

# Experiments in Education: Development of a Week-long Summer Shortcourse in Polymer Science for Undergraduates (“PolyCamp”)

*David R. Tyler, Mark Lonergan, University of Oregon, **DMR-0209835***

- **Purpose:** to expose undergraduate students to the fascinating field of polymer science with the ultimate goal of getting them to consider graduate school and a career in the field.
- **The Agenda:** PolyCamp consists of lectures on selected topics, laboratory experiments, and field trips to local polymer manufacturers. The lectures focus not only on polymer science but also on career opportunities in the polymer field.



PolyCampers working with an RTV silicone.



PolyCampers preparing to make a polyurethane.

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## **Results and Significance:**

- Student response to PolyCamp has been tremendous. In each year of the program, over 40 applicants from across the nation are received for the 12 available positions. The applicants are typically students who, for whatever reason, cannot commit to a full summer of research, as in an REU program. We conclude there is a huge demand for week-long enrichment programs.
- The students leave PolyCamp energized and excited about polymer science. At least four have gone on to graduate school in polymer science and many others in related fields.



PolyCampers modeling their polyester shirts.