Climate of the Field

Snowmass 2021
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Who we are

◎   Members of large, international particle physics collaborations

◎   Early career researchers

◎   People who have experienced "reportable offenses" at venues where the reporting system was inadequate

What we aren't

◎ HR
◎ Lawyers
◎ Experts on writing or enforcing codes of conduct (though we have read many papers on best practices!)
◎ Unique in our experiences

Climate of the Field: Snowmass 2021

The product of 12 LOIs that focus on different barriers to diversity and inclusion that can be mitigated by top down changes to policies and procedures from funding agencies, institutions, and collaborations.

https://arxiv.org/abs/2204.03713

Contents

Codes of Conduct

Codes of conduct are a necessary first step toward a safer working environment. As it stands, there are gaps in many of our policies.

The following slides are not our personal opinions only, nor are they hypotheticals. They show what we found when we searched for best practices, held formal interviews with people in DEI-related roles for their collaborations, and had casual conversations with many people who felt that their collaborations and institutions have not kept them safe.

Collaboration Systems: Non-academic roles

◎ How are technicians, engineers, IT professionals, etc. included in our collaborations?
  ○ Collaborations rely on labor from people in these roles but they are often overlooked in our policies.
◎ Are they bound and protected by collaboration codes of conduct?
◎ Do they have the same access to resources?
◎ Being intentional in our wording in our codes of conduct is vital for an inclusive working environment.

Collaboration Systems: DEI roles

Many collaborations have established a DEI role, but the precise role is often ill-defined and can be a catch-all for any or all of the following:

◎ victim advocate
◎ ombudsperson
◎ program coordinator for DEI-related activities

All of which are full-time jobs that come with very specific training, none of which is provided.

Additionally, trained professional advocates are at higher risk of secondary trauma stress and get support as part of their job. No such support exists for collaboration DEI roles.

CoC Violations: Who is responsible?

Consider an incident at a collaboration meeting held at an institution other than the host lab with collaborators from different institutions.

◎   If not from US universities, Title IX does not apply.
◎   If from US universities, Title IX offices for both the victim and the perpetrator may not act, as the incident took place off-campus.
◎   The hosting institution and the host lab may not investigate if neither collaborator is employed there.
◎   The funding agency may not investigate if they are not employees.

Institution representatives may believe it is in their best interest not to handle the case.

Where does that leave the victim?

CoC Violations: Can collaborations be responsible?

Can a collaboration perform an internal investigation?

◎ For egregious violations, no. Physicists are not trained to do misconduct investigations and should not do them. Additionally, an early career research may not report if the investigation could be done by someone who might write them a letter of recommendation in the future.

◎ Note also that for less egregious violations where mediation might be effective, mediation cannot be coerced or forced and must be performed by trained victim advocates.

Can a collaboration hire external investigators?

◎ There is no collaboration money to hire external investigators.

Collaboration CoCs: How can we enforce them?

The long and the short of it is that we often cannot.

Collaborations may not be able to follow through with disciplinary measures as they often require assistance from outside institutions which may be unwilling or unable to provide the support needed. Having policies and failing to enforce them is worse than having no policy at all.

> **If a community cannot hold the most powerful people in the community accountable to the code of conduct, it is best not to adopt a code of conduct at all.**
>
> *How to Respond to Code of Conduct Reports*

What are the risks of collaboration enforcement?

◎ Collaboration leadership cannot enforce disciplinary actions outlined in their own codes of conduct without legal risk.

◎ We learned of collaboration leadership who took action against a collaborator after performing an internal investigation and were told by lawyers at their home institutions that they:

    ○ could not inform the perpetrator's institution of their removal from the collaboration,

    ○ could inform the funding agency that they were no longer a collaborator, but could not inform them why,

    ○ could not make a public announcement of their removal.

◎ General sentiment from interviews is that people are waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Policy Changes: Systemic Support

◎ Little to no support in the development of collaboration CoCs.
  ○ Each collaboration reinvents the wheel.
  ○ "Standards" of behavior vary between collaborations.
◎ Little to no support in enforcing CoCs.
  ○ Institutions have financial resources, general counsel, and a human resources department; all things that collaborations and individuals on those collaborations often do not have access to.
  ○ Institutions benefit from the collaboration and have a responsibility to protect the scientists who are contributing to their scientific output and reputation.
◎ A collection of resources, from writing and enforcing codes of conduct, to program planning, would be beneficial.

Policy Changes: Institutional Policies

◎ Policies that focus on legal compliance protect institutions from legal liability but do not prevent harassment.

◎ Our institutions must develop clear, accessible, and consistent policies on harassment and standards of behavior which should include a range of clearly stated, appropriate, and escalating disciplinary consequences for those found to have violated policies and/or law, and these policies should be consistent across experiments.

◎ Many report that no one has exercised official reporting mechanisms, but they cannot claim whether there are no serious problems, or that people do not trust the system.

Policy Changes: How to handle investigations

◎ Investigations should be victim-centered (not trivial, requires specific training) for egregious violations and many institutions do not have access to an investigator like this.

◎ Clear and accessible policies on how institutions will prevent retaliation.

◎ Clear and accessible policies on how information will be shared between interested parties? e.g. the perpetrator's home institution, their collaboration

  ○ The absence of disciplinary action may only indicate that an institution is unwilling to take action and does not necessarily mean that the investigation yielded no evidence of misconduct. Will those findings still be communicated?

Commitment to DEI is an ongoing, all-inclusive process.

◎ Development of a code of conduct or DEI policies must be accompanied by an all-hands, continual process of evolution and commitment.

◎ **The code of conduct should not be a document that checks a 'requirements' box.**
Instead, it should provide for and contribute to an active and sustained commitment for improving collaboration culture.

A Code of Conduct should be

◎ … introduced as part of formal onboarding through collaboration leadership (not up to individual PIs).
◎ … introduced at the start of all collaboration activities, including virtual meetings.
◎ … reviewed periodically to account for the evolution of language and the development of collaboration values.
◎ … inclusive of non-academic community members (e.g. technicians, engineers, IT specialists).
◎ … aligned with best practices and funding agency guidelines, even as those change.

> The community must decide that ***everyone's*** participation in [community engagement] is ***required***.
> - *Individually* through *personal action*
> - *Corporately* through *structural change*

Collaboration Systems: Common Pushbacks

"Why can't we just do physics?"

"We're all good people!"
"We know how to behave!"

If you think that misconduct is not happening in your collaborations and communities, it is solely because no one has talked to you about it, and not because your specific community is exempt.

Refusing the responsibility

This is an easy argument to make if you assume that there are other people doing the work and that there are other people getting paid a fair wage to solve the problems of hierarchical structures in HEPA. The problem is: *there aren't*.

"If I'm not contributing to a negative climate, I'm off the hook."

If you elect not to act, you are acting against the moral imperative to engage.

Denial of the Problem

Lack of personal experience with harassment and discrimination does not preclude such behavior from existing.

Study after study after study have demonstrated the stark disparities in experiences of minoritized populations within STEM, including physics specifically.

This problem is not unique to nor excludes HEPA spaces.

◎ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. National Academies Press, Washington, D.C., 2018.
◎ Lauren M. Aycock et al. Sexual harassment reported by undergraduate female physicists. Phys. Rev. Phys. Educ. Res., 15:010121, 2019.
◎ Kathryn B. H. Clancy, Katharine M. N. Lee, Erica M. Rodgers, and Christina Richey. Double jeopardy in astronomy and planetary science: Women of color face greater risks of gendered and racial harassment. Journal of Geophysical Research: Planets, 122(7):1610–1623, 2017
◎ Kristie Ford. Race, Gender, and Bodily (Mis)Recognitions: Women of Color Faculty Experiences with White Students in the College Classroom. The Journal of Higher Education, 82(4):444–478, 2011.
◎ Heather L. Ford, Cameron Brick, Margarita Azmitia, Karine Blaufuss, and Petra Dekens. Women from some underrepresented minorities are given too few talks at world's largest Earth-science conference. Nature, 576(7785):32–35, December 2019.
◎ Derald Wing Sue, Christina M. Capodilupo, and Aisha M. B. Holder. Racial microaggressions in the life experience of Black Americans. Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 39(3):329–336, 2008.
◎ Kimberly A. Griffin, Meghan J. Pifer, Jordan R. Humphrey, and Ashley M. Hazelwood. (Re)Defining Departure: Exploring Black Professors' Experiences with and Responses to Racism and Racial Climate. American Journal of Education, 117(4):495–526, 2011.
◎ Women and Men in STEM Often at Odds Over Workplace Equity. Technical report, Pew Research Center, January 2018.

Collaboration Systems: Common Pushbacks

"We already have rules against this!"

"Wokeism" and "Back in my day"

"They Didn't Mean it Like That"

Deferral to existing standards

The EEOC was created just after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, nearly 60 years ago, and yet historically marginalized populations are still discriminated against and harassed in STEM.

We should expect our communities to do more than the bare minimum legally required. We should expect our communities to prioritize safety and well-being *even over scientific output.*

Minimizing the Actual Harm

"I am so attached to the systems that benefit me, I am so attached to my privilege, that I would prefer to devalue the comfort and safety of my colleagues rather than evaluate and change my own behavior."

Harm to a collaboration affiliate is harm to the collaboration.

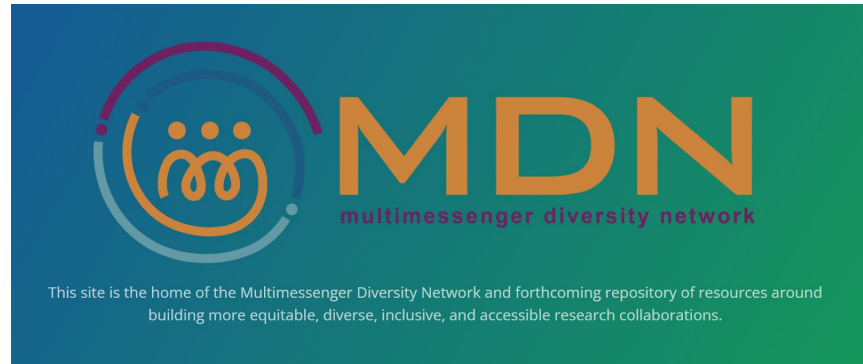**Choosing to remain neutral favors those engaging in misconduct.**

Centering the Perpetrator

The focus is placed incorrectly on the reputation or emotions of the perpetrator, rather than where it should be — on the feelings of the target and the rest of the community. The important questions to be asking are

◎ What impact does this behavior have on the target? On their work environment? On their job prospects?
◎ Is the community vulnerable to this type of behavior? What can be done to prevent this harm?
◎ What harmful experiences did this act create for people within and without the community?

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Existing Resources

◎ HEPA communities are not the first to attempt these policies, and in fact we are certainly not the most equipped to do so.

◎ Funding should be made available to invite experts to speak on these topics.
   ○ NSF has funded honorariums for guest speakers in the past, and should continue to do so.

◎ Funding should be made available to propagate best practices throughout HEPA collaborations, which might include organizations of EDI Chair / Ombudsperson meetings between collaborations (e.g. the Multimessenger Diversity Network

This site is the home of the Multimessenger Diversity Network and forthcoming repository of resources around building more equitable, diverse, inclusive, and accessible research collaborations.

Existing Resources

◎ Funding should be allocated to hire equity and inclusivity experts, such as equity scholars and organizational psychologists, to advise on development of codes of conduct, DEI initiatives, and methods of tracking the success of policies outlined in their code of conduct.

◎ These experts should be included as collaboration affiliates, so that their expertise is taken seriously. **This provides benefits on both sides: the collaboration is better served when they engage with someone they trust.**

○

Success of this model has been seen in IceCube and SuperCDMS.

◎ IceCube has an EDI program planner who is a collaborator but does not do data analysis. She leads an EDI working group, which is treated like any analysis working group. Events have included:
  ○ Meetups for different groups (e.g. LGBTQ+allies) at collaboration meetings
  ○ Guest speakers
  ○ Workshops for career advice, how to do SciComm
  ○ Mentoring program
  ○ Dependent care grants so people can travel to collaboration meetings

◎ SuperCDMS developed a survey to assess climate with heavy reliance on an expert in organizational psychology.

Select Recommendations

C1.1   Institutions and HEPA communities must develop reporting mechanisms and sanctions for egregious behavior and should transparently describe those mechanisms in full for the benefit of all affiliates. Communities must be prepared to exercise those mechanisms.

C1.2   The community should prioritize the implementation of best practices networks across institutions and communities of physics practice. This may be facilitated through Collaboration Services Offices, but may also include the facilitation of networks between DEI groups at similar collaborations.

C1.3   Future HEPA community codes of conduct should align with, and current codes of conduct should be reviewed upon new recommendations from funding agencies regarding enforcement and disciplinary measures.

Select Recommendations

C2.1   Reviews of community climate should include an evaluation of how leadership is selected within HEPA collaborations (e.g. assignment of high-impact analyses & theses topics, convenership of working groups, public-facing roles representing the collaboration such as spokespersons or analysis announcement seminars)

C2.2   Reviews of community climate should include the valuation of sub-community contributions. This includes the participation of "non-scientists" in community engagement and authorship, community perceptions of operations and service work, the development of onboarding and early-career networks, and implementation of policies toward equity in information sharing and software.

C3.1   Experts should be adequately integrated into HEPA communities, including collaborations, such that their expertise can be applied effectively. This may take the form of an official collaboration role like a non-voting member of a collaboration council.

"I'll leave you with this take-home: 'Diverse perspectives yield the best science' is a true statement, but it's one that commodifies the lived experience of marginalized people by reducing them to their contributions to productivity. It's a capitalistic framework that shirks the basic truth that cultivating a field where the norm is respecting the humanity and validity of all people is the right thing to do for no reason other than that it is right. If this is not enough of a justification for you, you are the problem."

#BlackInAstro Experiences: KeShawn Ivory

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