

## Mellon Inclusive Teaching Grant Application 2020

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### **Issues to be Addressed**

Of the 333 comments made on the @blackatrin Instagram, five referenced the chemistry department. Most of these comments involved instances of microaggressions, including two cases citing comments on student writing, one instance of students of color being consistently confused for one another, a case in which laboratory dress code was enforced unevenly, and an off-hand comment about Black History Month by a member of the department. These posts forced our department to recognize our blind spots around these issues, and the goal of this grant is to carefully examine our practices and policies to reduced implicit bias and microaggressions within the department.

### **Plan of Action**

This group will lead the entire Chemistry Department in a review of our normal practices, to see if we can identify areas where implicit biases may be operative, or areas where we can be more inclusive. Initially, four areas will be examined. These are (1) our course syllabi and grading policies, (2) the recruitment and hiring of students as Supplemental Instruction leaders and teaching assistants, (3) the selection of students who receive awards, honors and summer research fellowships, and (4) the dress code for students to safely undertake laboratory experiments. These four areas have been identified by the Chemistry Department for discussion and action. We remain open to looking at other areas if we perceive them as potential areas where implicit biases may affect the ability of all students to succeed in their studies.

### **Tracking Our Progress**

To assess the effectiveness of our policy changes we plan on tracking the demographics of our hires for Supplemental Instruction leaders and teaching assistants, as well as our award recipients. We aim to have the demographics of our SIs and TAs more closely match those of the student body and of our majors. Additionally, we would like to host listening sessions for students to come and share their experiences with the department and launch a webform for anonymous feedback. We hope students will feel comfortable bringing forth issues we need to address, as well as share with us the policies and practices they view favorably. Further, we would like to establish regular meetings with the Umoja Coalition to elicit feedback and ensure that we maintain an inclusive environment. Finally, as a department we pledged to attend more events hosted by the Umoja Coalition and other organizations on campus, and we will track this. Finally, we plan to revisit this topic with the entire department annually to ask how each faculty member has worked toward our diversity, equity, and inclusion goals in the past year.