

## **University of Akron**

### **Director, School of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering**

The University of Akron seeks an expert in the field of polymers to build on the School's past history of success; establish strategic direction; promote research, education, and service; provide participative and collegial leadership; cultivate internal and external partnerships; support diversity among administration, faculty, staff, and students; and raise funds for the School.

Integrity ... Expert ... Visionary ... Technical ... Relationship Builder ... Strategic Facilitator ... Fundraiser ... Seasoned ... International Reputation ... Collegial Budget-Savvy ... Mentor ... Scholarly ... Collaborative ... Dedicated ... Communicator

#### **The Position**

As the chief academic officer for the School of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering, the Director provides leadership for the School and exercises responsibility for its academic and administrative operations; including budget, personnel, programs, and physical facilities. Through consultation with the faculty, the Director establishes a vision in setting priorities, maintaining academic standards, and strengthening faculty scholarship and research.

Areas of responsibility include leadership for graduate and undergraduate programs, outreach, and continuing education; establishment and expansion of research, clinical practice, and educational programs; growth of extramural funding and fundraising; cultivation of alumni relations; and building and sustaining strong relationships with internal and external constituents. Working in partnership across the University, the Director represents the School within the University, the external community and region, the state, as well as with alumni and external agencies and organizations. The Director reports directly to the Dean and participates in a shared governance system with faculty, contract professionals, staff, and students.

Additional responsibilities include: advocate for the School and the College of Engineering and Polymer Science, work with College leadership to establish strategic direction for both the School and College, develop and administer a budget for the School, establish annual goals for the School and track progress, work with College leadership to raise funds for the School and College, mentor faculty and assesses performance, and provide guidance, direction, and performance feedback for staff.

#### **The Qualifications**

The University seeks individuals with a strong record of professional accomplishment; commitment to excellence in research and teaching; and strong management,

leadership, and fundraising skills. The Director must be a visionary educational leader with integrity, a high standard of excellence, and strong community engagement skills.

### Required Qualifications

- Ph.D. in Polymer Science, Polymer Engineering, Chemistry, Physics, Chemical Engineering, Materials Science, and Engineering or a closely related field.
- Record of achievement sufficient to sustain a credible application for tenure and appointment at the rank of Professor in the School of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering.

### Preferred Qualifications

- Leadership experience at a major research institution, for example as a department chair or dean at an academic institution, director of a major federal research center, or as a program/division technical director or comparable position in government or industry.
- International reputation for research and scholarship in the science and engineering of polymers or soft matter.
- Strong record of competitive research funding.
- Record of visionary research leadership as lead investigator of successful multi-investigator research efforts.
- Experience in budgeting, including the allocation of resources across units.
- Recognition of the importance of shared governance and dedication to participatory management and transparency.
- Experience with academic planning, enrollment management, and student success.
- Demonstrated success in cultivating relationships and fundraising.

### **The School**

The School of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering is home to the world's largest polymer academic program and greatest concentration of polymer expertise, establishing Northeast Ohio as an advanced functional materials hub that competes on the world stage in the development and commercialization of materials for multiple industries.

In 1909, University Professor C. M. Knight set up the world's first academic rubber chemistry laboratory and began teaching a course in rubber chemistry. By World War II,

the University's program was so highly regarded that the United States government contracted with the University to establish the Rubber Research Laboratory to aid in the development of the synthetic rubber needed for the war effort. In 1956, The Rubber Research Laboratory became the Institute of Rubber Research and the first Ph.D. program in Polymer Chemistry was initiated.

As the scope of research continued to broaden, the institute was renamed the Institute of Polymer Science and, in 1967, the University set up a separate Department of Polymer Science to oversee the academic programs while the Institute focused on research. During the 1980s a growing focus on polymer processing, design, and applications lead to the establishment of the Akron Polymer Engineering Center, the Center of Polymer Engineering, the Department of Polymer Engineering, and the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering. 1991 saw the completion of the Goodyear Polymer Center building, and in 2010 the National Polymer Innovation Center building was completed. Finally, in 2020, the College was renamed the School of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering and became part of the newly formed College of Engineering and Polymer Science.

The School consists of two units, 26 research active faculty members, two associate Directors responsible for assisting the Director with academic and research activities, 20 staff members and contract professionals, and 250 graduate students and research scientists. Polymer programs include doctoral degrees in Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering, Masters' degrees in Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering, and an undergraduate Minor in Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering.

With Northeast Ohio recognized as the Polymer Valley with approximately 2,400 polymer related companies and 50% of the North American plastics processed within a 250 miles radius of Akron, the School of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering's research carries forward this tradition. The school's Research Clusters include polymer chemistry, polymer physics, polymer engineering, biomaterials/bioengineering, energy/batteries, and polymer sustainability.

The School's outreach includes the Akron Global Polymer Academy, which provides opportunities for teachers and students of all ages to experience the world of polymers through a variety of offerings, competitive summer research experiences for undergraduates through the Research Experience for Undergraduates and Undergraduate Research Opportunities programs, the NSF Research Experience for Teachers in Polymer Engineering Program, and the annual Rubber Band Contest For Young Inventors.

The School spans four buildings, including the Goodyear Polymer Center, a 146,000 square foot building consisting of 12-story and 9-story towers; the Polymer Engineering Academic Center, a 32,000 square foot building that houses the student, faculty, and administrative offices of the Polymer Engineering program; the National Polymer

Innovation Center, serving as a hub for faculty members, graduate students, and research partners from industry and national laboratories to work cooperatively; and the Sidney L. Olson Research Center, housing the majority of polymer engineering labs, instrumentation, and equipment required for polymer engineering research.

For additional information about the School of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering, please visit [www.uakron.edu/polymer/](http://www.uakron.edu/polymer/)

## **The University**

The University of Akron, positioned to be the premier public research university of northern Ohio, is one of the largest universities in the state with an enrollment of approximately 20,000 students in more than 200 undergraduate and graduate majors. Founded in 1870 as Buchtel College, the institution's name was changed to University of Akron in 1936, and in 1967 became one of the Ohio's state universities. Over the past ten years, the University has engaged in extensive capital investment - a \$630 million campus modernization and development initiative - to develop and upgrade world-class facilities for academics and student life.

The University conducts high-quality research in focused areas of excellence, contributes to the vitality of the local economy, and provides a workforce highly trained in diverse disciplines. Seven colleges and schools include the College of Health and Human Sciences, the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Business, the College of Engineering and Polymer Science, the School of Law, the Graduate School, and the Williams Honors College. The University has three branch campuses: Wayne College, Medina County University Center, and UA Lakewood, in addition to nursing programs hosted in affiliation with Lorain County Community College.

The University is a world leader in creating new materials for the new economy; a national leader in the development, protection, management, and commercialization of intellectual property; and a regional leader in information technology initiatives. The University is the only public institution in Ohio to have a science and engineering program ranked in the top five nationally. Its polymer science and polymer engineering program, ranked second in the U.S., serves Ohio's \$50 billion polymer industry and includes a NASA-supported nanotechnology initiative.

Since its inception, the University has valued its partnerships and strives to strengthen the innovative collaborations and partnerships across educational, industrial, community, and government entities that can generate collective impact. Indicative of the partnership culture, the University was awarded the distinct designation of Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation.

A member of the Mid-American Conference, the University fields 16 men's and women's varsity teams at the NCAA Division I-A intercollegiate level. The athletic teams are

known as the "Zips," originally short for "Zippers," the rubber overshoes made by the BF Goodrich Company of Akron that were popular in the 1920s and 1930s.

For additional information about the University of Akron, please visit [www.uakron.edu](http://www.uakron.edu)

## **The Location**

The city of Akron offers a vibrant downtown, serene parks, and events and venues that appeal to almost every interest. Residents describe the area as a wonderful place to live with diverse architecture and neighborhoods, exceptional restaurants, and wonderful and unique shopping. Greater Akron is characterized by easy access to a wide variety of entertainment, recreational, and cultural activities that support a superb quality of life.

Greater Akron is the stage for many visual, musical, and theatrical cultural pursuits. Akron Civic Theatre, EJ Thomas Hall, Greystone Hall, Blossom Music Center, and Lock 3 Park amphitheater provide year-round access to performances large and small. World-class performance events include Broadway musicals, ballets, comedies, lectures, and entertainers. The Akron Art Museum houses an eclectic modern collection and Summit Artspace is home to more than 40 arts organizations and features gallery space, studios, and classrooms.

Outdoors you can hike, bike, ski, sled, or simply unwind. There's even a bike path you can ride all the way to Cleveland. The 87-mile Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail meanders through some of Ohio's most scenic countryside, including Cuyahoga Valley National Park, the 11th-most-visited national park in the country, with its more than 33,000 acres of rolling hills, forests, hiking trails, and waterfalls. Summit Metro Parks offer over 14,000 additional acres with 16 parks, several conservation areas, and more than 150 miles of trails.

Akron and Northeast Ohio are nationally recognized for excellence in advanced health care and are contributing to the current transformation in health service delivery. Two major health systems, Summa Health System and the Cleveland Clinic affiliated Akron General Health System, as well as the Akron Children's Hospital provide primary, specialty, and tertiary medical care services.

## **The Invitation**

Application, nomination, questions, confidential conversation.

To apply, please submit a complete curriculum vitae, a letter of application, and a list of at least five references (none of whom will be contacted until a later stage of the search and not without candidate permission). The letter should summarize your professional qualifications and the accomplishments that reflect the skills, background, and experience to be successful in this key position. Successful applicants will provide

specific examples of past work experience as it relates to the position responsibilities and qualifications listed above. Send your application materials to me at the email address below. The deadline for receipt of applications is **Friday, October 29, 2021**. First consideration will be given to those who apply by this date. The position will remain open until filled.

Nominations for this opportunity are encouraged. If a colleague comes to mind you feel might have an interest, I welcome your nomination. Please forward your nomination to me via email.

If you have any questions regarding the position or search process, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or phone.

Thank you for your consideration,

**Gary R. Rhoads, Search Consultant**  
[grhoads@strategicsearchadvantage.com](mailto:grhoads@strategicsearchadvantage.com)  
**570-484-6414**

*The University of Akron is an equal education and employment institution. It is the policy of this institution that there shall be no unlawful discrimination against any individual in employment or in its programs or activities at The University of Akron because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, genetic information, military status or status as a veteran. The University is also committed to the principles of affirmative action and acts in accordance with state and federal laws.*