



2026 Spring Message from the Chair

Seventy-five years in, POLY's programs and science are genuine strengths, but these have always served something more fundamental – a community whose members' voices and engagement make this Division what it is. This year, my aim is to lead by listening, and this spring offered several opportunities to hear directly from our community. Here are a few reflections.

ACS Spring 2026 in Atlanta, held alongside ACS's 150th anniversary, showcased the breadth and depth of polymer science. My thanks to our Programming Committee – Alice Savage, Julia Kalow, Graham Collier, Michael Petr, and Danniebelle Haase – and to the many symposium organizers, speakers, and presenters whose work made POLY's technical program so strong.

Two long-running symposia in Atlanta spoke clearly to who we are as a Division. This spring marked the 21st Undergraduate Research in Polymer Science Symposium (founded in 2006) and the 23rd Excellence in Graduate Polymer Research Symposium (founded in 2004). Year after year, these sessions give students a national stage to present their work, often for the first time, creating visibility, community, and opportunity for emerging polymer scientists – and giving the rest of us a chance to listen to the field's newest voices. Together, these symposia reflect POLY's sustained commitment to supporting students from their earliest undergraduate research experiences through graduate training and into the next stages of their scientific careers. Many of these students will carry POLY into its next 75 years.

In April, we held our inaugural Virtual POLY Town Hall, designed as a listening session rather than a formal business meeting, and it drew a strong, engaged turnout. Much of the conversation centered on POLY's value as a professional home – a place where personal invitations, mentorship, and lasting connections shape scientific careers. We also heard clear interest in expanding engagement pathways beyond national meetings, creating more visible roles for early-career scientists, and strengthening local and regional connections. My thanks to everyone who joined and spoke up; your input will directly inform our strategic work in the months ahead. For anyone ready to take the first step or to re-engage, the volunteer or "Get Involved" button on polyacs.org is a simple way to tell us about your interests.

Our POLY Pathways storytelling campaign is underway. The premise driving the campaign is simple. Members are sharing how they got involved with POLY, why they stay engaged, and the value they have found along the way. You can read the first of these stories now on POLY's LinkedIn. To me, these voices from our members are the clearest articulation of who we are as a Division. Whatever your path into polymer science, I invite and encourage you to share your POLY story at the following link: <https://forms.gle/v2oHZFxbLLduLFqw8>

As we look toward Fall 2026 in Chicago, we will carry forward our "Then → Now → Next" perspective, anchored by a plenary lecture from Marc Hillmyer connecting POLY's legacy to its present and future. Marc's insights, as Editor-in-Chief of *Macromolecules* and a Past POLY Chair, will make a fitting centerpiece for an anniversary year focused not only on where POLY has been, but on where our Division and community go next.

Of course, none of this happens without the people who sustain POLY day to day. My continued thanks to our Business Office – Kathy Mitchem and Carlee Black – and to the volunteers across our committees who turn ideas into programs, awards, workshops, and member connections.

POLY's strength has always come from its people. Whether we connect in Chicago, on LinkedIn, or through your POLY story, I look forward to continuing these conversations across the Division.

With appreciation,



Derek L. Patton
2026 Chair, ACS Division of Polymer Chemistry (POLY)