VEDB Research Laboratory Community Guidelines

PURPOSE

We, the principle investigators, researchers, and staff of the VEDB, are dedicated to conducting and communicating our research in accordance with the highest scientific, professional, and ethical standards while creating an inclusive and supportive community and environment that recognizes and respects the inherent worth of every person, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin, age, disability (physical or mental), sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, parental status, marital status, political affiliation, mental illness, socioeconomic status or background, neuro(a)typicality, or physical appearance. We are united by these values, and we celebrate our unique differences.

We put forth these community guidelines because we believe that articulating our values and accountabilities to one another reinforces the respect we all have for each other and provides us with clear avenues to correct our culture should it ever stray. We commit to enforcing and evolving these guidelines as our team grows and in response to evolving understanding of how best to meet our goals of creating an inclusive, supportive environment for all.

The community guidelines are concepts we expect teammates to work to apply to their daily lives in and outside of the VEDB research labs. Specifically, the guidelines apply to our interactions in various areas of our shared professional lives, including all events hosted or financially supported by the VEDB (including travel), shared online spaces (Slack, email, etc.), virtual and in-person meetings, social media, pull request feedback, and conferences or other events where we represent the VEDB and the VEDB research laboratories.

POLICY

What we do

Every member of the VEDB team is expected to be considerate of their teammates and to contribute to a collaborative, positive, and healthy environment in which we can all succeed. Specifically, all team members are expected to work and engage in a manner that promotes the highest levels of **Inclusion**, **Respect**, **Collaboration**, **and Integrity**.

Inclusion

- **Be inclusive**: Go out of your way and across cultures to include people in team jokes or memes; we want to build an environment free of cliques. Avoid slang or idioms that might not translate across cultures, or be deliberate in explaining them to share our diverse cultures and languages. Speak plainly and avoid acronyms and jargon that not everyone may understand. Be an ally to teammates when you see a need.
- **Be kind.** Be polite and friendly in all forms of communication – especially remote communication, where opportunities for misunderstanding are greater. Avoid sarcasm. Tone is hard to decipher online; make liberal use of emoji, GIFs and Bitmoji to aid in communication. Use video hangouts when it makes sense; face-to-face discussion benefits from all kinds of social cues that may go missing in other forms of communication.
- **Be mindful of** language. Inclusive language seeks to treat all people with respect, dignity, and impartiality. It is constructed to bring everyone into the group and exclude

no one. Historically, language has left many out. To change deeply embedded habits requires us to consider the implications of words and phrases that have long gone unchallenged and to dig deep into empathy and imagine an experience not our own. Some of these language changes might seem unnecessary or even silly to some. But why not try? Nothing is lost in the process, but so much is gained. Be careful in the words that you choose, even if it's as small as choosing "hey, everyone" over "hey, guys." Sexist, racist, ableist, and other exclusionary jokes are not appropriate and will not be tolerated under any circumstance. Any language that is unwelcoming—whether or not it rises to the level of harassment—is also strongly discouraged.

- **Be aware of and avoid microaggressions:** Much exclusionary behavior takes the form of subtle actions or microaggressions – small things that make others feel unwelcome. For example, saying "It's so easy my grandmother could do it" is a subtle microaggression with tones of both sexism and ageism. Regardless of intent, these comments can have a significant demeaning impact on teammates.

Respect
- **Create a comfortable environment for all.**
    - Use of images, activities, or other materials that are of a sexual, racial, or otherwise offensive nature that may create an inappropriate or toxic environment are prohibited.
    - Disorderly, boisterous, or disruptive conduct including fighting, coercion, theft, damage to property, or any mistreatment or non-businesslike behavior is prohibited.
- **Don't be condescending**.
    - Don't express surprise when someone doesn't know something. We are all beginners in something, and we were all beginners at "this thing" at some point. We are here to learn and the only way to do that is with an open mind. It is always acceptable to say "I don't know" or "I don't understand." All questions are great questions! So please don't act surprised when people aren't familiar with a tool, person, place or process. This applies to both technical things ("What?! I can't believe you don't know what the stack is!") and non-technical things ("You don't know who DHH is?!").
    - Don't say 'well-actually...'. A 'well-actually' happens when someone says something that's almost – but not entirely – correct, and you say, "well, actually…" and give a minor correction. Most 'well-actuallys aren't crucial to the overall conversation and diminish the contribution of the recipient. If it's critical to add your correction, use language that leaves room for the idea that you might be wrong or missing some context, too.
- **Be respectful of time**. Embrace habits that are inclusive and productive for team members wherever they are and whatever their life circumstances may be: make liberal use of asynchronous communication tools, document syncs and decisions thoroughly, and pay attention to time zones when scheduling events.

Collaboration
- **Be supportive of your colleagues, both proactively and responsively**. Offer to help if you see someone struggling or otherwise in need of assistance (taking care not to be patronizing or disrespectful). If someone approaches you looking for help, be

generous with your time; if you're under a deadline, let them know when you will be able to help or direct them to someone else who may be of assistance.
- **Be collaborative**. Involve your teammates in brainstorming and sketching sessions, code reviews, planning documents, etc. Share early and ask for feedback often. In addition to asking for feedback, be generous and kind in giving it.
- **Be generous in both giving and accepting feedback.** Feedback is a natural and important part of our culture and a key mechanism by which we all grow and learn. Good feedback is kind, respectful, clear, and constructive, and focused on goals and values rather than personal preferences. You are expected to give and receive feedback with gratitude and a growth mindset.

Integrity
- Conduct and report scientific research objectively, honestly, and thoroughly.
- Be honest and realistic in stating claims or estimates based on available data and understand the limitations of our knowledge.
- Use appropriate diligence in preserving and maintaining documentation, such as original data records, so that others may reproduce results.
- Acknowledge all conflicts of interest and do not knowingly engage in activities for which a conflict of interest impedes your ability to act in an objective, honest, and ethical manner.
- Properly reference and acknowledge the work and accomplishments of colleagues and others in the scientific community. Do not accept or assume credit for another's accomplishments.
- Take responsibility for safety and the impacts of your actions on the laboratory, the environment, and research participants.
- Accurately describe research methodology and data processing in all research products, including clear traceability of all figures and images to original data.

What we don't do
Discrimination and harassment of any kind are expressly prohibited. Additionally, behavior or language that is unwelcoming, disrespectful, or lacking in integrity will not be tolerated.

Don't transfer blame for your mistakes. If someone lets you know that you have offended them, don't reply with, "That's not what I meant. You're being too sensitive." or "Comment X wasn't sexist!" Keep an open mind, apologize, learn from your mistakes and move on.

Failure and mistakes are normal parts of the scientific process. **Acknowledge and accept when things go wrong** or in unexpected ways. Keep an open mind, learn from your mistakes and move on. (There is a theme here.)

Commitment to self-improvement

None of us is perfect: all of us will from time to time fail to live up to our standards. What matters isn't having a perfect track record, but owning up to your mistakes and committing to a clear and persistent effort to improve.

If you are approached as having (consciously or otherwise) acted in a way that might make your teammates feel unwelcome, listen with an open mind and avoid becoming defensive. Remember that if someone offers you feedback, it likely took a great deal of courage for them to do so. The best way to respect that courage is to acknowledge your mistake, apologize, and move on — with a renewed commitment to do better.

Repeated or severe violations of this code can and will be addressed by the principal investigator(s), and may lead to disciplinary actions, including termination.

REPORTING
When something goes wrong there are a number of things you can do to make sure the situation is addressed.

- If you ever witness something that seems like it isn't aligned with our values or these standards, err on the side of caring for your colleagues. Even if an incident seems minor, reach out to the person impacted by it to check in.
- For smaller incidents that might be settled with a brief conversation, you can choose to discuss how it affected you directly with the offending person. Please use this approach only if you feel comfortable; you do not have to carry the weight of addressing these issues yourself. If you're interested in this option but unsure how to go about it, try discussing with your PI first—they will have advice on how to make the conversation happen and can also join you in a conversation.
- Talk to your PI. They will be able to talk directly to the colleague in question if you feel uncomfortable or unsafe doing so yourself.
- Report incidents via your institutional reporting systems. Each of our institutions has programs and systems for reporting incidents of harassment and discrimination.
  - **Bates College**
    - **Title IX Officer, Gwen Lexow,** Lane Hall 202-A, 207-786-6445, glexow@bates.edu
    - **Deputy Title IX Coordinator, Erin Foster Zsiga,** Senior Associate Dean of Students for Residence Life and Health Education, Lane Hall 104, 207-786-6215,   efoster@bates.edu
    - **Anonymous reporting: bates.ethicspoint.com**, **844-251-1879.** Any individual may make an anonymous report concerning an act of sexual misconduct. An individual may report the incident without disclosing their name, identifying the Responding Party, or requesting any action. The college's anonymous reporting system is hosted by EthicsPoint. This service allows the college to communicate with the person making the report, while maintaining complete confidentiality. EthicsPoint stores all information regarding these reports on their secure servers. The Title IX Officer will receive the information contained in the anonymous report and

will determine any appropriate response or action, including individual or community remedies as appropriate.

- **University of Nevada Reno**
  - **Title IX Coordinator and Interim Director, Equal Opportunity & Title IX,** Jeanne Meyer, Continuing Ed Building, Room 206, m/s 158, (775) 784-1547
  - **Deputy Title IX coordinator**, Rhona Bennett, (775) 682-6981, rlundin@unr.edu
  - **https://www.unr.edu/research-integrity**
  - **https://www.unr.edu/research-integrity/contact**

- **North Dakota State University**
  - **Vice Provost and Title IX Coordinator**, Canan Bilen-Green, Old Main 201, NDSU Main Campus, (701) 231-7708, ndsu.eoaa@ndsu.edu
  - **Institutional Equity Investigator and Deputy Title IX Coordinator,** Heather Higgins-Dochtermann, Old Main 201, NDSU Main Campus, (701) 231-7107, heather.higginsdocht@ndsu.edu

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