

Mitchell Anthamatten, PhD
Professor and Chair



HAJIM
SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
& APPLIED SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

June 16th, 2020

Dear Students, Alumni, and Colleagues:

The Department of Chemical Engineering stands in solidarity with the University of Rochester in supporting all Black members of our community. The deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and many others have catalyzed a global movement, raising awareness on how social injustice has persisted and has plagued our society for centuries. The events have caused grief, pain, and frustration, and we can only imagine how Black members of our community are feeling and have felt throughout our history.

Our department's core mission is to prepare students for professional careers in chemical engineering or related fields through excellent research and education, and it is critical that we conscientiously strive to overcome implicit bias and to provide equal opportunity to our students. We value diversity, and we are fortunate to have a rich population of minority and international students. We need to ensure that all of our students—prospective students as well—are treated equally. In addition to university-level efforts, our department is taking the following steps to confront existing or emerging injustices:

- (i) Each of our faculty and staff will complete implicit bias training to increase our awareness of how objectivity can be lost through subconscious assumptions.
- (ii) A student focus group will be formed and students will be invited to “grade” our department on how well we are promoting equity. The group will summarize student sentiment and provide recommendations for action.
- (iii) Our graduate committee will continue to act deliberately in promoting diversity within our student population. Last year, through the UR's Provost-Promise program, the department offered matching financial support and a robust academic advising and mentoring plan to a PhD fellowship recipient. We will continue to go after such win-win opportunities, and we will also encourage qualified underrepresented students to apply for scholarships to our graduate programs.

Beyond these items, our faculty and staff are open to further ideas and dialog on how to directly address social injustice, continuing to foster openness and inclusiveness. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have suggestions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mitch Anthamatten". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mitchell Anthamatten