


[Everyone List] Update June 12: town halls, research restart, new approaches

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on behalf of

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To: everyone mailman <everyone@chem.wisc.edu>

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Many of you attended the town halls this week where we discussed diversity, updated attendees on research restoration and talked about L&S Dean Eric Wilcots' town hall messaging.

We learned that budget constraints related to COVID-19 will impede faculty hiring for next year, as well as employee bonuses and pay adjustments. On a positive front, summer enrollment for our department is higher than usual and we are almost ready to restore Stage 1 level access to our research facilities. If you attended the town hall hosted by Dean Wilcots, you heard that we are still planning for classes to be online in the fall, while we await an official announcement. In addition, it looks like the remote work rule – anything that can be done remotely should be done remotely - may be in effect through the end of this calendar year, possibly longer.

We expect research restoration to begin toward the middle of next week, as we complete setup of the building and application processes. Please be patient just a little longer and expect additional instructions early next week for how to proceed with requests for laboratory access and what you may expect upon your return.

Recent protests have raised the overall awareness of racism and equity issues and shined light on the importance of diversity and inclusion, which our department has been working on for several years. Because of the efforts put forth by many, we have made progress toward increasing diversity in the chemical sciences. We emphasize collaboration and the benefits of bringing people from diverse backgrounds into our conversations and have, over the years, added programs which help bring diverse students into science and research, including our Chemistry Opportunities program (CHOPs), Catalyst, and now the UW Bridge to the Chemistry Doctorate. All of these programs create opportunities for students to pursue a career in the chemical sciences.

Within the past few months, meeting at first in person and more recently virtually, a team consisting of the co-chairs of our Climate and Diversity Committee, the GSFLC co-chairs, the GSFLC Climate Survey leaders, and the chairs of the University Staff and Academic Staff committees revised the departmental approach to climate and diversity. The new setup will be managed by the Climate, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Steering (CDEI) Committee, co-chaired by AJ Boydston and Desiree Bates. Working with the CDEI Steering Committee will be a series of CDEI Action Teams, which for 2020-2021 include: the Faculty Mentor Training Action Team; Graduate Recruiting, Retention & Mentoring Action

Team; Faculty Recruiting & Retention Action Team; and the Staff Recruiting & Retention Action Team. Standing CDEI subcommittees include: the Faculty & Staff Wellness & Professional Development Committee and the Post-doc Community Committee. For those who expressed an interest in serving on the Climate and Diversity Committee, I invite you to consider whether you would be interested to serve in any of these new roles.

These committees and action groups, along with the Graduate Student Faculty Liaison Committee, facilitate assessments and conversations about how we might continue to promote inclusivity and equity. We are excited about the progress we have made and know that there is always more we can do to create and maintain an environment where everyone feels respected and valued.

On that note, I'd like to address the inappropriate and offensive essay by Canadian chemist Tomas Hudlicky which was published in and subsequently deleted from the chemistry journal *Angewandte Chemie*. Hudlicky's opinion, which lacks respect for women and minorities, is not representative of the atmosphere and priorities of our department and because we disagree so strongly, many of our faculty have signed a letter of "response, accountability, and commitment."

We must celebrate the achievements and progress brought forth by collaboration between people from varied backgrounds and encourage those around us to do so as well. We must stand in opposition to those who devalue others based on a race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion. As stated in the letter to our department from faculty, "To the women underrepresented minorities, first generation and non-traditional students, international, and LGBTQ+ students, postdocs, and faculty among us: you belong here, and we ask you to keep us accountable when those of us in positions of authority fail to support you."

You may read the letter in its entirety here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fPNknktlzMnHtelN9h6qSvo5uq-pFlbnWI8UIkINuio/edit>

As always, we welcome your comments and offer the [anonymous suggestion box](#), through which you may contact department leadership freely.

We encourage you to review the content from the University's [Division of Diversity, Equity & Educational Achievement \(DDEEA\)](#). Student support, which includes bias reporting procedures and mental health assistance is available through the [Multicultural Student Center](#) and [University Health Services](#). Employee support is available through the [Employee Assistance Office](#).

Judith

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