Genetic Engineering and Society Center

Statement on Productive, Inclusive, and Ethical Communication
Program in Genetic Engineering and Society
North Carolina State University
Adopted June 28, 2013

Genetic engineering encompasses technologies, practices, and policies that can affect all of society and must be informed by substantial, rigorous, open, and inclusive civic deliberation. The Genetic Engineering and Society (GES) Center at North Carolina State University has adopted the following guidelines to promote productive, inclusive, and ethical communication.

1. Our discussions will be inclusive, seeking out and listening respectfully to a broad range of voices and perspectives. We will listen carefully and openly before evaluating the statements of others.

2. We recognize that participants' views may be grounded in substantially different cultural frameworks and belief systems. Engagement across these differences is essential to the success of our dialog.

3. We honor differences of opinion without reducing those to mere opinion. We recognize that opinions have a variety of foundations: accurate facts, rigorous reasoning, personal experience, and cultural and personal values. We expect a combination of tolerance and open-minded skepticism on the part of all participants.

4. Participants in our discussions will not only have varied opinions; they will also have varied degrees of familiarity with the underlying science and technology and with its social, cultural, and political contexts and implications. We expect participants to be as fully informed as possible, but we will not dismiss or exclude participation based on degree of familiarity with the topic.

5. Participants are expected to share their knowledge with the rest of the community, limiting the use of discipline-specific jargon and maximizing efforts to illustrate complex material clearly, concisely, and rigorously.

6. We value ongoing dialog in which participants make time and effort to examine and research others' ideas before returning to the conversation.

7. We expect appropriate disclosure and transparent representation of group and self-interests.

8. Differences and conflicts often emerge in such deliberations, and can help illuminate the issues and interests at stake. We will engage with issues in the most collaborative manner possible, seeking to use disagreements productively rather than to avoid disagreement.

9. Our members and guests can expect to be challenged on the basis of facts and reasoned arguments, but not in ways that are personal or disrespectful. Emotional expression and creative and performative expression are welcome when consistent with our other guidelines.

10. Should arguments be made, or positions be taken, that violate basic principles of equity, justice, inclusion, and mutual respect, these will be challenged. We will avoid disparagement or exclusion of individuals based on personal or group characteristics.

Source Materials

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International Environmental Communication Association (IECA) (2013). Code of ethics. Available at: http://theieca.org/about/code-ethics

National Communication Association (1999). Credo for ethical communication, Available at: http://www.natcom.org/uploadedFiles/About_NCA/Leadership_and_Governance/Public_Policy_Platform/PDF-PolicyPlatform-NCA_Credo_for_Ethical_Communication.pdf

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Quintillianus, M. F. (Quintillian) (1920). *Instituito oratoria* (Trans. H. E. Butler). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

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