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Donald Walker

Professor

Tenure-track Assistant Professor of Chemical Engineering with 4 years of independent research on membrane separations for water treatment. NSF CAREER awardee with 11 peer-reviewed papers and 2 patent applications since starting the lab.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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KEY SKILLS

- Polymer membrane synthesis and characterization
- Interfacial polymerization and thin-film composite fabrication
- PFAS and trace contaminant analysis (LC-MS/MS, IC)
- Transport phenomena modeling and COMSOL simulation
- Grant writing (NSF, DOE, EPA, industry proposals)
- Graduate and undergraduate mentorship
- Peer review for ES&T, JMS, and Water Research
- Curriculum design for transport and separations courses
- SEM, AFM, FTIR, and contact angle characterization
- Python and MATLAB for data analysis
- Lab safety management and IBC/IRB compliance

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF CHEMICAL ENGINEERING | PINECREST STATE UNIVERSITY, IOWA CITY, IA
2021 – PRESENT

- Built and lead a research group of 5 PhD students, 2 master's students, and 4 undergraduates studying polymer membranes for PFAS removal
- Awarded NSF CAREER grant of \$574,000 and a DOE early-career supplement; total external funding since hire is just over \$1.1M
- Published 11 peer-reviewed articles in venues including Journal of Membrane Science and Environmental Science & Technology
- Teach CHE 340 (Transport Phenomena) and a graduate seminar on separations; redesigned the lab module so groups present results in a conference-poster format
- Co-advise an interdisciplinary NRT trainee program with the College of Public Health

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE | NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, EVANSTON, IL
2019 – 2021

- Designed thin-film composite membranes that improved selectivity by roughly 40% over the prior lab benchmark
- Mentored 3 senior thesis students, two of whom went on to PhD programs
- Co-authored a Nature Water article and presented at AIChE and NAMS annual meetings

EDUCATION

- PhD, Chemical Engineering, University of Texas at Austin, 2019 |
- MS, Chemical Engineering, University of Texas at Austin, 2016 |
- BS, Chemical Engineering, Purdue University, 2014 |

- Conference organization and session chairing (AIChE, NAMS)