



INSPIRING  
PLASTICS  
PROFESSIONALS

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

“

# SPE CONTINUES TO EVOLVE AND THRIVE.



As I gather my thoughts to share with each of you, I cannot help but be reminded of the delicate environment we continue to navigate. At this stage, I would venture to say that all of us have been impacted by COVID in some way – either professionally, personally, or both. While we may be left wondering if “normal” will ever return, in an ironic twist of fate, many businesses have had record growth during the pandemic because they used the time to reevaluate their processes, workplace environments, and offerings. Through sheer determination and grit, SPE chose to take this time to overcome what seemed to be an insurmountable hurdle. Throughout the past two years, SPE re-examined its offerings, not just to align how business and research are conducted during a pandemic, but to enhance the high-level of value that you have come to expect as a member. With the help and fearless perseverance of the SPE staff, Executive Board, and the amazing leaders of our respective chapter groups, SPE continues to evolve and thrive, despite what nature has thrown at us.

In 2021, in addition to presenting a host of virtual events, we saw the return of in-person gatherings and the creation of new hybrid events. The combination of all this allowed us to maximize our dissemination of knowledge and networking opportunities, while taking into account some unavoidable challenges. Simply said, we never stopped! Additionally, we continued and grew many of our events and offerings, including our “Plastics In” series, the many opportunities that ANTEC® continues to provide, and the introduction of our “National Week of Learning” series, which kicks off in March of 2022. We worked with other organizations to co-develop new content through our very successful Recycling and Circular Economy (RACE) conferences and we made an unwavering commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within the plastics industry and beyond. All of this aimed at keeping our membership informed of growing trends in the plastics industry, whether in the lab, on the line, or in the workplace. Granted, the future is always uncertain, but that uncertainty can lead to great things.

**Looking to SPE’s future, I am confident that we will continue to expand our reach, enhance our reputation, and change the perception of plastics and the people in this great industry across the globe.**

**Dr. Jason Lyons**  
SPE President 2021-2022



**PATRICK FARREY**  
SPE CEO

### Who could have predicted this?!?!?!?

In last year's Annual Report, when I reflected on the havoc COVID wreaked on 2020, I never imagined that I'd be writing the same words again about 2021. But here we are. And the further into this pandemic we get, the further away its end seems.

Yet 2021, like 2020 before it, was filled with more successes than failures. As a Society, and as an industry, we learned, innovated, explored, overcame. We figured out how to continue to do good business and how to stay connected, even if not under the most ideal of circumstances. We faced new emerging challenges, and despite it all we marched ahead.

I am proud of SPE's many accomplishments during 2021. I am prouder of how our volunteer leaders and staff team served our stakeholders – plastics professionals worldwide. We continued to produce events and to recognize and award good work. We published countless magazine stories and hundreds of original research articles in our four peer-reviewed Journals. We participated, and led, discussions on matters of real importance – like sustainability and the environment. We began our journey toward diversity, equity, and inclusion. And we made plans to ensure our Society's viability – planning not just for what happens when COVID ends but also for how we remain relevant and successful until then, in the likely event that COVID's negative impact will continue to be felt for the foreseeable future.

I appreciate the support of our stakeholders, our members, and our customers. I look forward to seeing you all again in-person as soon as it is safe to do so. Here's to a great 2022!

### Significant achievements of 2021:



Created the industry's first Society Advisory Board on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in plastics.



Completed the Society's most profitable financial year in more than a decade, with total Retained Earnings of more than \$990,000.



Relaunched SPE's *Plastics Engineering* magazine, with the addition of Editor-in-Chief Patrick Toensmeier, a redesigned look, and expanded content that explores the innovations of plastics across all industries.



Launched SPE News, a biweekly newsletter focused on SPE activities.



Hosted numerous virtual global conferences, including ANTEC®, Plastics in Aerospace, and RACE Asia, with more than 2000 attendees.



Expanded the reach of PlastiVan and its impact on middle- and high-school students, with positive messaging about plastics.



Served underrepresented communities with investment in new STEM programs, including SPE-hosted after school clubs and hands-on lab work in partnership with Ecotek Labs.



Awarded over 50% more scholarship dollars to future plastics professionals than in 2020.



Named one of the "Most Interesting Social Media Accounts in Plastics" by *Plastics News* magazine.



Adopted a permanent, fully virtual HQ staffing model resulting in six-figure future savings without any negative impact on operations or member services.

# JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS



## Newest journal SPE Polymers is in second year

SPE open access journal *SPE Polymers* is celebrating its second year of launching. *SPE Polymers* published four issues in its volume 2 in 2021. *SPE Polymers* articles are attracting world-wide attention from polymer researchers and readers as evident from the large volume of downloads.

## All SPE journals received an increase of impact factor

*Polymer Engineering and Science* (2.428), *Polymer Composites* (3.171), and *Journal of Vinyl and Additive Technology* (1.993) saw an increase of impact factor in 2020. It is too early for *SPE Polymers* to receive an impact factor.



Our editorial teams are reporting a significant increase of the quality of the manuscripts and the number of submissions.



**826,800**  
full text article downloads  
(Up from 663,400 in 2020)



**30**  
online open articles  
(Up from 24 in 2020)



**5,610**  
current 2-year citations  
(Up from 5,450 in 2020)



**3,040**  
new submissions  
(Up from 2,900 in 2020)



**860**  
articles published  
(Up from 788 in 2020)



**101**  
median days from  
submission to publication  
(Down from 118 in 2020)

**DR. RAY PEARSON**  
Vice President of Publications



**DR. Sadhan C. Jana**  
Executive Editor, SPE Journals

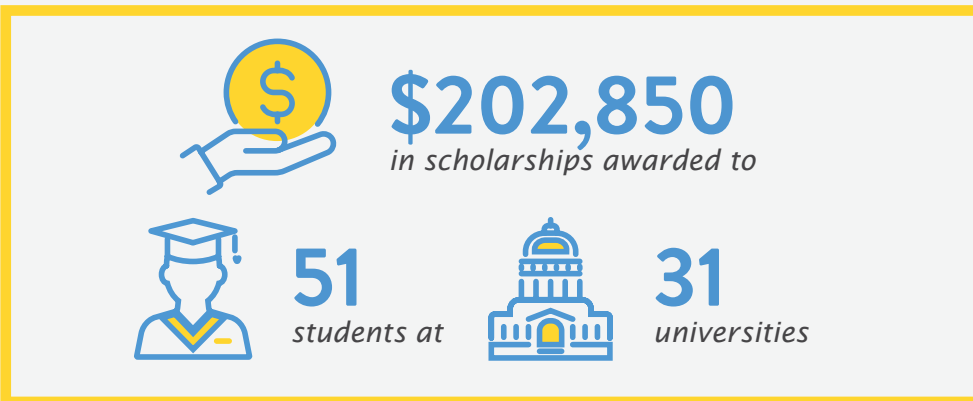




# SPE FOUNDATION



EVE VITALE  
Chief Executive, SPE Foundation



**\$88,000**  
*total grant dollars awarded*

**\$34,367**  
*raised from SPE membership renewal donations*

**\$499,000**  
*generously given to support the work of the SPE Foundation*

**52** *donors gave more than* **\$25,500** *for after school STEM Clubs on Giving Tuesday*

**27** *donors gave more than* **\$10,275** *for scholarships on our June Giving Day*



*PlastiVan and PlastiVideo™ served over*

**12,250** *students*   **2** *continents*   **2** *countries*   **15** *states*   **51** *cities*

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

Despite all of the COVID related issues, the Society had a positive year. Overall revenues exceeded the budget and expenses were below. The investment returns exceeded projections for 2021 leaving the Society in a good financial position.

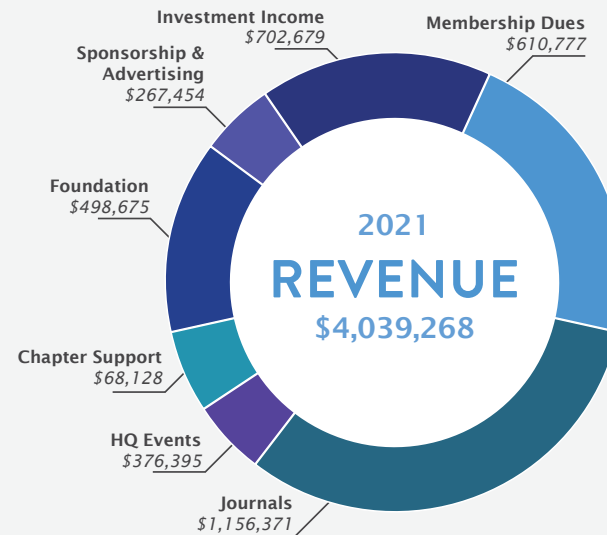
**JAMES WADDELL**

Vice President of  
Business & Finance

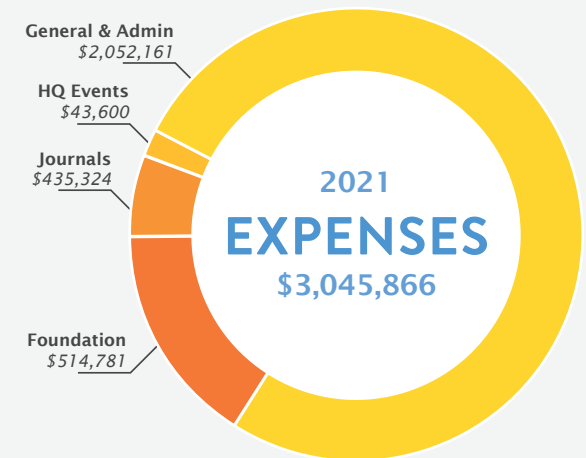


## 2021 Balance Sheet Summary

<b>Assets</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
Current Assets	\$636,702	\$794,657
Fixed Assets	\$9,414	\$95,216
Other Assets	\$7,193,351	\$6,450,104
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$7,839,469</b>	<b>\$7,339,977</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
Current Liabilities	\$156,073	\$148,889
Long-Term Liabilities	\$2,633,214	\$3,192,935
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$2,789,287</b>	<b>\$3,341,824</b>
<b>Equity</b>	<b>\$5,050,181</b>	<b>\$3,998,153</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Equity</b>	<b>\$7,839,469</b>	<b>\$7,339,977</b>



As we enter 2022, the Society is in a strong financial position with very adequate reserves.



*(Preliminary and Unaudited)*



BY CREATING AN INDUSTRY THAT IS WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE OF EVERYONE, WE CAN ALSO START TO WORK TOWARD RESOLVING ONE OF OUR BIGGEST (COLLECTIVE) CONCERNS: HOW TO FILL THE POSITIONS OF OUR RETIRING INDUSTRY MEMBERS.



**LYNZIE NEBEL**

**Vice President of  
Member Engagement**



### **PlastChicks Podcast**

PlastChicks is officially three years old. The expertise of our guests has gone even further into the industry. We were able to interview the great grandson of the inventor of Bakelite, several experts in recycling, a few women who are CEOs, entrepreneurs, and inventors, and even took the show international with a conversation with Elena Mantagaris, the VP of Plastics for the Chemistry Industry Association of Canada.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

In 2021, SPE wanted to show that we are not only supportive of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, but that we want to teach others how to also be supportive, how to educate, how to mentor, and how to grow (both through internal recruitment and professional development) using DEI principles. Creating the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Advisory Board cements our commitment and gives us the opportunity to devote resources to these goals to make sure all our members feel respected and valued within SPE.

By creating an industry that is welcoming and inclusive of everyone, we can also start to work toward resolving one of our biggest (collective) concerns: how to fill the positions of our retiring industry members. SPE's member numbers show that at least half of our members are 50 years old or older. DEI is all about bringing more people to the table, which happens to be the exact same thing our industry needs. When we apply these values into our industry's fundamentals, we gain the opportunity to grow our knowledge and our membership.

It is critical to spark this conversation in our industry now. To kick things off, we created a series of DEI roundtables that have been scheduled for 2022 in conjunction with the Informa Advanced Manufacturing shows. Other initiatives include coordination with the SPE Foundation, a DEI library, and a new podcast focused on DEI topics.





I AM PROUD TO SEE SUCH PARTICIPATION AND ACTIVITY FROM OUR CHAPTER LEADERS WHICH IS A CRITICAL STEP TO NURTURING BOTH IDEAS AND THOUGHT LEADERS THAT WILL DRIVE THE SUCCESS OF OUR SOCIETY FOR YEARS TO COME.

SPE continues to look for ways to empower members and Chapter Leaders to be able maximize on the value they receive from SPE as well as the value that can be generated and shared with Plastics Professionals across our industry. Since the implementation of SPE's Regional Interest Group (RIG) model, there have been six Chapters that have embraced this structure in 2021 including the launch of the Austria RIG which is the newest international Chapter of SPE. This has provided a streamlined mechanism to organize within SPE to allow each Chapter to focus on their mission.

Furthermore, and despite the challenges we have all faced with being able to connect in person, we as a Society have pioneered new virtual ways to stay connected and execute on our mission of knowledge sharing and networking. We launched forums to discuss critical topics such as membership best practices and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) with our SPE Roundtable discussions. In addition, through the leadership of our Council Committee of the Whole Chair, Barry Morris, we have brought together Councilor and Chapter leaders to hear from expert panelists to drive conversations focused on our Chapter's most important issues such as virtual vs. in person event planning and non-dues revenue generation. I am proud to see such participation and activity from our Chapter leaders, which is a critical step to nurturing both ideas and thought leaders that will drive the success of our Society for years to come.



**DR. SCOTT EASTMAN**  
Vice President of Chapters



**PAUL MARTIN**  
Vice President At Large

The Society is dedicated to supporting the members and will continue to support Chapters in their programs.

The Executive Board, along with SPE CEO Pat Farrey and SPE staff, are exploring new opportunities and programs that will offer our members additional services and provide incentives for new members to join.





# EVENTS



8

New workshop series were created in 2021 focused on technical and essential life skills geared towards target audiences.

2,139

Total registrations



SPE launched its first Corporate Learning Virtual Program. This new technical product is built specifically around the employee training needs of the purchasing company.



1,100+  
attendees



215  
speakers

ANTEC® also included 17 Industry Insights Sessions, Classic Sessions, 50 on-demand presentations and 19 Student Posters.



38

SPE Chapter meetings & conferences held

4,350+

people attended hybrid, virtual and live events

## Webinars

SPE HQ continued to build a strong webinar program in 2021 despite the live, virtual and hybrid event competition and Zoom burnout.



6,950  
total attendees



3,230  
attendees



2,360  
attendees

# AWARDS

2021 did not put us back on a path to normal that we hoped for, despite flickers of return to normal, much of the developmental options SPE provides remained virtual. As with other aspects of our lives, we found ways to adapt, to support our mission to help plastics professionals strengthen their skills through networking, events, training, and knowledge sharing.

An essential part of development is the celebration of the achievements by SPE membership, and our teams. To support this goal, we have launched the new Awards and Recognition Team (ART) with the specific objective of reviewing current awards and proposing new areas of recognition to shine a spotlight on the contribution of our industry. We created a multi-generational plan with short and long term deliverables with a target roll out in 2022.

**In June we celebrated the tremendous efforts and achievements of a select few SPE members in recognition of their many contributions made on behalf of the Society and to our industry.**



PAVAN VALAVALA

Vice President of Professional Development



#### The 2021 HSM honorees include:

- » **Adrian Merrington**, Ph.D., M.R.S.C., C.Chem, C.Sci, Business Quality Leader, Trinseo. He was nominated for the award by the SPE Detroit Chapter.
- » **Robert Weiler**, North America Sales Manager and Product Line Manager for Non-Halogen Flame Retardants, Amfine Chemical Corporation. Weiler was nominated for the award by the SPE Akron Chapter.

#### The 2021 Fellow of Society Award honorees were:

- » **Dr. Umesh Gandhi**, Executive Scientist, Toyota Research Institute North America. Nominated by the SPE Automotive Division.
- » **Dr. Yushan Hu**, Research Scientist, Dow Packaging & Specialty Plastics. Nominated by the SPE Engineering Properties and Structure Division.
- » **Jeffrey A. Jansen**, Engineering Manager and Partner, The Madison Group. Nominated by the SPE Injection Molding Division.
- » **Mark Lavach**, Manager, North American Analytical Group, Arkema Inc. Nominated by the SPE Palisades-New Jersey Section and the SPE Vinyl Division.
- » **Dr. Tieqi Li**, Chief Research Scientist, Formosa Plastics Corporation. Nominated by the SPE Applied Rheology Division.
- » **Dr. Manjusri Misra**, University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada. Nominated by the Injection SPE Molding Division.

Dr. Gómez presented Dr. Jason Lyons with his President's Gavel and Pin. Immediately thereafter, Dr. Jason Lyons introduced the new Executive Board for 2021.

**Conor P. Carlin**, SPE's VP Sustainability, was recently named as the 2021 recipient of the Society's President's Cup Award. Dr. Jaime Gómez, SPE's 2020-2021 President, presented the award to Carlin during SPE's Honors & Awards Ceremony, which took place virtually on June 29th.

# SUSTAINABILITY



**CONOR CARLIN**

Vice President of Sustainability

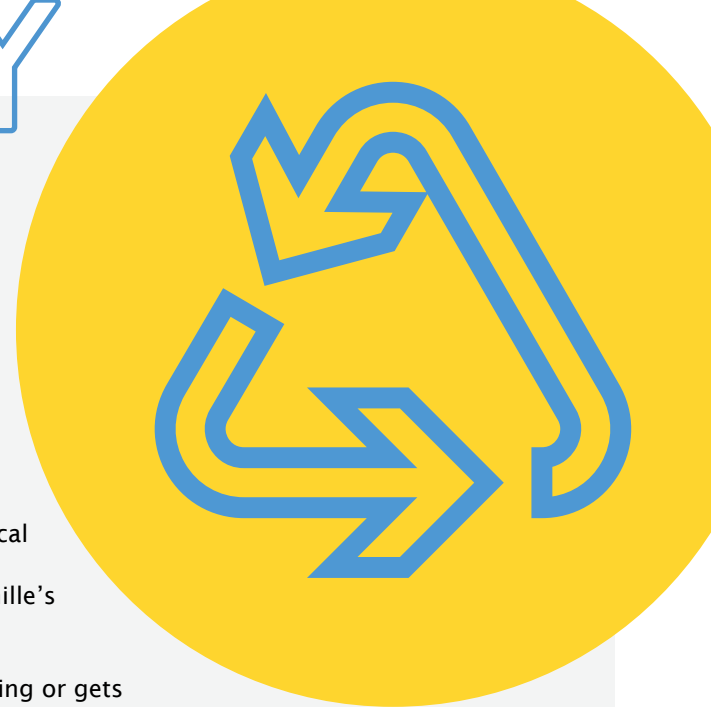
As the term “sustainability” becomes more widespread, more frequently used (and more frequently mis-used), it is fair to say that the word is at risk of losing its core meaning: that we cannot compromise the ability of future generations to sustain themselves. Within the world of plastics and polymers and their myriad applications, there are many changes being made to reduce the environmental footprint and ecological impact of plastics production and disposal. That said, it is no secret that production is outstripping our ability to manage waste effectively. Plastics’ efficiency is, ironically, it’s Achilles’ heel when it comes to end of life management.

It is perhaps a truism of media in the modern age that negative news is somehow more appealing or gets more coverage. A closer look at innovation in plastics recycling technologies and bioplastics reveals a rich array of entrepreneurs and small companies who are working to solve difficult problems. Just because things have been done a certain way until now does not mean it will always be so. It’s not easy to be comfortable with ambiguity, however, but sometimes we have to accept that solutions to complex problems are difficult, messy, incomplete. We cannot let the perfect be the enemy of the good when it comes to environmental impact. Sometimes the least worst option is the best choice.

I encourage everyone to subscribe to newsletters of start-ups; find online conversations where entrepreneurs are seeking help with scale, scientific and technical advice, and investments; watch for strategic investments and financial investments in new technologies to see where the future lies. At SPE, we continue to create opportunities for members to avail themselves of these resources, whether through our technical divisions, online community discussions, or major events such as Recycling & Circular Economy (RACE).

**2022 WILL SEE INCREASED INVESTMENTS IN NEW TECH, BETTER TECH, MORE ADVANCED CHEMISTRY AND, OF COURSE, MORE RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOR FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS STRONG SIGNALS ARE BEING SENT ABOUT INTENTIONALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY.**

It’s time to roll up our sleeves and get to work.



# LOOKING FORWARD



**JAIME GOMEZ**

2020-2021 President

As I look back and reflect on the many accomplishments of the Society during 2021, the new Fellows and Honored Service Members, the scholarships given, the many conferences and activities we held, the new members we were able to attract, etc., I can't help but think of the many hours of work that our staff and volunteers devoted to getting things done in the middle of the most adversary environment in over a century!

Back in 2019, 99% of the most conscious SWOT analysis performed during Strategic Planning Processes failed to mention "a global pandemic" as a threat to any business. And it hit us hard and continues to affect the normal development of business. We can truly state that working against all odds, we have continued our course of action even in the face of difficulty.

If I were to choose one subject that would be of primary importance to SPE for years to come is that of sustainability. Nothing will define SPE more with the new generations than the adoption of chemistries, technologies, and activities that help transform how we use and engineer plastics to use, reuse and preserve our natural resources.

**THIS WORK SUPPORTED OUR MISSION DEVELOPED IN 2020:  
"SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLASTICS PROFESSIONALS  
SO THEY CAN LEARN FROM EACH OTHER AND INSPIRE POSITIVE  
CHANGE FOR SOCIETY AND THE PLANT."**



**BRUCE MULHOLLAND**

President Elect

One of the duties of the President-Elect of the Society is to lead the Executive Board through a strategic planning exercise. In June we were able to meet in person to complete this plan. We started with a clean slate and focused on high level pillars of Impact, Value, Operational Excellence, and Inclusivity. The exercise included brainstorming strategic actions to support the high-level pillars, focusing in areas of Knowledge, Networking, and Reputation. This work supported our Mission developed in 2020: "Supporting the development of plastics professionals so they can learn from each other and inspire positive change for society and the plant." The strategic plan includes specific actions around enhancing the reputation of the Society by becoming an advocate for DEI (Diversity Equity and Inclusion) and expanding SPE's voice and reach; developing more robust "Create, Curate, and Connect" knowledge sharing programs; and increasing engagement and networking. This strategic plan will help the Society focus efforts throughout 2022 and beyond.



*It's our responsibility to make the plastics world a better place. By providing a forum that generates a strong awareness of issues facing the plastics community we can look at solutions that will benefit everyone. Join SPE and help us bring about real change. Together we will make a difference.*

[www.4spe.org/JoinNow](http://www.4spe.org/JoinNow)





**INSPIRING  
PLASTICS  
PROFESSIONALS**

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