Most of you are aware that in late 2019, complaints were lodged against CSE faculty member Walter Lasecki. By agreement with Prof. Lasecki, I have a statement about the situation that I can make on behalf of the Division to CSE graduate students and faculty. Due to the sensitivity of this matter, we will not be including the statement in written notes of this meeting, and I ask all of you to exercise discretion in dissemination of this information. However I think it is important that our community be notified about the following points.

I will be reading the same statement to the faculty on Friday.

1. The complaints were investigated by the university’s Office of Institutional Equity (OIE). The investigation reached out to all relevant parties and reviewed all relevant available documents, over the course of several months. OIE did not find that there was any sexual misconduct or harassment, nor did they find any other violation of university Standard Practice Guidelines. The process was thorough and professional, and conducted independently from CSE and the College of Engineering.
   1. Speaking personally, I wish to acknowledge the hurt and harm inherent in the complaints, and express my regret that a member of our community experienced feelings of violation.
2. Regardless of the findings of this case, the episode has without doubt been extremely unsettling to the department. It was especially disruptive to students in Prof. Lasecki’s research group, and difficult and uncomfortable for everyone having to live with the uncertainty on a matter such as this within CSE for an extended period.
   1. To support students during this process, the department made sure all students had funding and advising options. There was stress over the time it took to resolve some of these situations. Fortunately, most PhD students involved already had official or unofficial co-advisors who could facilitate transitions, and I am very grateful for the CSE and SI faculty who helped with this.
   2. While the investigation was pending and since, Prof. Lasecki took a variety of precautionary measures for security of students on his own initiative. These were disclosed early in 2020.
   3. After discussions with CSE and the College, it was agreed that Prof. Lasecki would contribute discretionary research funds to help the college and department support the transition of students to new research groups. All of those transitions have been supported.
3. Prof. Lasecki has expressed a desire to learn and improve from this experience. He is continuing to reach out to get feedback and input from resources both on and off campus, and has updated his lab’s policies and processes. These include measures to improve expectation-setting and transparency, and increase his professional distance from students. He is also making individual changes such as committing to remove alcohol from all professional interactions.
   1. The College is conducting a study of the situation to better understand how to improve advising training and guidance, for example how student concerns can be averted, or addressed as they arise rather than years later.
   2. Prof. Lasecki has met with the CSE Executive Committee in an open discussion of his situation. ExCom suggested that engaging faculty and others in small-group discussions might help clear the air and address any remaining concerns in a way that a single monolithic discussion cannot. The department is willing to facilitate such discussions, or people can reach out to Prof. Lasecki directly.
4. I also need to point out that some took actions in response to this matter that were problematic and counter-productive to establishing facts and resolving the issues. For instance, some inaccurate information was disseminated including about the status and handling of the case. This has had negative impact on individuals, and on the departmental climate generally. I wish to note in particular:
   1. Some students and others have reported that they were fearful of being seen disagreeing with their peers or felt pressure regarding their associations or other career choices. I would hope we could agree to allow each other to reach our own judgments, and not accuse others of being unsupportive of individuals or principles based on good faith choices they make based on the information they have and their situations.
   2. And I must call out in particular a flyer posted in Beyster by unknown individuals containing what some have viewed as racially-tinged content and narratives.
5. I hope this long and long overdue statement is helpful to all of you who understandably felt in the dark about the status of this case. This is by no means meant as a last word, but a first step in processing what has been a very painful episode in CSE.