Department of Chemistry: Equity Review – Executive Summary

Review Process

The Department of Chemistry Equity Review was conducted to assess the current state of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the Department and identify priorities for future action. The review consisted of a department-wide survey distributed to faculty, staff, post-doctoral researchers, graduate students, and undergraduate students between March 12 and April 2, 2026. A total of 168 community members participated, providing both quantitative and qualitative feedback on departmental culture, inclusion, leadership, and equity-related priorities. The follow document represents an executive summary of the main findings. Please refer to the complete report for a more fulsome overview of community responses within each section within the survey.

Overall Findings

The findings indicate that the Department of Chemistry has a strong foundation for equity and inclusion. Respondents generally described the Department as welcoming, supportive, respectful, and inclusive, with positive perceptions of interpersonal relationships, diversity, fairness, and leadership commitment to creating an inclusive environment. Reports of discrimination were relatively infrequent, and many respondents expressed appreciation for existing equity initiatives and community groups, particularly Chem EDI as well as student-led organizations.

At the same time, respondents identified opportunities to build on these strengths. Across the survey, four themes emerged consistently: (1) Facilitating community in the Department of Chemistry, (2) Enhancing communication and visibility of equity-related work, (3) Diversifying and deepening student support, and (4) Improving the quality of response to negative or harmful incidents. These findings suggest community members recognize the Department of Chemistry as having a strong foundation related to advancing equity-related work, while also seeking consistent commitment and effort related to enhancing communication, support, and transparency.

The review also points to meaningful progress since the 2020–2021 assessment, including increased community engagement, stronger recognition of Chem EDI's role, more established equity-related programming, and fewer concerns related to overt resistance to EDI initiatives.

Recommendations

Stemming from the review's findings, the following recommendations have been made:

Expand communication and visibility of equity work

- Increase the frequency, clarity, and accessibility of communication about equity initiatives, supports, priorities, and outcomes
- More clearly connect equity work to the Department's mission and values

Invest in community-building opportunities

- Expand inclusive events and opportunities for interaction across students, staff, and faculty
- Continue supporting existing groups such as Chem EDI, Chem Soc, and the Queer Chem Collective
- Create opportunities for ongoing conversations about departmental culture, values, and belonging

Strengthen student supports

- Improve access to academic supports, mentorship, and peer networks
- Increase attention to graduate student community-building and support needs

- Review opportunities to better communicate and strengthen available resources

Strengthen responses to harm and reporting processes

- Improve education regarding disclosure, reporting, and support pathways
- Review response processes to ensure alignment with current policies and best practices
- Increase clarity about what community members can expect when concerns are raised

Conclusion

The central finding of the review is that the Department of Chemistry has established a positive and inclusive environment and is well positioned to build on this strong foundation. The most impactful next steps involve making equity work more visible, strengthening community connections, enhancing support, and increasing clarity and confidence in departmental processes.