

Diversity, Inclusion, and Respect Virtual Discussion

American Chemical Society - Committee on Professional Training

July 21, 2020, The American Chemical Society held a 90 minute virtual discussion with ACS Approved Program department chairs focused on diversity, inclusion and respect. The session was organized by the Committee of Professional Training with the goal of discussing the addition of a [Diversity Section](#) to the ACS Guidelines for Bachelor's Programs. Dr. Rigoberto Hernandez (Gompf Family Professor in the Department of Chemistry at Johns Hopkins University and the Director of the Open Chemistry Collaborative in Diversity Equity (OXIDE)) provided the [keynote address](#).

Participants were required to pre-register for the event to collect some preliminary data.

Pre-registration Data¹



171 unique institutions were represented in the pre-registrant database.



53% (n = 179) of the pre-registrations represented predominantly undergraduate institutions.



80% (n = 179) of the pre-registrants had not previously attended an OXIDE training.

Finally, while **78%** of pre-registrants stated that their institution offers voluntary or mandatory workshops to faculty and staff focused on diversity, equity and inclusion, **63%** of pre-registrants did not report any specific methods used by their department to recruit and retain faculty and staff from underrepresented groups in STEM. Those that did report noted, diversity-focused advertisements and outreach as key strategies.

¹ These data points do not include ACS staff or CPT committee members.

155 individuals attended the virtual meeting²

Breakout Group Feedback

Following the keynote address, small groups (facilitated by ACS Committee members and staff) discussed the Diversity Section of the ACS Guidelines for Bachelor's Programs. Groups were instructed to discuss the following facilitation questions:



1. What is missing from the draft section and what needs to be shifted from a normal expectation to a critical requirement or vice versa?
2. What from the guidelines can you take back to your administration to further cultivate a culture that embraces diversity in your department and at your institution?
3. What is the responsibility of the chair in leading and advocating for diversity-focused efforts?

Q1: What is missing from the draft section and what needs to be shifted from a normal expectation to a critical requirement or vice versa? Some feedback included:

Guidance, Resources, and Workload	Recruitment and Retention	Training, Workshops, and Accountability	Reporting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several groups noted the need for additional guidance and resources from the ACS and best practices for prioritizing and implementing DEIR efforts. Additional guidance should also include steps for navigating institutional vs. departmental responsibilities. Many voiced concern in the additional workload associated with spearheading a DEIR effort and some noted that the workload may fall disproportionately on BIPOC faculty and staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While some groups discussed challenges in recruiting and retaining candidate, other groups noted that departments should consider the removal of academic biases and move towards the holistic evaluation of faculty/staff candidates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was strong support in making training and workshops on DEIR mandatory for faculty, department chairs, and search committees. There was also support for students to receive training on DEIR-related topics. Some noted the need for further information on the proposed metrics for evaluating an approved department and the desire for the guidelines to add personal accountability as a requirement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was strong support for continued demographics reporting to the ACS, however, some groups did note institutional challenges (i.e. IRB) in reporting accurate data.

² The reported figure includes ACS Staff and members of CPT.

Q2: What from the guidelines can you take back to your administration to further cultivate a culture that embraces diversity in your department and at your institution?

Training	Concerns	Recruiting
<p>DEIR Training is needed, especially for leaders - department chairs, division heads, etc.). DEIR training needs to drive a culture shift similar to safety training led to a 'culture of safety' within departments. Search committees need training (microaggressions, bias, etc.) and strategies in order to go beyond the usual pool of applicants. Markers of excellence can be used to drive search committees.</p>	<p>Many smaller schools expressed concerns about receiving enough help from the administration and the possibility that all of the work will fall on faculty. Also, institutions may not have the resources to launch new efforts like larger schools. Faculty are concerned that these are institutional issues they cannot control.</p>	<p>Administrations need to be willing to look beyond the top institutions for recruits.</p>

Q3: What is the responsibility of the chair in leading and advocating for diversity-focused efforts?

Institutional Support	Departmental Support	Training
<p>DEIR efforts need institutional support for sustainability; it should not just rely on the chair.</p>	<p>Departmental support is necessary for DEIR efforts to be viable, perhaps through a subcommittee with student involvement.</p>	<p>Chairs should be required to have DEIR training.</p>

The virtual meeting generated a lot of valuable discussion on the proposed section. ACS will use the discussion notes as well as feedback received electronically to finalize the Diversity Section of the ACS Guidelines.