

ChBE ARDEI Quarterly Update for Winter 2021

Summary: Fall 2020 and Winter 2021 marked the establishment of the ChBE anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ARDEI) committee. To date, we have 16 members including 5 faculty members, 7 graduate students, and 4 undergraduate students. We have organized into sub-committees that are each tackling a different action. Updates from each initiative sub-committee are below.

Department Climate Survey: During the Fall and Winter quarters, we developed the departmental climate survey with the help of outside consultants. The survey was released to all members of the department (students, post-docs, faculty, and staff) towards the end of winter quarter, and resulted in a completion rate of roughly 35%. The consultants have completed the analysis of survey results and will be preparing an executive summary that we plan to share with the department this spring.

Department Town Hall: Plans are underway to have a Town Hall meeting in the department. We will be using the results of the Climate Survey to help guide the topics to be discussed as well as the timing of this event.

ARDEI Department Website: We are working on creating a section of the ChBE departmental website focused on ARDEI topics. We plan to build this out over time, but to start we would like to place links to resources at NU, resources for learning, upcoming events and a space for contacting us. We welcome your ideas for website content as well!

ARDEI Annual Seminar Series: The ChBE department is establishing an annual winter quarter seminar modeled after the Mah and Hulburt lectures with the goal of exposing STEM researchers and students to research and efforts focusing on environmental justice, research justice, anti-racism, intersectionality, etc. Seminar speakers will be awarded an honorarium. The first seminar is slated for June 3, 2021 (future seminars will be held in winter) and will feature an accomplished researcher in a relevant field from Northwestern. More details are forthcoming.

Undergraduate ARDEI Resources and Course Development: We aim to educate undergraduate students about the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and draw explicit connections between their technical work as engineers and social responsibility as advocates of anti-racism. We are currently developing resources that ChBE faculty could use to introduce ARDEI topics in their courses and as a result, in the ChBE curriculum. The goal is to create several touchpoints during a student's undergraduate degree to emphasize the need to think about how our efforts as chemical engineers affect the society at large. We met with Professor Randy Snurr in Winter 2021 who approved of our plans and gave us permission to present our ideas during a ChBE faculty meeting in Spring 2021. For Spring 2021, we plan to write homework problems and provide resources that give faculty examples of how ARDEI topics can be incorporated in their assignments and courses at large and present them at a faculty meeting.

Graduate ARDEI Course Development: We are developing a first-year graduate course to introduce students to ARDEI topics in STEM and encourage thoughtfulness and intentional actions during their career. Currently, we are outlining course objectives, brainstorming topics and activities for the syllabus, and consolidating resources about teaching these topics and material for the course. The first iteration of this course will take place on a smaller scale during part of the required Professional Development course first-year graduate students are already required to take.