

Editorial – Recent Appointees in Polymer Science special issue

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Recent Appointees in Polymer Science (RAPS, <http://www.raps.org.uk>) is a UK based network for early career polymer scientists. It is aimed at fostering new collaborations and networks between academics and industrialists in the polymer field, to support these emerging scientists in their starting career. RAPS was founded almost 20 years ago by now prominent polymer scientists and has gone from strength-to-strength ever since. At RAPS we have the vision to support the development of the careers of UK polymer scientists in these changing times, where globalisation and international cooperation are under the spotlight. Science, and in particular, polymer science, is not possible without international cooperation and the flow of talent across the globe. Up to now, the British polymer community has greatly benefitted from the economic, legislative and political environment created by organisations such as the European Union and the Commonwealth. This environment allowed the necessary flow of talent from and to the UK, to create a vibrant research community in polymer science. Organisations like RAPS were instrumental in facilitating this flow of talent, supporting the establishment of researchers, sharing knowledge and expertise from established members of the community and overall, allowing new collaborations to be established and the next generation of UK polymer scientists to flourish.

In collaboration with the Eur. Polym J. we have put together this special issue to reflect this international spirit, highlight and promote the research of emerging UK based polymer scientists, and extend our goals of supporting early career polymer scientists with our colleagues across Europe and the world. The RAPS network encompasses globalisation and international collaboration, with its members coming from places as diverse as Spain, Belgium, Iraq, and Australia.

The list of Contributors is a reflection of the welcoming and international nature of the polymer community in the UK. Researchers from the UK and all over the world have been supported by the British polymer community and have been able to start their independent career. This has led to thriving research, a sample of which is demonstrated here.

This special issue highlights the breadth and depth of the polymer science research carried out by the RAPS community, which goes from the synthesis and characterisation of polymers,¹ nanoparticles^{2,3} and hydrogels,^{4,5} to the characterisation of the solution⁶ and physical⁷ properties of polymeric materials. The applications discussed range from drug and gene delivery,^{2,5,8} to sensing³ and a review of the methods used to modify the properties of epoxy resins.⁹

RAPS vision in these changing times is that the need to establish and support international collaboration is more important than ever. We believe that every step

we take in this direction, as small as it may seem, will help counteract the potential negative effects that the new political landscape will have. We hope that this special issue helps to highlight the quality of the polymer science carried out in the UK and its international spirit. Our aspiration is that it will facilitate forging new links with the European Polymer community and beyond, to allow us to continue to work towards addressing world challenges by working together.

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