Departmental Diversity Action Plan – Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering
Approved by ChemBE Faculty on March 30, 2018

1. Status of Departmental Diversity

See appendix attached for demographics. For faculty, we exceed the national average for women (33% vs. 18.3% nationally), but we have no underrepresented minorities (nationally 2.2% African American and 5.0% Hispanic). Our graduate student demographics are near the national pool numbers: 2015-2016 graduating PhD women 28.5% (national 31.4%), Hispanic 0% (national 5.7%), African American 7% (national 4.4%); 2015-2016 MS women 45.8% (national 33.3%), Hispanic 8.0% (national 8.3%), African American 0% (national 4.4%). Undergraduate diversity is stronger (not controlled by the department) including 39.5% women (compared with 33.3% nationally), 11.8% Hispanic (compared with 10.7% nationally) and 3.9% African American (compared with 3.9% nationally). National data from ASEE’s Engineering by the Numbers report on 2016 graduates.) Postdoctoral demographics are not available.

2. Process

The ChemBE Diversity Committee (CDC) met in January and February and discussed the 2016 departmental Faculty Diversity Plan and current barriers and routes to overcome barriers.

The CDC is currently:

1. Jeffrey Gray, Professor, CDC Chair
2. Sharon Gerecht, Professor
3. David Gracias, Professor (sabbatical spring 2018)
4. Lise Dahuron, Sr. Lecturer
5. Rachel Wallach, Communications Specialist
6. Dominic Scalise, PhD student

Members of the CDC drafted and edited this document before presentation and discussion at a full faculty meeting. Members of the CDC will lead the implementation of the diversity goals with department members. Integration of diversity actions with the department strategic plan will happen when the new department head is appointed (expected this summer).

3. Identification of barriers, problems, or challenges to address

Several barriers, problems and challenges were identified over a series of meeting of the CDC and by asking for input at faculty meetings. The highest-priority items are:

1. Lack of knowledge of diversity and inclusion terminology, issues, and practices. Lack of awareness of the department’s values and policies around diversity. This gap spans issues from gender bias to transgender definitions to microaggressions.
2. We have no URM faculty members.
3. Advisory board members are mostly white men.
4. Staff are all women.
5. Asian / international / non-native English speakers do not feel included at times; perception of anti-immigrant sentiment.
6. While the overall population of graduate students is diverse, diversity is uneven across labs.
7. Perception of little diversity among postdocs (numbers not available).
8. Overreliance on international PhD students and postdocs without providing adequate opportunities to progress to a faculty position in the U.S.
9. PhD/postdoc child care support burden is currently borne by the PI out of research grants, reducing competitiveness for renewal.

4. Diversity Goals for 2018-2019

1. Host a Diversity 101 workshop for faculty and staff. Possible speakers are Rigoberto Hernandez (chemistry), Arturo Casadevall (JHMI), or Fenimore Fisher (Vice Provost)
2. Write a departmental diversity and inclusion statement and post publicly on the web.

5. Longer-term goals and actions (3-year time frame)

1. Seek URM faculty candidates.
   a. Efforts will include advertising broadly in URM affinity groups, personal outreach and networking to seek candidates, and connecting with AIChE’s Minority Engineering Program.
2. Nominate diverse advisory board members.
3. Assess how many faculty and staff have completed SafeZone workshop, and set a goal for others to attend.
4. Invite URM seminar speakers, particularly from neighboring institutions (Howard, Morgan, UMBC, etc.)
   a. Add extra time slot to meet URM students and/or present second talk.
   b. At all seminars encourage questions from grads and postdocs.
   c. Consider an annual seminar that focuses on diversity, and count it as part of the departmental grad student seminar requirement. Possible speakers include Arturo Casadevall, Rigoberto Hernandez
5. If JHU and WSE do not support PhD/postdoc family leave support (preferable for greater aggregation of risk), consider a policy to cover from departmental funds (~2-4 months support per year).
6. Provide funds to send women and URM graduate students/postdocs to disciplinary conferences early in their careers and/or affinity group meetings, and faculty to represent ChemBE at affinity group meetings (e.g. NOBCChE, ABRCMS, NSBE, SHPE, SWE).
7. Seek departmental climate data through the Provost’s office.
8. Continue posting stories of successful URM and female alums on the web site and sharing in the departmental newsletter.
9. Create and showcase artwork that depicts diverse people doing chemical and biomolecular engineering. Partner with MICA or DMC.

6. Key Milestones/Results/Accountability

Key outcomes for the coming year include:

1. Posting this plan and our demographics online.
2. Posting online a departmental statement on diversity, equity and inclusion.
3. Holding a departmental workshop (measure interest via attendance and post-workshop feedback)

Additional outcomes will be identified over the next three years in collaboration with the to-be-appointed department head.