



DIVISION OF POLYMERIC MATERIALS: SCIENCE & ENGINEERING



Chair's Message

2021 PMSE Chair

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To the extended PMSE community, it is an honor to serve as your 2021 Division Chair in these unique and sometimes trying times. I hope everyone is safe, has adapted to a different normal, and are finding the 'good' within these times that have forced us to think and act differently.

PMSE has a robust extended executive committee and to them, a shout out for all the help in navigating the last 12 months. A special thanks to Eva, Lisa and Eileen who navigated the swirling waters induced by pandemic and to what they did to our comfortable and repeatable national meeting 'norms'. We had a system, based on an in-person presence, based on face-to-face contact, based on the physical interaction of our membership with each other and colleagues from other technical disciplines. All of this was thrown out of the window with the cancellation of the Philadelphia meeting and the 'clunky, inefficient, and inflexible (my opinion) attempt at doing a fully virtual "San Francisco" meeting. We adapted in large part to our technical programming committee who had to shift, cancel, slide, morph many of our planned technical symposia due to a variety of constraints. They were in the middle with ACS on one side driving a rigid structure and agenda and our symposia organizers who were trying to adapt on the fly. Kudo's to them for being there to help us continue to bring valued programming, particularly as we pivot to a more reasonable ACS stance this calendar year.

We are a go for the upcoming spring meeting. ACS has modified its stance re the virtual platform and will now enable 'live' presentations, the type that we have all become so used to in our daily work and personal lives. This is a marked and positive shift from SF where most talks had to be 'taped' and questions and answers were done at some time later. These changes are working based on the spring 21 numbers. The abstract turnout is actually higher than I expected; perhaps a reflection of the above point and perhaps a reflection of all of us getting more comfortable in the virtual world. It is still incredibly important for us as a community to interact with each, to help our younger member grow, to enable additional connections in all of our professional circles, and to push the forefront of science forward. We must adapt to the current situation. I expect it will be some time or perhaps never before we go back to the 'way it was'. For the foreseeable future, I expect major meetings to have some component of virtual interchange because of what it enables re overall a) cost, b) efficiency of getting a much larger audience, and c) lingering pandemic effects in society.

I have been part of PMSE (and POLY) for many, many years. Although my career is defined by a jack-of-all-trades; master-of-none technical flavor which goes beyond the classic polymer community, I am proud to be the chair of PMSE. Multidisciplinary, problem-oriented research is my passion and I believe our membership is uniquely qualified to contribute. PMSE is a top notch organization and I am pleased to serve. We cannot



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rest on our laurels however as we need to grow our membership, given ours roots (applied) we need to grow our non-academic membership (industry and national labs), and we need to expand our academic reach and footprint via student chapters. We are currently making some changes with our internal and external outreach activities to increase our visibility. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of service. Much like my AF career (defined as being a servant leader), I am here to serve.

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