

June 12, 2020

To Angewandte Chemie Leadership:

We are disappointed and outraged by the recent publication by Tomáš Hudlický. This publication was a wrong that cannot be easily righted through retraction and apology. By publishing this article, *Angewandte Chemie* has given a voice to every sexist, racist, homophobic, and xenophobic chemist worldwide, and to be clear, there are many. In addition to the section entitled “diversity in the work force,” we find his claims about publishing by Chinese scientists to be racist and inappropriate. Fraud is an important topic of conversation, but such a clearly biased and generalized opinion is unacceptable. We cannot overlook the fact that the attitudes Hudlický shares within the article are still held by many. We cannot give a platform to such discriminatory opinions and allow these feelings, which are already pervasive throughout STEM, to be given momentum.

This article also applauds a toxic work culture for all: Hudlický calls for “an unconditional submission...to his/her master.” This type of mentorship style, in which the PI has complete control over their graduate students, is not only counter-productive but can also lead students to serious mental health issues. It is also important to call attention to the highly inappropriate use of the word “master.” We should not overlook the fact that this word is deeply linked to slavery. We recognize that this is a deep-seated issue in the chemistry community and that everyone needs to fight against this culture. By publishing this article, *Angewandte Chemie* has set us all back and justified this behavior.

Angewandte Chemie will have to take action in a continuing, active manner before we can stand behind it as a reputable journal that values all scientists and the science they accomplish. Until we are convinced of the journal’s commitment and dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion in science, we will no longer be publishing articles in *Angewandte Chemie*, and I will no longer be serving as a referee in the peer-review process for this journal.

We challenge *Angewandte Chemie* to change our minds and make this journal reputable once again. To reiterate, apology is insufficient. Especially apologies that include statements such as, “It is not only our responsibility to spread trusted knowledge, but to also stand against discrimination, injustices and inequity. While diversity of opinion and thoughts can spur change and debate, this essay had no place in our journal.” We no longer trust *Angewandte Chemie* to spread “trusted knowledge.” To even hint that this article can be viewed as “diversity of opinion and thought” is deplorable, as this article undermines decades of work that individuals of all scientific communities have gone through to make their fields accessible to all individuals. This apology reads as “Someone needs to defend bigotry in chemistry, but it shouldn’t be *Angewandte Chemie*.” We ask that in addition to providing an unequivocal apology, *Angewandte Chemie* make concrete changes in the coming months and years.

Concrete actions the journal should take include but are not limited to the following:

1. Add a new editorial section to each issue that addresses culture and publishing in chemistry. For the next year, *Angewandte Chemie* could publish only profiles of those people that face implicit and explicit bias in science. In addition, *Angewandte Chemie* should include extra sections or articles discussing constructive and effective mentorship. These articles may be challenging to elicit, as it is not a quick task to recognize

effective mentorship in STEM. We recommend hiring staff who are well versed in chemistry and effective teaching to facilitate/construct these articles.

2. Increase the number of women and URM scientists on editorial boards and in administrative leadership for the general benefit of the journal and not to be exclusively responsible for making *Angewandte Chemie* a more equitable journal.
3. Have mandatory recurring implicit bias training for all editors and an outside audit of the past reviewer process. This is necessary for scientific articles as well as opinion pieces. Be an advocate for reforming the peer review system towards more accountability and transparency. Some examples and questions the audit could answer are as follows:
 - a. Ensure the published scientific articles aren't biased—were there trends in the past that clearly indicated bias?
 - b. Train editors on how to be aware of and combat different stereotypes and microaggressions—were there trends in the past that suggest articles were accepted because the authors fell under certain stereotypes? Were harsh language or microaggressions used in previous editorial feedback?
 - c. Provide actions to manage and assess implicit bias from the editors.
 - d. Generate statistics on the number of women and URMs that contributed to articles and if they contributed as first/second/third/etc. author.
 - e. Results from the audit should be publicized.
4. The editor that handled the Hudlický essay should be dismissed, not just suspended as is currently the situation.
5. We understand there is an internal investigation of how this essay was allowed to be published; however, it is imperative that this investigation be thorough and that the results are made public.

We all have roles to play in making diversity, equity, and inclusion core values in STEM, as well as fighting to make the culture in STEM less toxic. We hope that *Angewandte Chemie* accepts its role and makes drastic changes to ensure disdainful speech and opinions will never again be tolerated in this journal.

Very truly yours,

Prof. Cathy Drennan
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Francesca Vaccaro
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