

# THE MERKERT CATALYST

*Brought to you by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee*

THIS MONTH'S FEATURE STORY:

*Women in Science*

## WHAT IS THE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE?

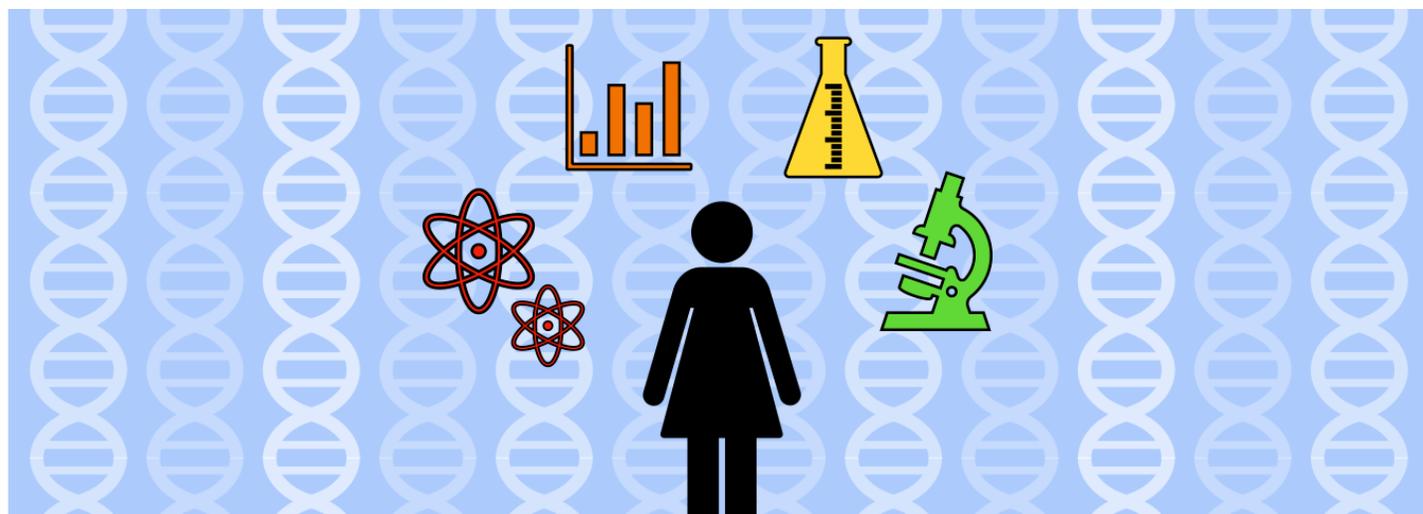
*Written by Sarah Canarelli*

In June of this year, a Diversity and Inclusion committee was initiated within the Boston College chemistry department. This committee is made up of faculty, post-docs, and students who are passionate and motivated to bring long-overdue change to the halls of Merkert.

The primary goal of this committee is to raise awareness of biases and discriminatory behaviors and promote diversity and equity within the department and, more broadly, in the sciences. One way the Diversity and Inclusion committee plans to communicate is through a monthly newsletter, The Merkert Catalyst. This student written newsletter will highlight what is going on in our department and our community. The newsletter will provide educational resources on diversity, inform readers about social justice events in the community, and feature stories about our department and its members.

While the committee has some initial ideas regarding what to include and address in the newsletter, feedback, comments and suggestions are welcomed and encouraged. Kindly send your suggestions to the Diversity and Inclusion committee email, [diversity.chemisry@bc.edu](mailto:diversity.chemisry@bc.edu).





## WOMEN IN SCIENCE

*Written by Sarah Canarelli and Elise Ficaretta*

Low representation of women in science is not a new problem. For years, societal norms have perpetuated the gender gap in STEM. While we are currently witnessing a shift of the gender balance in this field, we still have a long way to go. As a society we must actively work to abolish the perceptions that this is a male dominated field and encourage young female scientists that a career in science is possible.



*Melanie Sanford*, an Associate Editor for the Journal of the American Chemical Society and Professor of Chemistry at the University of Michigan.

[1] *Org. Process Res. Dev.* 2020, 24, 2, 111–114

<https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.oprd.0c00032>

[2] *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* 2020, 142, 26, 11317–11318

<https://doi.org/10.1021/jacs.0c06482>

Earlier this year, the American Chemical Society (ACS) journals published a virtual issue celebrating women in organic chemistry [1]. In the editorial of this issue, Melanie Sanford shared some of her thoughts and experiences as a woman in science. Sanford has studied and observed the low representation of women in science coverage for years. Regardless of the cause, she says this lack of gender diversity has important implications in terms of visibility/recognition, career opportunities, and mentorship for the next generation of scientists. Sanford shares more of her thoughts on diversity in article published in response to the now retracted *Angewandte Chemie* article written by Tomas Hudlicky.

**"ACTIONS NOT JUST WORDS ARE  
REQUIRED TO TACKLE SYSTEMIC  
INEQUITIES, AND WE ALL CAN AND  
SHOULD BE DOING MORE."**

Sanford's article, titled "Equity and Inclusion in the Chemical Sciences Requires Actions not Just Words" provides readers with examples of things they can do to address diversity in chemistry [2]. To highlight a few, Sanford encourages us to advocate for underrepresented minorities, lead by example, mentor the next generation and educate ourselves. We all should take a page from Sanford's book going forward. Words are no longer enough if we want to bring about real change. We must recognize that diversity drives innovation and improve the representation of women in sciences for our generation and the ones to follow.

## MEET OUR COMMUNITY

*Written by Sarah Canarelli*



"WHETHER IT'S ON THE LINKS  
OR IN THE LAB, YOU JUST HAVE  
TO KEEP MOVING FORWARD."

Meet Elise Ficaretta! Elise is a rising third-year graduate student from Saratoga Springs, NY. She earned her Bachelor's degree from Binghamton University, only a few hours away from her hometown.

Currently, Elise is working on genetic code expansion as a member of the Chatterjee lab. When Elise is not in the lab, you can usually find her reading a book at a coffee shop or starting a new series on Netflix (and never really finishing it). Some people may also be surprised to know that Elise is big into golf and Star Wars; she could talk about these things for hours.

When you ask Elise what she likes about Boston College or why she chose Boston to be her home for the next several years, you will inevitably hear her talk about the incredible networking opportunities that come with living in a scientific hub like Boston.

While Elise has not yet decided what she would like to do after she graduates, she has a passion for learning and looks forward to encouraging future generations of female scientists.

## RESOURCES

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

*Empowering Women in Organic Chemistry  
Virtual Conference, August 13th-14th  
<https://ewochem.org/ewoc-2020/>*

*Novartis Quantitative Sciences Academic-  
to-Industry Symposium, August 18th-19th*

*Women's Equality Day, August 26th*

For more information, please visit the Boston College chemistry webpage. We are currently working on updating the webpage to include a diversity tab, which will provide additional resources and link to the Diversity and Inclusion website. Stay tuned for more details on the launch!

Want to be featured in our next "Meet Our Community" story? Email us at [diversity.chemistry@bc.edu](mailto:diversity.chemistry@bc.edu) and we will be in touch!

