Department of Chemistry – University of South Florida

Engagement, Access, and Inclusion Statement

The Department of Chemistry at the University of South Florida believes that the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff is critical to its educational mission. The Department expects all its members to contribute to an inclusive and respectful culture in classrooms, work settings, and campus events. As a department, our goal is to serve in a fair and equitable manner while embracing all dimensions of diversity, which can include life or work experiences, sex, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, intellectual, physical or unique abilities, sexual orientation, first generation college attendance or non-traditional students, income, faith and non-faith perspectives, socio-economic class, political ideology, education, primary language, family status, military experience, cognitive style, and communication style. We welcome members from all backgrounds and perspectives. We value the individual intersection of these dimensions and their expressions, and we strive to create a welcoming environment where everyone can have a sense of belonging and receive resources that support success.

We join the university and broader community efforts to work against racism, discrimination, harassment, and intolerance. We are guided by CAS's foundational principles: Respect, Responsibility, Excellence and Engagement. To confirm our department's commitment to diversity, access, engagement, and inclusion, we will work towards the goals and endeavors specified in the dynamic action plan below.

Our action plan has been broadly divided into two categories: I) Education and self-awareness for faculty and staff and II) Creating and fostering a diverse, accessible, and inclusive environment within the chemistry community. Our initiatives are at various stages of planning and execution; please check back for updates to follow our progress. We also welcome community feedback by contacting the departmental Engagement, Access, and Inclusion (EAI) Committee at CHMDEIC@usf.edu.

I) Education and self-awareness

A. Form an Engagement, Access, and Inclusion (EAI) Committee within the Department of Chemistry

B. Establish a formal departmental service position of EAI Committee Chair

C. Encourage the EAI Committee to work closely with the seminar coordinator to ensure diversity of speakers, topics, and programming on EAI issues.

D. Devote time during regular departmental meetings to discuss EAI issues.

E. Hold forums with students and student groups to discuss their experiences and departmental culture.

F. Make a practice of setting individual goals for specific anti-discrimination and pro-inclusiveness practices each academic year and hold each other accountable.

G. Develop pool of resources to incorporate anti-discrimination and pro-inclusiveness practices into teaching and mentoring.

II) Creating a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all within the chemistry community

A. Advise search committees for faculty and staff to ensure that new recruits are broadly representative of, and well-positioned to serve, the department's student body.

B. Advise the Graduate Student Recruitment Committee to ensure that graduate students and teaching assistants are broadly representative of, and well-positioned to serve, the department's student body.

D. Offer diverse departmental seminars – both in content and in speakers' backgrounds and experiences.

E. Create multiple avenues for ongoing feedback from undergraduate and graduate students (e.g., implementation of an online feedback form)

F. Discuss student feedback regularly in EAI Committee meetings and during departmental meetings.

G. Address EAI in courses and research groups by adding EAI statements to course syllabi and research group websites/policies. **Example:** USF is committed to access and opportunities for individuals of all backgrounds, creating a welcoming environment where everyone can experience a sense of belonging, and offering resources that support the success of our students, faculty, and staff.

H. Create a resource list describing best practices and guidelines for collaborative work (study groups, lab groups, etc.) that support the learning, achievement, and inclusion of all students; encourage faculty to incorporate these into course policies.

Our goals are supported by several university offices and groups:

Title IX - File an Incident Report
Counseling Center
Office of Multicultural Affairs
LGBTQ+ Resources
Gender Inclusive and Single Stall Restroom Map
Office of Veteran Success
Student Accessibility Services