

Bluestockings Collective Agreement

Adopted February 22, 2015; modified July 5, 2015

The Bluestockings collective is a body that ensures the store's present and future existence and represents the community as a whole.

Guiding Principles - The Bluestockings collective commits to these guiding principles, and collective members consistently model and teach these values to the best of their ability:

- **Community:** Bluestockings is a community project, and being a collective member entails centering decisions around the community and putting the community's needs above your own.
- **Kindness:** Bluestockings is centered on kindness to one another. Bluestockings is a group effort, and we support one another in this work. We work to understand the needs and strengths of all of our community members, and prioritize self-care. We all grow through our involvement with the space, and aim to meet mistakes with additional opportunities for learning, kindness, and forgiveness.
- **Non-hierarchy:** Bluestockings strives to be a non-hierarchical space, where no one has authority over any other person. We aim to be a leaderful (not a leaderless) project. Collective members empower other members of the space through training, involving them in project work, and helping them actualize their own ideas for the space. The collective should be reflective about how power is distributed in the space and seek to correct any imbalances.
- **Consensus:** The collective uses consensus as a non-hierarchical decision-making structure. Decisions made by the collective will be made through consensus to empower all members to have an equal say in decision-making, which is a form of power. By working without hierarchy, we can demonstrate our belief in the value of each member and practice the values that will lead to a more equitable society.
- **Balance:** The collective balances our political ideals and the survival of Bluestockings. This is not a stagnant balance; rather it is constantly discussed and renegotiated within the collective and is determined on a case-by-case basis. The collective examines the tensions between commercial bookstore and community space, individual staffer needs and needs of customers, and other tensions, and develops solutions to address these tensions.

Collective Group Responsibilities - The Bluestockings collective takes responsibility for bottom-lining the store's operations and representing the community in our practices,

and any decision in these areas will fall to the collective. This includes but is not limited to:

- Maintaining the safer spaces policy and addressing any violations of the policy
- Interfacing between Bluestockings and the media
- Deciding what items we will carry and how they will be organized
- Maintaining the physical space (technology, equipment, facilities, and maintenance)
- Ensuring Bluestockings is meeting its organizational requirements (financial, taxation, legal, etc.) in the short- and long-term
- Designing and communicating Bluestockings operating procedures
- Ensuring all project work and day-to-day tasks are being addressed adequately and in a timely way
- Identifying new staffers and providing staffer training; ensuring all staffing shifts are covered
- Supporting other members of the Bluestockings community with their projects
- Troubleshooting unexpected issues or emergencies

Individual Member Responsibilities - The work of the collective is shared between individuals. While contributions from each member will vary depending on their knowledge, availability, and interests, all members agree to contribute in the following ways:

- Collective members will fully participate in collective, non-hierarchical decision-making through consensus:
 - Collective members will ensure all perspectives are heard. Methods of communication and decision-making will be designed with all collective members in mind.
 - Collective members commit to fully engaging in the pursuit of solutions that are amenable to all collective members.
 - Collective members will not purposefully seek to enforce a hierarchy by amassing power for themselves or disempowering other members of the collective (e.g. forming voting blocs, silencing one another)
- Collective members act as a resource to the broader volunteer and patron community about the project, including our mission, structure, projects, history, and how to get involved in any project. Collective members should do their best to learn about different areas of Bluestockings and are encouraged to share their work with others.
- Collective members are accountable for the projects and tasks they undertake and maintain regular communication with community members about their work. Collective members are encouraged to form teams and/or coordinate projects with other volunteers. Collective members also communicate when they need help or can no longer bottom-line a project/task.

- As a body, the collective is responsible for ensuring the smooth functioning of the store. Individual collective members agree to:
 - Assist in day-to-day operations of the store, specifically by:
 - Staffing during at least one half-day staffing shift per week
 - Coordinate at least one project (booking events, inventory, volunteer coordinating, accounts payable, etc.)
 - Share other responsibilities (e.g. cover for staffers in emergencies, assist with facilities projects or emergencies, etc.) by making themselves reachable and contributing time outside of their regular shift when needed, to the extent possible for each member.
- Being a collective member is a significant time, energy, and emotional commitment. Collective members agree to make Bluestockings a priority in their lives by meeting these responsibilities and communicating with and making themselves available to community members and to each other. There is no hourly requirement, but collective members typically spend at least 12 hours per week on Bluestockings' work.

If any collective member cannot commit to any of these responsibilities, the member should communicate this to the rest of the collective. The collective can decide to make accommodations for the member and re-distribute work among other volunteers or collective members.

Membership procedures

Bluestockings seeks collective members whose marginalized identities have informed their understanding of oppression, privilege, and power, and who demonstrate a deep commitment to intersectional politics. As a feminist space, Bluestockings prioritizes people of women, trans, and gender non-conforming experience.

Generally people volunteer for at least six months prior to joining the collective. To ensure the sustainability of the collective, collective members are expected to remain members for at least 18 months.

To join the collective:

- **Intention:** The prospective member will express their interest to the current collective.
- **Application:** The collective will decide by consensus to extend an application to the prospective member. The application will consist of written questions or other material agreed to by the collective. The collective will review the material and meet with the prospective member in person to discuss their application. The collective can decide to administer additional steps. The collective will decide by consensus whether the member is invited to participate in admission.

- **Adhesion:** If the person accepts the invitation to participate in adhesion, the new member will go through a three-month “adhesion” period. This period is a trial period – the member will attend all collective meetings, contribute to collective work, etc. The prospective member can rescind their interest in joining the collective at any time during the adhesion period.
- **Invitation:** After the three-month adhesion period, the collective will decide by consensus whether to add the prospective member to the collective. If the new member accepts the invitation, the new member will agree to abiding by all language in this document and sign on to legal ownership of the space.
- **Reflection:** After 18 months, the collective will engage in a reflection on the member’s contributions over the past 18 months and decide via consensus again on the person’s collective membership. After 36 months, collective members should consider stepping back to create space for new members to take on these commitments.

If a collective member is unable to meet the responsibilities detailed above:

- For a short and/or finite period of time: The collective can accept a member “stepping back”, i.e. out of the communication and decision-making structures, for a specified period of time.
- For a long and/or indefinite period of time:
 - A collective member may of course announce their decision to step off of the collective at any time for any reason.
 - If a collective member is regularly not meeting the above responsibilities, these concerns will be communicated to the collective member in person with all collective members present. The other collective members can decide by consensus to remove the collective member.

Whenever a collective member steps back or steps off of the collective or a project for any reason, it is expected that they will fully pass off their project work and regular tasks to another collective member, including procedures, accounts/passwords, contacts, etc.