

CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE STUDIES IN MATHEMATICAL BIOLOGY

STATEMENT ON COLLABORATION

INTERCOLLEGIATE BIOMATHEMATICS ALLIANCE

The Board of IBA encourages and supports collaborative scholarly activities among its members in the pursuit of producing high quality research in mathematical biology and related fields.

The Board of Directors of Intercollegiate Biomathematics Alliance (IBA), in its effort to facilitate, sponsor, and evaluate academic and scholarly collaboration among IBA members, is responsible for making every possible effort to assess fairly the quality of a publication and the journal or book in which it is printed.

Similarly, the IBA is responsible for considering grants, the number of co-authors of a publication and the level of contribution of a faculty member, the level and reputation of the association at which a presentation is made, and related considerations. Emphasis must be on the quality of the product submitted.

First, the Board notes that the IBA is multi-faceted with faculty in various mathematical biology related fields that have slightly different conventions in terms of publishing. The primary professional organization in Mathematics, the American Mathematical Society, made an official statement in 2015 about the culture of collaboration in mathematics. This statement says:

In most areas of mathematics, joint research is a sharing of ideas and skills that cannot be attributed to the individuals separately. Researchers' roles are seldom differentiated (as they are in laboratory sciences, for example). Determining which person contributed which ideas is often meaningless because the ideas grow from complex discussions among all partners. Naming a "senior" researcher might indicate the relative status of the participants, but not the relative merit of the contributions.

For this reason, mathematicians traditionally list the authors on jointly authored publications in alphabetical order. IBA Board recognizes that there may be differences in the sub-disciplines represented within the IBA community and it is the Board's responsibility to consider these differences when possible. Even when the authors are not listed in alphabetical order, it may be difficult to discern exact percentages of contributions of each individual author unless the contributor specifies a certain percentage. Even when the contributors do so, the Board recognizes that these percentages are generally approximations.

In addition, the Board highly values and encourages collaborations among IBA members with the recognition that the product of such collaborations is usually of a higher quality and produced more quickly than what might have occurred if a single author had produced it, if it would have been produced at all. The Board finds it counterproductive to give reduced credit to a co-author of a high-quality publication with multiple authors in which all the co-authors have made a substantial contribution that cannot be distinguished as distinct from each other.

For these reasons, when evaluating an IBA member's scholarly record for the purposes of providing research support, a grant, or an award, the Board believes it is essential to look at the faculty member's record in a holistic way. The Board shall consider whether a person has shown that they do or can make substantial and sustained scholarly contributions through publications in high quality venues, whether through collaborative works or single authored works. Hence, the Board of IBA encourages and supports collaborative scholarly activities among its members in the pursuit of producing high quality research in mathematical biology and related fields.