

Chair Message from Cristina Thomas

March 15, 2025



Dear Fellow Members of the PMSE Division,

It is an honor and privilege to serve as the 2025 PMSE Division Chair, working alongside five other dedicated PMSE officers to fulfill PMSE's mission: fostering a global community of scientists and engineers advancing polymeric materials through science and engineering.

This year marks the beginning of the next century for PMSE, building on the successes of our 2024 centennial celebrations. Last year we enjoyed an array of symposia, events, and social gatherings that highlighted the division's remarkable journey from its humble beginnings. I would like to celebrate the visionaries of the 1920s who laid the foundation for this thriving community, formally established in 1924. I also wish to thank Professor Megan Robertson, the 2024 PMSE Chair and now Past Chair, for her outstanding leadership during the centennial year. Please join me in applauding Megan and the many volunteers who made 2024 an enriching and meaningful centennial year. I can only imagine the pride of our early founders and past chairs; because of their efforts PMSE thrives today.

As ACS continues to reimagine its meeting formats to create "must-attend events for the global chemical enterprise," PMSE has fully embraced the changes. We are collaborating closely with ACS staff to ensure that our symposia, poster sessions, networking

opportunities, social events, and award presentations remain relevant, informative, and engaging for our members. These gatherings provide an invaluable platform for member development, for collaborations, and for advancing the chemical enterprise.

Thanks to the hard work of our programming committee, this spring's meeting in San Diego boasts a robust technical program. It features 16 in-person symposia, 4 joint symposia, and 5 poster sessions showcasing an impressive 642 oral and 218 poster abstracts. Visit our website or refer to the PMSE Corner newsletter for detailed information on each session — we hope to see vibrant attendance throughout! Highlights include a keynote by Professor Karen Lozano, recognized for her efforts to support underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students in pursuing careers in chemical sciences. This mission is close to my heart, as inclusiveness is key to attracting top talent. Polymers play a vital role in modern life, from life-saving medical devices to sustainable packaging solutions. I am a believer that advances in polymer science and engineering are essential to solving global challenges. Do not miss special panel discussions on “Polymers for Energy and Sustainability” and “India-U.S. Collaborations,” which promise to provide unique insights.

Looking ahead, the programming committee is also busy preparing an enriching slate for the Fall meeting in Washington, D.C., featuring 41 sessions across 19 symposia. Make plans to join us! This year, we are piloting a 1-day forum for early career industry, government and non-academic members, designed to foster professional development and spark discussions on challenges and opportunities in polymer science, materials, and engineering. The Breakthrough in Polymers Forum (BIP Forum) will take place at the fall meeting in DC. Nominate a deserving peer! Nominate yourself!

Our membership committee has created an extensive list of benefits for students, early-career professionals, academics and industry/government members. Many of us value PMSE most for its technical programming at national and regional meetings. PMSE supports symposia via funds that allow organizers to bring the best scientists and engineers from diverse sectors. Additionally, PMSE's growing role in regional meetings, along with its networking opportunities, enables members to forge collaborations, explore career paths, and drive progress in polymer materials, science, and engineering. With a membership base spanning industry, academia, government and others, PMSE acts as a bridge between technical programming and other ACS divisions. We have a very strong partnership with POLY and are cultivating interactions with BIOT, RUBB, and BMGT. PMSE truly is your division for expanding both your technical expertise and professional network.

Our international community continues to thrive, supported by long-term partnerships like the one with the Chinese Chemical Society Polymer Division. This spring we are excited to

host the Joint India-U.S. Symposium on Sustainable Technologies for Manufacturing and Electronics — an event not to be missed.

We remain deeply committed to engaging the next generation of polymer scientists and engineers. Each year PMSE hosts the Future Faculty and the Young Investigators Symposium, which highlights the groundbreaking work of emerging researchers. The PMSE/POLY student chapter network has expanded to 17 active chapters, offering students leadership opportunities, annual awards, and mentorship connections with experienced scientists. If you're a graduate student, PMSE provides abundant opportunities to grow professionally and develop leadership skills.

This is a thrilling time to be part of PMSE. If you're not already a member, we invite you to join this supportive community — your first year is free! PMSE is dedicated to fostering a fair and respectful environment for all polymer scientists and engineers.

Finally, I want to express profound gratitude to our PMSE officers, executive committee members, committee chairs, and volunteers who drive our division's success. Special thanks go to Eileen Ernst, who ensures our spring and fall meetings run smoothly and our PMSE Corner keeps you informed. Be sure to stop by the PMSE desk to thank her personally, and while you're there, take a guess at the gummy candy cylinder for a chance to win a chemistry glass! Eileen and desk volunteers will gladly share information on how to get more involved in PMSE, whether you're a current or prospective member.

Warmly,

Your 2025 PMSE Chair

Cristina U. Thomas

Transformative R&D & STEM Leader

acspmsechair@gmail.com