

Dear ACS POLY Division Members,

As we look back on this year, I want to take a moment to celebrate the people and programs that made it such a meaningful one for our POLY community. So much of what we do as a Division depends on members generously sharing their time, experience, and energy, and this year was a wonderful example of that spirit in action.

One of the highlights of the year was the launch of the POLY/PMSE Mentoring Program. We began building the program at the end of 2025 by gathering names of members interested in serving as mentors and mentees, and mentor-mentee pairings officially began in January 2026. The response was outstanding. Our first cohort included 80 mentees, most of whom were graduate students, and 35 mentors, many from industry. We were especially encouraged by the feedback from our pulse check survey, where participants shared that they viewed the program as a valuable first-year initiative and expressed strong support for continuing it.

As with any new program, this first year also gave us many valuable learnings. We gained helpful insight into what worked well and where we can improve, including how to better support mentor-mentee connections, strengthen communication, and continue shaping the program to meet the needs of our members. We are grateful to everyone who shared feedback and helped us identify opportunities to make the program even stronger in future cohorts.

Thank you to everyone who helped bring this program to life, especially the mentors who generously shared their time and guidance, and the mentees who participated with enthusiasm and curiosity. We are already looking ahead to the next cohort. **If you are interested in serving as a mentor or helping coordinate the mentoring program, please reach out to me directly.**

Another accomplishment we are proud of this year was our continued effort to strengthen volunteer engagement. One good example for the year is POLY Distinguished Poster Award judging process. Thanks to the participation of more than 11 volunteer judges, the poster award process ran smoothly and successfully. We were grateful to have judges representing industry, academia, and national laboratories, which truly reflects the collaborative and interdisciplinary nature of our Division. Their thoughtful participation helped support and recognize the excellent work being done by emerging scientists in the polymer community.

We are always excited to welcome more members into POLY volunteer activities. If you are interested in mentoring, helping coordinate the mentoring program, judging posters, or

contributing to other Division efforts, please complete the POLY Volunteer Interest Form and indicate your areas of interest: <https://polyacs.org/poly-volunteer-interest-form/>

Finally, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to all of the membership subcommittee co-chairs for their leadership and dedication throughout the year. Kaitlyn, Sofia, Ying, Mayuri, Jarrett, Colleen, Oleg, Ezra, and Dillon, your work behind the scenes makes an enormous difference, and your efforts helped make this year a success.

Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, mentored, judged, coordinated, and supported these initiatives. We are grateful for your continued commitment to POLY and look forward to building on this momentum together in the year ahead.

Warm regards,

Piril Ertem