



March 8, 2023

Re: Unit Response to the Committee's Chemistry Program Review Report

Dear Colleagues:

I want to start by expressing my sincere thanks to the Review Committee (referred to as the Committee from hereon) for their participation in our decennial academic program review process on behalf of both the Department and the University. We appreciated their insightful discussions with department members during their visit (January 30-31, 2023) and their thoughtful report dated February 6, 2023. The Department of Chemistry agrees with the findings from the Committee's report and would like to take this opportunity to highlight areas identified for improvement and immediate action.

1. *The urgent need for investing in Chemistry's research infrastructure.*

- a. We agree with the Committee that Bagley Hall and the Chemistry Library Building, two of the three buildings housing Chemistry researchers (faculty, postdocs, research staff, and students), are unsuitable for modern chemistry research and present "a real and present threat to the continued excellence of the Department of Chemistry." We acknowledge the prioritization from the College of Arts and Sciences for this building, their investment in the recently started pre-design study, and their commitment of \$40M for the construction phase. We will continue to work with the College and central administration to ensure that the new Chemical Sciences Building remains a top capital project priority for the University through the next two biennia.
- b. We also agree with the Committee that the department needs to allocate resources and seek strategic federal funding opportunities (NIH equipment grants, NSF-MRI, etc.) for updating core shared instrumentation such as Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectrometers, mass spectrometers, etc. The departmental Research Infrastructure Committee has been tasked with prioritizing the department's shared instrumentation needs and identifying faculty who can lead equipment grants. The Associate Chair of Research will oversee this project over the next 3-5 years.

2. *Increasing faculty size, investing in student-facing staff, and adding TA resources to effectively execute our educational mission.*

- a. We highlight the fact that the Committee endorses our proposed size of 40 tenure-track faculty and 8 teaching track faculty. We ask the College and the administration to work with us to achieve and maintain this faculty size by 2030. A new building will provide us with a unique opportunity to engage in strategic hires of mid-career and senior faculty colleagues. Additionally, we agree with the Committee that there is an urgent need to hire faculty in experimental physical chemistry to maintain the strength of our undergraduate and graduate training programs.
- b. The Committee notes that the graduate program advisor serves 250+ students. This ratio is much higher than that in other science and engineering units. Additional

advising staff support will be crucial for better serving the graduate student population.

- c. The department has lower TA counts than peer institutions with similar or even smaller instructional programs. We reiterate our need for 40 additional TA quarters to provide a better student-to-TA ratio in our large gateway classes at the 100 and 200 level.

3. ***Attracting and retaining excellent and diverse students, staff, and faculty.***

- a. We agree with the Committee's recommendation that central UW administration will need to address the issues of adequate parental leave and develop policies for spousal hires in the near term to increase diversity in the faculty ranks and maintain the excellence of its faculty.
- b. We also agree with the Committee that we should build long-term relationships with URM students to increase the diversity of our applicant pool at the graduate, postdoctoral and faculty levels. In 2020, the Department entered a partnership with the ACS Bridge Program which gives us access to applications of URM PhD students. We have set aside endowment funds to send a few students to meetings of national chemistry organizations focusing on DEI (NOBCChE and SACNAS).
- c. Since FY 22, we have started allocating funds to provide stipends for undergraduate researchers to participate in research with Chemistry faculty and graduate students. We will build on this program and develop plans to fundraise specifically for this purpose.
- d. The department values its long-term staff and depends on them to run things smoothly. We will continue to advocate for competitive staff salaries to both recruit and retain staff. At the same time, the department will provide funds for staff members' professional development and provide funded opportunities for team-building and social activities.
- e. Our self-study made a case for hiring a PhD level staff member to serve as a Director of Equity, Education and Outreach. The Committee has encouraged us to appoint a faculty member as an Associate Chair for DEI and Community Building. While our preference would be to hire a staff member for consistency and continuity of our efforts, we will explore the model of an Associate Chair for this important work.

We also embrace the many secondary recommendations made by the Committee and once again thank them for their work. We look forward to working towards our goal of becoming one of the best Chemistry departments at a public R1 University in the United States and executing our mission for discovery and education in the chemical sciences for the public good.

Sincerely,



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