

# Pierre Kawak

Interdisciplinary Research Building, Office 211  
University of South Florida, Tampa, FL 33613  
+1 (801) 762-7999 • [pskawak@gmail.com](mailto:pskawak@gmail.com) • [linktr.ee/pkawak](https://linktr.ee/pkawak)

## Education

Brigham Young University (BYU) <i>Funded Assistantship; 3.81 GPA</i> Dissertation: Simulation of Crystal Nucleation in a Polymer Melt	Ph.D, Chemical Engineering <i>Advisor: Douglas R. Tree</i>	2017 – 2022
American University of Sharjah (AUS) <i>Full Scholarship; 4.0 GPA</i> Dissertation: Ultrasound Triggered Release of Estrone-Targeted Liposomes	M.S. Chemical Engineering <i>Advisor: Ghaleb A. Hussein</i>	2015 – 2017
American University of Sharjah (AUS) <i>Partial Scholarship</i>	B.S. Chemical Engineering Minor Economics	2010 – 2015

## Research Experience

- Copolymer Sequence Specific Effects on Glass Transition ( $T_g$ ) with David S. Simmons 2022 – Present  
*Expertise:* Atomistic Simulations, Vittrification, Copolymer Theory
- Identify, create, and simulate atomistic copolymer with specified sequences to tune  $T_g$
  - Analyze segmental and chain dynamics of automated quench simulations to calculate  $T_g$
  - Develop/maintain team-wide simulation/analysis software suites
- Molecular Origins of Polymer Nanocomposite Toughness (PNC) with David S. Simmons 2022 – Present  
*Expertise:* Nonequilibrium MD, Rouse Modes Analysis, Polymer Viscoelasticity, Stress Dissipation
- Develop equilibrium (eq.) & non-eq. LAMMPS MD simulators to study rheology of filled rubber (PNCs)
  - Analyze nonlinear rheological response via local & global metrics to identify nanoscale toughness origins
- Polymer Crystal Simulation with Douglas R. Tree 2017 – 2022  
*Expertise:* Free Energy Analysis, Morphology Analysis, Nucleation Theory, High Performance Computing
- Develop and maintain 2 molecular simulators to study coarse-grained polymers
  - Evaluate progress of and exposed trends in crystallization by employing varied order parameters
- Ultrasound-sensitive smart drug delivery systems with Ghaleb Hussein 2014 – 2017  
*Expertise:* Liposomes, Chemotherapy, Drug Delivery, Surface Modification, Breast Cancer, Ultrasound
- Synthesize, validate and test novel nanoparticle carrier for treatment of breast cancer cells
  - Develop/modernize team-wide lab protocols

## Publications

- [2] Pierre Kawak, Dakota S. Banks, and Douglas R. Tree. "Semiflexible oligomers crystallize via a cooperative phase transition". *Journal of Chemical Physics* 155 (2021), p. 214902. doi: [10.1063/5.0067788](https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0067788).
- [1] Najla M. Salkho, Vinod Paul, Pierre Kawak, Rute F. Vitor, Ana M. Martins, Mohammad Al Sayah, and Ghaleb A. Hussein. "Ultrasonically controlled estrone-modified liposomes for estrogen-positive breast cancer therapy". *Artificial Cells, Nanomedicine, and Biotechnology* 46 (2018), pp. 462–472. doi: [10.1080/21691401.2018.1459634](https://doi.org/10.1080/21691401.2018.1459634).

## In Progress Publications

- [3] Douglas R. Tree and Pierre Kawak. "The Search for a Molecular-Level Understanding of Nucleation in Polymer Crystallization" (in preparation).
- [2] Pierre Kawak, Harshad Bhapkar, and David S. Simmons. "Central role of filler-polymer interplay in nonlinear reinforcement of elastomeric nanocomposites" (2023). doi: [10.48550/arXiv.2310.18433](https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2310.18433).
- [1] Pierre Kawak, Christopher Akiki, and Douglas Tree. "The effect of local chain stiffness on the mechanism of crystal nucleation in an oligomer melt" (2023). doi: [10.26434/chemrxiv-2023-374qx](https://doi.org/10.26434/chemrxiv-2023-374qx).

## Awards and Fellowships

NSF CoPI Discover <a href="#">ACCESS</a> (MAT230074) Compute Resource Grant		Nov. 2023
National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) <a href="#">IMPACT Fellowship</a>		2023 – 2024
NSF and SACNAS Grant Writing Workshop Attendance		Aug. 2023
Future Faculty Workshop Diverse Leaders for the Future Workshop Attendance		June 2023
USF Annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium <a href="#">Best Poster Award</a>	\$200	Mar. 2023
APS <a href="#">Career Mentor Fellowship</a>		2023
AUS <a href="#">College of Engineering Hall of Fame Inductee</a>		2023
BYU Chemical Engineering Department Graduate Student of the Month		Sept. 2022
APS Forum on International Physics <a href="#">Distinguished Student Award</a>	\$300	Fall 2022
BYU University Accessibility Center Banquet Scholarship Award	\$1500	Fall 2021
BYU Graduate Student Society Professional Presentation Award	\$500	Fall 2021
BYU Chemical Engineering Department Travel Award	\$500	Fall 2021
Delta Alpha Pi (DAPI) International Honor Society Inductee		2021
Fully-funded attendance of oSTEM <a href="#">Professional Development Summit</a>		Mar. 2021
UCSD SDSC High Performance Computing Summer Institute Attendee		Jul. 2018
AUS Biomedical Engineering Symposium Best Overall Talk Award	\$700	Fall 2016
AUS 3× Dean's List for Academic Excellence		2013 – 2014

## Research Mentorship Experience

Harshad Bhapkar	Peijing Yue	Makayla Branham	William F. Drayer
USF Ph.D. Candidate	USF Ph.D. Candidate	USF Ph.D. Candidate	USF Ph.D. Candidate
Bao Ma	Annelise Curtin	Austin Hartley	Dakota S. Banks
USF Ph.D. Candidate	USF M.S. Student	USF Undergraduate	BYU Undergraduate
Christopher Akiki	Beverly S. Delgado	Andrew S. Gibson	Paul Kawak
BYU Undergraduate	BYU Undergraduate	BYU Undergraduate	AUS Undergraduate

## Teaching Experience

Graduate Teaching Assistant	Thermodynamics	Winter 2021
<i>Brigham Young University</i>	Separations Engineering	Fall 2021
	Heat & Mass Transfer	2018 – 2021 (3x)
	Process Dynamics & Control	Fall 2018
Volunteer Course Instructor; <i>University of the People</i>	College Algebra	Spring 2018
Graduate Instructor; <i>American University of Sharjah</i>	Principles of ChemE	2016 – 2017 (3x)
Graduate Teaching Assistant	Corrosion Lab	2016 – 2017 (2x)
<i>American University of Sharjah</i>	ChemE Lab I	2015 – 2016 (2x)
	Graduate Desalination	Spring 2015
	Wastewater Treatment	Spring 2015
Undergraduate Teaching Assistant	Mass Transfer	2014 – 2015 (3x)
<i>American University of Sharjah</i>	Kinetics	Fall 2014
	Thermodynamics	Spring 2014
Private Tutor	Maths, Engineering, Business, etc.	2008 – now

## Community and Service

---

### American Physical Society (APS)

Division of Polymer Physics (DPOLY) March Meeting Focus Session Organizer “Polymer Structure and Dynamics across Multiple Length and Timescales”	Mar 2024
<a href="#">Physicists To-Go</a> Public Engagement Program Participant	2022 – present
<a href="#">Career Mentoring Fellow</a>	2022 – 2023
DPOLY Executive Committee Early Career Member-at-Large Nomination & Candidacy	2022, 2023
2023 March Meeting Session Chair “ <a href="#">Polymers and Polymer Composites for Energy Storage and Conversion Applications I</a> ”	Mar 2023
Forum on Diversity and Inclusion (FDI) Executive Committee Candidacy	2022
Forum of Graduate Student (FGSA) Affairs Executive Committee Candidacy	2021

### Early Career Researchers in Polymer Physics

Administrator	2022 – present
Cofounder of <a href="#">Self-Development Seminar</a> series	2022 – present
Organizer of <a href="#">Virtual Polymer Physics Symposium</a>	Aug 2023

### American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE)

Member of ASEE LGBTQ+ Advocacy in STEM <a href="#">Virtual Community of Practice</a>	2022 – present
Facilitator of <a href="#">Trans Allyship Safe Zone Ally Training Workshop</a>	Mar. 2023

### Out in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (oSTEM), Inc.

Table Representative at MAA MathFest 2023	Aug 2023
Scholarship Coordinator	2023 – present
Scholarship Review Volunteer	2022 – present
Annual Conference Volunteer and Organizer	Nov. 2022
Annual Conference Merchandise Team Organizer	Nov. 2022
Mentorship Program Volunteer	2021 – present

### American Chemical Society (ACS)

<a href="#">Science Coach</a> (Education Outreach Initiative)	2023 – 2024
5× Peer Reviewer of <a href="#">ACS Macromolecules</a>	2022 – present

### Brigham Young University (BYU) Chemical Engineering Graduate Student Council (GSC)

President and Cofounder	2018 – 2021
Organizer of Department Recruitment Poster Event	2019, 2020, 2021
Department BBQ Social Organizer	2018 – 2021
Department-Wide Survey Administrator on Graduate Student Financial Health	Fall 2021
Social Media Accounts Manager	Fall 2021

### American University of Sharjah (AUS) IEEE Engineering in Medicine & Biology Society (EMBS) chapter

Chemical Engineering Research Coordinator	2016 – 2017
Biomedical Engineering Symposium Organizer & Poster Session Lead	2016, 2017

## Outreach Activities

---

Lecture series for highschoolers at Bradenton Christian School ( <a href="#">ACS Science Coach</a> )	2023 – 2024
Highschoolers Programming and Scientific Computing Summer Workshop facilitator	June 2023
Florida State Science and Engineering Fair (SSEF Florida) judge	Apr. 2023
Josephine C. Locke Elementary School visiting scholar talk ( <a href="#">APS Physicist To-Go</a> )	2022
Frequent science/engineering fair judge at local elementary schools	2021 – present

## Selected Presentations

- 
- [19] Pierre Kawak, Harshad Bhapkar, and David S. Simmons. "Polymer-Filler Competition-Driven Reinforcement Beyond the Payne Effect in Elastomeric Nanocomposites". APS March Meeting. American Physical Society. Minneapolis, MN, 2024.
  - [18] Harshad Bhapkar, Pierre Kawak, and David S. Simmons. "Exploring the Effects of Nanoparticle Loading, Dispersion and Structure on the Stress Response of Elastomeric Nanocomposites". APS March Meeting. American Physical Society. Minneapolis, MN, 2024.
  - [17] Pierre Kawak, David S. Simmons, and Douglas R. Tree. "Rational Sustainable Polymer Materials Design Using Multiscale Simulation and Theory". AIChE Annual Meeting. American Institute of Chemical Engineers. Orlando, FL, 2023.
  - [16] Pierre Kawak, Makayla Branham, William F. Drayer, and David S. Simmons. "Tuning Polymer Dynamics Via Sequence Control". AIChE Annual Meeting. American Institute of Chemical Engineers. Orlando, FL, 2023.
  - [15] Pierre Kawak, Harshad Bhapkar, and David S. Simmons. "Elucidating the Molecular Origins of Reinforcement in Filled Elastomers Via Spatial- and Species-Resolved Stresses from Molecular Dynamics Simulations". AIChE Annual Meeting. American Institute of Chemical Engineers. Orlando, FL, 2023.
  - [14] Harshad Bhapkar, Pierre Kawak, and David S. Simmons. "Insights into the Dependence of Elastomeric Nanocomposite Mechanics on Nanoparticulate Properties". AIChE Annual Meeting. American Institute of Chemical Engineers. Orlando, FL, 2023.
  - [13] Pierre Kawak, Harshad Bhapkar, and David S. Simmons. "Dissecting the Payne Effect: How Filler-Polymer Competition Reinforces Elastomeric Nanocomposites". IOP Polymer Physics Group Graduate Symposium. Institute of Physics. Virtual, 2023.
  - [12] Pierre Kawak. "Career Paths in Physics". Physics Colloquia Series. University of South Florida Department of Physics. Tampa, FL, 2023.
  - [11] Pierre Kawak, Harshad Bhapkar, and David S. Simmons. "Exploring Mechanisms of Enhanced Dissipation in Nanoparticle-filled Rubber Using Molecular Dynamics". Annual Postdoctoral Research Symposium. University of South Florida. Tampa, FL, 2023.
  - [10] Pierre Kawak, Harshad Bhapkar, and David S. Simmons. "Exploring mechanisms of enhanced dissipation in nanoparticle-filled rubber using molecular dynamics". APS March Meeting. American Physical Society. Las Vegas, NV, 2023.
  - [9] Pierre Kawak, Dakota S. Banks, and Douglas R. Tree. "Acute Sensitivity of Polymer Crystallization Phase Behavior to Intermolecular Interactions". AIChE Annual Meeting. American Institute of Chemical Engineers. Phoenix, AZ, 2022.
  - [8] Pierre Kawak. "Be the Black Sheep: Standing Out from the Crowded Field". oSTEM Conference. Out in STEM Incorporated. Boston, MA, 2022.
  - [7] Pierre Kawak, Dakota S. Banks, and Douglas R. Tree. "Free Energy Analysis of Polymer Crystal Nucleation Indicates Cooperative Crystallization and Nematic Alignment". APS March Meeting. American Physical Society. Chicago, IL, 2022.
  - [6] Pierre Kawak, Dakota S. Banks, and Douglas R. Tree. "Free Energy Surfaces for Homogeneous Nucleation in a Polymer Melt". AIChE Annual Meeting. American Institute of Chemical Engineers. Boston, MA, 2021.
  - [5] Pierre Kawak, Dakota S. Banks, and Douglas R. Tree. "GPU-accelerated Wang-Landau Simulation of Polymer Crystallization". APS March Meeting. American Physical Society. Virtual, 2021.
  - [4] Pierre Kawak, Andrew S. Gibson, Logan S. Brown, Beverly Delgado, Douglas R. Tree, and Dakota S. Banks. "Investigating Primary Nucleation in Polymer Melts using GPU-Accelerated Wang-Landau Simulations". AIChE Annual Meeting. American Institute of Chemical Engineers. Virtual, 2020.
  - [3] Pierre Kawak, Andrew S. Gibson, Logan S. Brown, Beverly Delgado, and Douglas R. Tree. "Wang-Landau Simulation of the Free Energy Surface of Crystallization in a Polymer Melt". APS March Meeting. American Physical Society. Virtual, 2020.
  - [2] Pierre Kawak, Vinod Paul, Paul Kawak, Rita Kassermally, Fatme Lahib, Rute F. Vitor, Mohammad Al-Sayah, and Ghaleb A. Hussein. "Doxorubicin-Encapsulated, Estrone-Appended Liposomes Triggered

by Ultrasound for the Treatment of Breast Cancer”. Graduate Students Research Conference. UAE Ministry of Education. Khalifa University, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 2017.

- [1] Pierre Kawak, Christian C. Momah, Mohamed A. Elkhodiry, Shaima R. Suwaidi, Dina Gadalla, Fatehia M. Banamah, Rute F. Vitor and Hesham G. Moussa, Ana M. Martins and Mohammad Al-Sayah, and Ghaleb A. Hussein. “A Peptide-Targeted Nanodelivery System Triggered by Ultrasound for Anti-cancer Therapy”. Life Sciences Grand Challenges Conference. Institute of Engineering and Electronics Engineering. Khalifa University, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 2016.

## References

---

David S. Simmons	+1 (813) 974-4988	<a href="mailto:dssimmons@usf.edu">dssimmons@usf.edu</a>
Associate Professor of Chemical Engineering; University of South Florida		<i>Postdoc Advisor</i>
Douglas R. Tree	+1 (801) 422-5162	<a href="mailto:tree.doug@byu.edu">tree.doug@byu.edu</a>
Assistant Professor of Chemical Engineering; Brigham Young University		<i>PhD Advisor</i>
Ghaleb A. Hussein	+971 (6) 515-2970	<a href="mailto:ghussein@aus.edu">ghussein@aus.edu</a>
Professor of Chemical Engineering; American University of Sharjah		<i>MS Advisor</i>
Thomas A. Knotts	+1 (801) 422-9158	<a href="mailto:thomas.knotts@byu.edu">thomas.knotts@byu.edu</a>
Professor of Chemical Engineering; Brigham Young University		<i>Dissertation Committee Member</i>
John D. Hedengren	+1 (801) 422-2590	<a href="mailto:john_hedengren@byu.edu">john_hedengren@byu.edu</a>
Associate Professor of Chemical Engineering; Brigham Young University		<i>Graduate Committee Head</i>
William G. Pitt	+1 (801) 422-2589	<a href="mailto:pitt@byu.edu">pitt@byu.edu</a>
Professor of Chemical Engineering; Brigham Young University		<i>Dissertation Committee Member</i>
Lawrence Stern	+1 (813) 974-5587	<a href="mailto:sternl@usf.edu">sternl@usf.edu</a>
Assistant Professor of Chemical Engineering; University of South Florida		<i>Mentor</i>

Last updated: January 23, 2024