Guidelines for Fostering Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion in STEM at ISU[1]

Introduction

Everyone working and learning in ISU STEM programs, both formal and informal, has the right to an environment free from bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, and violence. These guidelines exist to state and protect the values of STEM programs at ISU and to promote equitable representation, diversification, and inclusion with STEM disciplines both at ISU and broadly. These guidelines do not supersede the rights and responsibilities outlined by Illinois State University policy nor state and federal law. Rather, these guidelines provide additional guidance for expectations that reflect commitment to pursuing policies, procedures, and programs that contribute to establishing equity, inclusion, sense of belonging, and diverse viewpoints across the STEM units at ISU.

Shared Values

We are guided by the following shared values.

1. Respect for the dignity and worth of all individuals
2. Genuine appreciation and consideration of diverse experiences, ideas, perspectives, and beliefs that challenge both our implicit assumptions and canonized knowledge
3. Enthusiasm for the pursuit of STEM literacy among the public
4. Professionalism, honesty, and integrity in the generation of STEM knowledge
5. Accountability for behaviors and their impacts, particularly impacts on minoritized and marginalized groups
6. Transparency in decision-making
7. Collaboration and cooperation in the generation of new STEM knowledge, learning of STEM principles and practices, and recruitment of individuals who identify with underrepresented groups into STEM disciplines

Shared Acknowledgements

We acknowledge that some amount of current progress in STEM at ISU rests on past oppression, discrimination, and offenses toward humanity. Specifically, we acknowledge:

1. Illinois State University was built on the land of multiple native nations. These lands were the traditional birthright of Indigenous people who were forcibly removed and have faced centuries of struggle for survival and identity in the wake of dispossession and displacement. We acknowledge that our campus sits on the lands that were once home to the Illini, Peoria, and the Myaamia, and later, due to colonial encroachment and displacement, to the Fox, Potawatomi, Sauk, Shawnee, Winnebago, Ioway, Mascouten, Piankashaw, Wea, and Kickapoo Nations. We express honor to those Indigenous people who we may have excluded in this acknowledgement due to erasure and historical inaccuracy.

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[1] Adapted from the University of Kansas's Center for STEM Learning Code of Conduct. Accessed on 31 December 2021 from: https://policy.ku.edu/CLAS/code-of-conduct-CSTEM

2. Some pursuits of STEM knowledge have disregarded the dignity and worth of people. Examples include performance of unethical research and medical procedures on people of color (e.g., Tuskegee syphilis study, nonconsensual sterilization of Puerto Rican women in 1950-60s), bias and prejudice perpetuated under the guise of science (e.g., Linnaeus's classification of humans in *Systema Naturae*), and misinterpretation and application of scientific knowledge in ways that lead to societal inequities (e.g., healthcare disparities).
3. Although STEM disciplines strive for objectivity by taking measures to reduce bias and construct explanations of natural phenomena based on experimentation, observation, and logic, STEM remains a human endeavor and can therefore never be perfectly objective. Thus, the knowledge generated within STEM disciplines always holds the potential to reflect the biases of those who constructed the knowledge. This highlights the importance of representation from a large diversity of perspectives within STEM disciplines, open-minded consideration of dissenting perspectives, and revisiting of accepted knowledge considering new evidence or data interpretations.

Concordant Actions
Many ideas, experiences, perspectives, and skillsets are represented among the members of our STEM units, which can be combined in creative ways as we pursue equity, inclusion, sense of belonging, and diverse viewpoints across the STEM units at ISU. Actions that reflect the shared values and acknowledgements include but are not limited to the following.

Conduct
Members of STEM units act with honesty and be personally accountable for their individual actions and their impacts, particularly impacts on minoritized and marginalized groups. Members treat others with respect and seek equitable and fair solutions and policies.

Integrity
Members take responsibility for the integrity of their contributions to STEM, at ISU and within their disciplines.

Acknowledgement
Members acknowledge names and roles of all who made contributions to STEM activities, products, knowledge, and achievements.

Environment
Members are responsible for creating and promoting safe, open, and productive environments for all people. The environment honors privacy and confidentiality and is characterized by integrity, respect, fairness, trustworthiness, and transparency. Creating a safe environment includes devoting effort to not committing microaggressions. If a microaggression is committed, there is acknowledge the occurrence and the harmful impact of the microaggression; assumption of good intentions by the microaggressor, acknowledging that they are speaking from their authentic but imperfect experience; and collective pursuit of deeper understanding of both the unconscious biases that led to the microaggression as well as develop the cultural competence to avoid the microaggression in the future.

Relationships that Involve a Power Differential
Members are sensitive to the power imbalance in the various interactions on our campus (e.g., student/faculty, graduate student/advisor, nontenured faculty/tenured faculty). The individual with the greater power in the relationship takes care to understand the full perspective of the other and not put them at risk, given their reduced power.

Public Communication
Members, when representing or otherwise displaying any affiliation with STEM at ISU, will limit professional comments to their areas of expertise, refrain from personally critical comments, and will clearly distinguish professional comments from their opinions based on personal views. This applies to engagement in both public discussions and to social media postings.

Adherence to Law and Policies
Members will be aware of and adhere to laws, university policies, and these guidelines in their professional behavior.

Intervention
Members will take responsibility for active positive intervention when aware of misconduct or suspected misconduct including discrimination, harassment, bullying, or other irresponsible behaviors that undermine individuals, their STEM unit, or the university.

Reporting
Members have a responsibility to report misconduct appropriately and promptly that they witness or of which they become aware.