a
resident researcher at NASA Langley
Research Center.

**Sudip Ghosh (M.S. 1994/MBA University of Iowa 2004)**
Is global manufacturing engineering manager
for John Deere Water in San Marcos, Calif.

**Dr. Rajesh Gomatam (Ph.D. 2002)**
Has been promoted to senior field engineer ERP
Integration at OSIsoft in Philadelphia.

**Dr. Abhishek Guha (M.S. 2003/Ph.D. Case Western Reserve University 2007)**
Has been appointed senior electrochemist with
Rayovac in Madison, Wis.
“And the Winner Is...” CONTINUED

Dr. Sedat Gunes
Dr. I. Sedat Gunes (Ph.D. 2009)
Is a senior research engineer with 3M Company in St. Paul, Minn.

Lijuan He (M.S. 1997)
Is staff engineer at Codman & Shurtleff, Inc. (division of Johnson & Johnson) in Raynham, Mass.

Meagan Hill Marko with daughter Marley.
Meagan Hill Marko (M.S. 2005)
Meagan and husband, Jon, announce the birth of their first child, a daughter, Marley Elizabeth, on Nov. 30, 2009. She serves as project engineer for Cascade Engineering in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dr. Wenyi Huang (Ph.D. 2006)
Hongyan Chen (M.S. 2008)
The couple announces the birth of their second child, daughter Emma Zilin, on Aug. 7, 2010. Huang is currently a post-doc in the Department of Polymer Engineering with Dr. Chang Dae Han. Chen is pursuing an additional graduate degree in statistics at UA.

Suzette Iskander (M.S. 1994)
Is a polymer consultant and adhesives and polymers expert through her own company, PLSI, in Huntersville, N.C.

Dr. Prashant Joshi (Ph.D. 1999)
Is involved with two new start-up companies: OceanFuels, Inc., based in Dallas, Texas, concentrates on algae-based applications in lubricants, pharmaceuticals and biofuels, and International Dynamics Corp. (IDC), based in New York and Ankara, Turkey, develops new green energy projects in Turkey.

Measunor Kadota
Masanori Kadota (M.S. 1997)
Is president and owner of You and Earth System Co., Ltd., in Bangkok, Thailand, which develops production management software for Japanese companies in Thailand.

Bimal Kalvani (M.S. 1991/MBA University of Chicago 1995)
Heads Kalvani & Company, based in Schaumburg, Ill., which specializes in business turnarounds and mergers and acquisitions advisory services.

Dr. Karnav Kanuga (Ph.D. 2006)
Is a product development specialist in the renewable energy division at 3M Company in St. Paul, Minn.

Dr. Hyunjung Kim (M.S. 1997/Ph.D. Louisiana State University 2004)
Is senior chemist in Chromatographic Services at AMPAC Fine Chemicals in Rancho Cordova, Calif.

Dr. Kwang-Jea Kim (Ph.D. 1998)
Has joined Dong Ah Tire & Rubber Company in its Bukjeong factory in South Korea.

Dr. Namil Kim (Ph.D. 2010)

Sumeet Kumar (M.S. 1998/MBA Indiana University 2005)
Has joined MonoSol, LLC, in Portage, Ind., as senior manager for product development.

The Lee family, left to right, Shane, Kyungmin, Yeounju and Deborah.
Dr. Kyungmin Lee (Ph.D. 2002)
Is a research scientist with the U.S. Air Force Research Lab, Materials and Manufacturing Directorate, at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio.

Ivor Lewis (M.S. 1992/MBA University of South Carolina 1997)
Is marketing manager for GraTech International in Cleveland, Ohio.

Dr. Chengtao Li
Dr. Chengtao Li (Ph.D. 2003)
Is senior polymer processing engineer with Dart Container in Mason, Mich.
Edgar Marquina (M.S. 2010)
Is a process engineer with Ovation Polymers in Medina, Ohio.

Dr. Tsang-Min Huang (Ph.D. 2010)

Dr. Rushikesh Matkar (Ph.D. 2007)
Promoted to LF TD process engineer in the Ultrapure Water Group at Intel Corporation in Hillsboro, Ore.

Dr. Alexei Melnikov (Ph.D. 2010)
Is a research and development engineer with System Seals in Cleveland, Ohio.

Dr. Domasius Nwabunna (M.S. 1996/Ph.D. 1999)
Is senior development engineer at Spartech Corporation in St. Louis, Mo. He was appointed in spring 2010 as a series editor for the John Wiley & Sons Series on Plastics Engineering and Technology based upon his record of publications and scientific accomplishments in the polymer industry.


Dr. Pavlo Paramonov (Ph.D. 2005)
Is managing director of Multidisciplinary Insights, LLC, in San Francisco, which provides interdisciplinary science consulting services in nanoscience, chemistry, physics, computational materials science and bioengineering.

Dr. Sang Eun Shim (Ph.D. 2002)
Sang Eun and wife, Clara Cho, announce the birth of their second child, daughter Yuna, on March 15, 2010. She joins older brother, John. Shim was recently promoted to associate professor of chemical engineering at Inha University, South Korea.

Fred Shockey (M.S. 1996)
Is chairman and CEO of WinSell, Inc., in Akron, Ohio. The company distributes color concentrates, engineering plastics, master batches, color compounds and resin regrind for plastics and related industries.

Dr. Chang Hoon Song (M.S. 1994/Ph.D. 1999)
Serves as lead R&D engineer with PolyOne Corporation in Suwanee, Ga.

Prabhu Soundararajan (M.S. 2003)
Is growth leader of gas sensor business at Lumasense Technologies in Santa Clara, Calif.

Vijay Tandel (M.S. 1994/MBA University of Michigan 2005)
Serves as director of global supply chain with Albany International in Albany, N.Y.

Hemant Thakkar (M.S. 2003)
Is a partner and technical director of his family’s business, Pawan Rubber Products, in Pune, India, which manufactures meteorological balloons, consumables and instruments for the weather forecasting industry.

Kalpesh Patel
Kalpesh Patel (M.S. 1994/MBA Wright State University 2010)
Is regional sales manager (eastern U.S.) at PolyOne Corporation in Centerville, Ohio.

Dr. Jairo Perilla (Ph.D. 2004)
Promoted to chair of the Department of Chemical and Environmental Engineering at the National University of Colombia.

Anand Ramanujam (M.S. 1998/MBA Northwestern University 2006)
Is senior pricing manager at PepsiCo Canada in Toronto.

Dr. Sangheon Rhee (Ph.D. 2000)
Promoted to director of innovation at Tekni-Plex, Inc, in King of Prussia, Pa.

Dr. Edward Park (right) receives the CEO Award from Freudenberg-NOK president and CEO, Dr. Mohsen Sohi.

Dr. Ho-Sung (Edward) Park (Ph.D. 1990)
Received the Freudenberg-NOK CEO Award at the company’s Toast to Technology celebration Sept. 24, 2009, in Plymouth, Mich. The award is Freudenberg-NOK’s highest honor for overall outstanding achievement. Park, a senior staff chemist, was recognized for having the patent voted to be the most innovative of the year for his FluroXprene® patented technology. He holds 33 patents, with an additional 26 in the application process.

Dr. Shane Parnell (Ph.D. 2002)
Shane and wife, Harumi, announce the birth of their first child, a son, Max Hikaru, on July 27, 2010. Parnell is materials manager at Callaway Golf Company in Carlsbad, Calif.

Fred Shockey (M.S. 1996)
Is chairm an and CEO of W inSell, Inc., in Akron, Ohio. The company distributes color concentrates, engineering plastics, master batches, color compounds and resin regrind for plastics and related industries.

Perry Vadhar
Parimal (Perry) Vadhar (M.S. 1985)
Promoted to project leader – materials platform at Sealed Air Corporation in Duncan, S.C.

David Valladares (M.S. 2002)
Is account manager at MicroStrategy in Madrid, Spain.

Tilak Varma (M.S. 1991)
Serves as senior project manager at Corning Life Sciences in Kennebunk, Maine.

Dr. Dongbiao Wang (Ph.D. 2005)
Is project chemist with Veyance Technologies (formerly Goodyear Engineered Products) in Fairlawn, Ohio.
Ben and Shanshan Wang Cordy with new baby Alex.

Dr. Shanshan Wang Cordy (Ph.D. 2007)
Shanshan and husband, Ben, announce the birth of their first child, a son, Alex, on June 29, 2010, in Medina, Ohio.

Dr. Haijun Xu (Ph.D. 2010)

Dr. Weibin Zha (Ph.D. 2006)
Weibin and wife, Linping, announce the birth of their first child, a daughter, Allison, on Aug. 19, 2010. Zha is a research and development specialist with Nomocor in Zebulon, N.C.

Dr. Jianguo Zhou (Ph.D. 2007)
Is a research engineer at Wright Materials Research in Beavercreek, Ohio.

Dr. Baris Yalcin
Dr. Baris Yalcin (Ph.D. 2004)
Is an application development specialist with 3M Company in St. Paul, Minn.

Dr. Kevin Cavicchi
September 2010 – For his research on “Supramolecular Assembly of Low Molecular Mass Organogelators,” Cavicchi received an initial $85,000 of a total overall award of $255,000 from the National Science Foundation.

Dr. Dr. Avraam Isayev
October 2010 – Chosen as the 2011 George S. Whiby Award recipient by the Rubber Division of the American Chemical Society. The award honors outstanding international researchers of chemistry and polymer science, and recognizes innovative research as well as outstanding contributions to the integration of chemistry and polymer science into educational systems.

Dr. Avraam Isayev

Dr. Sadhan Jana
September 2010 – Recognized as honorary professor of National University of Colombia, Bogota, Sept. 24.


Dr. Weibin Zha (Ph.D. 2006)
Dr. Weibin Zha and wife, Linping, announce the birth of their first child, a daughter, Allison, on Aug. 19, 2010. Zha is a research and development specialist with Nomocor in Zebulon, N.C.

Dr. Dr. Kevin Cavicchi
Dr. Kevin Cavicchi
September 2010 – For his research on “Supramolecular Assembly of Low Molecular Mass Organogelators,” Cavicchi received an initial $85,000 of a total overall award of $255,000 from the National Science Foundation.

Dr. Hendrik Heinz
September 2010 – Awarded $4,000 from the National Science Foundation for travel support for international speakers for a symposium on Simulation of Hybrid Interfaces and Polymeric Materials at the 240th ACS National Meeting in Boston.


June 2010 – Awarded $25,000 from Procter & Gamble as an unrestricted gift in support of his research.

May 2010 – Received the CAREER Award from the National Science Foundation. The Faculty Early Career Development Program of the NSF offers the CAREER Award in support of junior faculty who exemplify the role of teacher-scholar through outstanding research and excellent education. For his work on “Unraveling Molecular Mechanisms of Bimineralization,” Heinz received an initial $181,000 of a total overall award of $430,000.

May 2010 – Awarded $22,000 from Universal Energy Systems for “Understanding and Designing Biotic-Abiotic Interactions Using Computational Models.”

April 2010 – Received $6,930 in continuing money from Sika Technology for “Computational Services for Acquisition of Data”.

Dr. Sadhan Jana (seated center) at the Royal Golden Jubilee with (clockwise from left): Boonharn Du-Udomying (M.S. 1993), Dr. Wirunya Keawwattana (Ph.D. 2002), Dr. Piaywit Koombhongse (Ph.D. 2001), Dr. Pasaree Laokicharoen (Ph.D. 2000), Dr. Penvisa Pitsatok, and Dr. Rathawanan Kaeawpanya Magaraphan (M.S. 1993/Ph.D. Polymer Science 1996).

April 2010 – Invited speaker at the Royal Golden Jubilee Ph.D. Congress XI (RGJ-Ph.D. Congress XI) in Bangkok, Thailand.

Dr. Alamgir Karim
September 2010 – Awarded $295,864 by the U.S. Department of Energy for “In-Situ Neutron Scattering Determination of 3D Phase-morphology Correlations in Fullerene-block Copolymer Systems.”

June 2010 – Received $103,000 from the National Science Foundation for “Collaborative Research: Fundamentals of Block Copolymer Ordering During Cold Zone Annealing.”

FACTOR
**“And the Winner Is...” CONTINUED**

Dr. Thein Kyu  


**Dr. Robert Weiss**  
November 2010 – Served as external reviewer of the Materials Engineering Program at the University of Cincinnati, Nov. 3-4.

October 2010 - Delivered the Chevron Phillips Plenary Lecture at the Macromolecules and Interfaces Institute Symposium held at Virginia Tech, Oct 11.

Served as co-PI on a successful Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative proposal to the Office of Naval Research for “Rational Design of Advanced Polymeric Capacitor Films.” Of the total $4.5 million award, Weiss will receive $524,722 for three years.

Boggs and Greg Sotzing, all from the University of Connecticut; Curt Breneman, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; Mike Chung, Penn State; and Sanat Kumar, Columbia University.

Appointed to serve on the committee for local arrangements for the 2011 Society of Rheology National Meeting in October 2011 in Cleveland.

August 2010 - Elected a Fellow of the American Chemical Society during the ACS Fall National Meeting in Boston. The honor is bestowed upon distinguished scientists who have demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in chemistry, and made important contributions to ACS, the world’s largest scientific society. Weiss is the only ACS Fellow at The University of Akron.

July 2010 - Collaborator on a $3.6 million Third Frontier Research and Development Center Attraction Program grant for the Kraton Polymers Innovation Center.

June 2010 – Received $28,175 from the Ohio Space Grant Consortium for “High Temperature Shape Memory Polymers.”

**Fatemeh Emami**  
August 2010 – Received $500 from the National Science Foundation to attend the 2010 NSF Workshop on Mathematical Modeling and Computer Simulations for Soft Materials in September 2010 at Colorado State University. She is a third-year doctoral student with Dr. Hendrik Heinz.

April 2010 - Won a Best Presenter Award for her talk on “Peptide Binding Mechanism to Silica on the Molecular Scale” during the 2010 Conference on Undergraduate and Graduate Research at UA.

**Dr. Li Fang**  
April 2010 – Was honored as an outstanding woman student of polymer engineering by The University of Akron Women in Higher Education at a luncheon event. She is a fourth-year doctoral student with Dr. Kevin Cavicchi.

**Dr. Rostyslav Dolog**  
September 2010 – Received an Excellence in Engineering Award from Ticona and $500. He is a second-year doctoral student with Dr. Robert Weiss.

**Amy Blake**  
April 2010 – Was honored as an outstanding woman student of polymer engineering by The University of Akron Women in Higher Education at a luncheon event.

**Yannan Duan**  
September 2010 – Was chosen as the polymer engineering student recipient of the 2010 Frank N. Kelley Student Awards in Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering. The award carries a $1,500 prize. She is a fourth-year doctoral student with Dr. Sadhan Jana.

April 2010 – Was honored as an outstanding woman student of polymer engineering by The University of Akron Women in Higher Education at a luncheon event.

**Dr. Dr. Erol Sancaktar (standing right) in a Hiroshima University engineering class with Dr. Toshiyuki Sawa, director of the Center for Collaborative Research and Community Cooperation.**

**Dr. Erol Sancaktar**  
June 2010 – From June 20-28, was appointed a visiting professor at Hiroshima University in Japan by the university’s president. Sancaktar presented several lectures on nanotechnology and adhesion/adhesive mechanics to graduate engineering students.
Setareh Niknezhad

Setareh Niknezhad

September 2010—Was chosen as The University of Akron recipient of the 2010-11 Eastman Chemical Fellowship, which recognizes a student’s academic and research success. The fellowship will provide a $5,000 award to the fifth-year doctoral student and a trip with her adviser, Dr. Avraam Isayev, to visit the Eastman facility in Kingsport, Tenn., and give a presentation on their research.

Sayantan Roy

May 2010—Received $500 and the Best Poster Award by the Society of Plastic Engineers during the Annual Technical Meeting in Orlando for his research on “Strengthening of Polyolefins by Bottom-up Self-assembly of POSS Nanoparticles.” He is a fourth-year doctoral student with Dr. Sadhan Jana.

Siamak Shams Es-Haghi

September 2010—Received an Excellence in Engineering Award from Ticona and $500. He is a second-year doctoral student with Dr. Arkady Leonov.

Join Us Online at LinkedIn  by Sarah Thorley

Many polymer engineering alumni, faculty, students, and staff are members of LinkedIn. With more than 70 million members in more than 200 countries, LinkedIn is the world’s largest online professional organization and free to join!

When you join, you create a profile that summarizes your unique professional expertise and accomplishments. You can update your profile at any time. You can then search for friends and colleagues and invite them to connect to you. No one can access your information unless you allow that person to connect to you.

Once connected, you will know when someone has taken a new position, updates their profile or joins a group within LinkedIn. You control your own information and what others can view. Your network consists of your connections, your connections’ connections and the people they know, thus linking you to a vast number of qualified professionals and experts.

LinkedIn has been very helpful to the department in locating “lost” alumni and keeping in touch. If you have already joined LinkedIn, thank you. If you haven’t yet, please visit www.linkedin.com to get started today!

Linkedin

We Want to Hear From You!

Alumni, we would like to hear from you — be it new jobs, new degrees or new additions to the family. We welcome your news, photos and any other items you would like to share with your fellow alums!

Please direct updates and correspondence to:

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Speakers in the memorial tribute to Professor James L. White during RubberPlas 2010 in Thailand included, left to right, Dr. Pranee Pinyocheep; Dr. Pasaree Laokijcharoen (Ph.D. 2000); Dr. Sadhan Jana; Dr. Chang-Woon Nah (Ph.D. 1995); Dr. Pratum Vongpanish (Ph.D. 2000); Dr. Aubert Coran; Dr. Min-Young Lyu (Ph.D. 1997); Dr. Kwang-Jea Kim (Ph.D. 1998); and Dr. Takashi Inoue.

Editors
Mark D. Soucek; Sarah Thorley

Connect With DPE
Published by the Department of Polymer Engineering at The University of Akron for DPE alumni, students, faculty, contract professionals, staff and friends.
It is with sadness I share with you that Dr. Kyonsuku Min Cakmak passed away on April 16, 2010, after a nearly two-year battle with cancer. Dr. Min was one of the four founding members of the Department of Polymer Engineering. Later, she became a faculty member and, as a professor, guided more than 30 M.S. and Ph.D. students. Her main research interests were based on the rheology, morphology, processing of polymer blends and simulation of mixing in complex devices such as twin-screw extruder and internal mixers. She studied the reactive processing of blends extensively and incorporated reaction in the mixing simulation studies.

In her career at The University of Akron, Dr. Min published more than 75 refereed journal articles and won numerous awards for her work, including two SPE best paper awards, an Achievement Award from The University of Akron and the Gen Corp. Signature award. Her latest research was focused on creating new ionic gels for polymeric supported batteries.

Kyonsuku Min was born in Kyoto, Japan, and attended Kyoto Institute of Technology where she obtained both B.S. and M.S. degrees in Polymer/Textile Engineering. In 1979, she came to the United States to obtain a Ph.D. at the University of Tennessee working for Dr. James L. White. She earned a Ph.D. in 1984, after which she married Dr. Mükreem Cakmak, another recent graduate from Dr. White’s group. Together they enjoyed a wonderful marriage. Their son, Emre Cakmak, now a sophomore at The Ohio State University, was a great source of pride to his mother.

A celebration of life was held for Dr. Min on April 19, 2010. Many people came from far and near to share their recollections about her and to give their support and sympathy to her family. Friend and colleague, Dr. Sadhan Jana, led the service, and both he and Dean Stephen Cheng shared their stories about the kindness of Dr. Min as a human being, and how her presence within the department and the college would be deeply missed. Many others spoke as well, including her former and current students, and her friends. They shared their stories of how Dr. Min helped them, her acute sense of observation and her humor.

As we all know, Dr. Min had a passion for education and, in particular, in the role of mentor. Through her compassion, she had the ability to touch the lives of most of the 400 polymer engineering alumni. There are literally a hundred stories (or more) of how she helped students with advice about research, research adviser-student problems, career choices and personal difficulties. A treasured member of our polymer family, she will be greatly missed.

"Dr. Min was one of those rare people — anyone who came to know her would never forget her kind, gentle and pleasant personality. Truly an inspiration to all and a great teacher."

- Dr. Prashant Joshi (Ph.D. 1999)
Ocean Fuels, Inc. and International Dynamics Corporation, Silver Spring, Md.

"Dr. Min was the only female faculty member during our time at the Department of Polymer Engineering. I simply describe her as a strong woman with a very soft heart. She was always a mentor to us, both professionally and in our private life. I still remember her remarkable talk honoring female students of polymer engineering during a Women in Higher Education meeting in March 2002. We always felt her support on our shoulder. She was proud of us and we are proud of her. Her sincerity, caring nature and hospitality were only a few aspects of her unique personality. I will keep nice memories of her smile, her advice and, of course, famous house parties and wonderful dishes."

- Dr. Hatice Duran (Ph.D. 2004)
TOBB Economy and Technology University, Ankara, Turkey

"When I think of Dr. Min, I remember her kindness, her gentleness, her motherly caring, the smile on her face and her joy. She was a role model for me — a great mother, wife, mentor and professor. Whenever she invited us to her house for parties, she would prepare lots of delicious dishes. She would always ask me to make a Turkish salad and her trust in me would make me feel good about myself. She was always interested in my well being, often giving me good advice for life. I will always cherish all those precious memories with Dr. Min and I will miss her dearly."

- Dr. Sirarpi Bicakci Jenkins (Ph.D. 2000)
Tyco Thermal Controls, Menlo Park, Calif.
Dr. Min was a great mentor and friend. She was always there to help me with my academic work or to discuss life in general. She will be missed.

- Dr. Jiao Guo (Ph.D. 2010)
The University of Akron, Akron, Ohio

Positive, happy, kind, friendly, smart, strong, determined, passionate, dedicated, hard working – these are the adjectives that come to my mind when I close my eyes and think about Dr. Min. I met her for the first time 19 years ago, when I traveled to Istanbul to see my future adviser, Dr. Cakmak. Dr. Min was running after her little boy, Emre. She gave me a secure feeling from the beginning, as if she would protect me if something went wrong when I traveled to the United States for my graduate studies. A couple of days after I arrived here, her house was the first warm gathering place I experienced. Her support and understanding continued through my graduation. She also shared her life experiences with me and that helped me with my personal life, my marriage, my job and my motherhood. Everyone could count on Dr. Min at social gatherings. She could make Turkish grape leaves like no one’s business!

To me, Dr. Min was an example of how someone could be professional, competitive and, at the same time, nice and thoughtful. Behind her friendly smile, sweet accent and fun personality, there was a very intelligent, bright and tough person. As a woman, she was a role model that proved you could be very successful in a male-oriented competitive environment without losing your feminine and motherhood qualities.

I will always cherish my memories with Dr. Min and hope to continue being a part of Dr. Cakmak’s and Emre’s lives.

- Dr. Haleh Ayrom-Keuchel (Ph.D. 1997)
AlphaMicron, Kent, Ohio

I was shocked when I heard the news. In 2001, Dr. Min taught me one course. It is really very sad to lose such a nice person.

- Abdulaziz Asiri (M.S. 2003)
Saudi Aramco, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

Dr. Min loved her students and treated them very kindly. She was like a beloved mother in her students’ eyes. You did not need to hesitate telling her anything bothering you, since she was always ready to share with you the joy and grief. She cared about the studies, the lives and the future careers of her students. She taught the students to be honest and responsible in research, active and confident in their work, and easy and optimistic in life. She always held a farewell party when a student graduated. She was so happy to see her students get a job offer by the time they graduated. Dr. Min deserves the love and esteem from her students because she truly cared. Along with all her other precious students, I will always miss her.

- Dr. Jiao Guo (Ph.D. 2010)
The University of Akron, Akron, Ohio
Recent Polymer Engineering Graduates

Spring 2010

Sug Hun Bumm, Ph.D.
“Mixing Studies and Simulation of Compounding Chopped Fiber and Silica Filler into Thermoplastics in a Modular Co-rotating Twin Screw Extruder”
Advisers: Dr. James L. White and Dr. Avraam Isayev

Edgar Marquina, M.S.
“Use of Dynamic Mechanical Testing, EACS and SEM Image Analysis to Study the Properties of Polypropylene/CaCO3 Nanocomposites”
Adviser: Dr. Kyonsuku Min

Summer 2010

Neelakandan Chandrasekaran, Ph.D.
“Miscibility, Morphology and Biocompatibility Studies of Novel Hemodialysis Membranes with Enhanced Antioxidant and Anti-inflammatory Properties”
Adviser: Dr. Thein Kyu

Krystle Dzienis, M.S.
“Mechano-optical Behavior and Structure Development in Nylon MXD6 Films Biaxially Stretched and the Effect on Oxygen Permeability Properties”
Adviser: Dr. Miko Cakmak

Jiao Guo, Ph.D.
“Development of Ion Conductive Polymer Gel Electrolytes and Their Electrochemical and Electromechanical Behavior Studies”
Adviser: Dr. Kyonsuku Min

Linping Ke, Ph.D.
“Dispersion Characteristics of Nanocomposites Based on Functionalized Block Copolymers”
Adviser: Dr. Chang Dae Han

Namil Kim, Ph.D.
“Photoisomerization- and Photopolymerization-induced Phase Transitions in Mixtures of Photoresponsive Chromophores and Reactive Mesogens”
Adviser: Dr. Thein Kyu

Alexei Melnikov, Ph.D.
“Damage and Fatigue in Cross-linked Rubbers”
Adviser: Dr. Arkady Leonov

Jason Randall, Ph.D.
“Tailoring Structure Property Relationships and Elastic Phenomenon in Native and Polymer Reinforced Silica Aerogels”
Adviser: Dr. Sadhan Jana

Lin Song, Ph.D.
“Chemical Modification of Starch and Preparation of Starch-based Nanocomposites”
Adviser: Dr. Chang Dae Han

New Horizons for Polymer Engineering Student Organization

The Polymer Engineering Student Organization (PESO) is dedicated to serving students’ social and academic interests. The 2010-2011 academic year kicked off with the annual department picnic at Munroe Falls Metro Park in August prior to the start of classes. More than 80 attendees enjoyed grilled burgers and hot dogs, fruits, pizza and cake, along with recreational activities like baseball, football and Twister. The lake was open for swimming, so many students and faculty, with their respective families, enjoyed a good swim on a pleasant day.

PESO also sponsored tickets for an Akron Aeros game in August. The nine students who attended witnessed a win for our city’s team. PESO also designed shirts to sell as a fundraising activity during Alumni Day in October.

PESO’s plans for the year include a plethora of unique and exciting opportunities for students enrolled in the Department of Polymer Engineering, such as a paintball tournament, intramural sports, movie nights, laser tag and ice skating. In addition to social events, PESO will continue to sponsor activities with an academic focus, such as industry tours and guest speakers on topics of interest.