

We believe that JLab's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy should include sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression included within its language.

Sexual Orientation - The term sexual orientation is meant to be inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and straight people. The term sexual orientation is preferable over sexual preference because preference infers a choice and is often used to justify the thinking that this is a condition that can be "cured." This has been extremely damaging to lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. In order to give the lab a more welcoming atmosphere we suggest that sexual preference be changed to sexual orientation.

Gender Identity - The term gender identity means actual or perceived gender-related identity or gender-related characteristics of an individual with or without regard to the individual's assigned sex at birth. This will protect transgender employees from discrimination on the basis of being transgender. According to a study conducted by the Department of Health, 19.6% of transgender Virginian respondents have been denied a job due to their transgender status or gender expression, 12.7% have been fired due to their transgender status or gender expression, and 8.9% have disclosed their transgender status to their employers and it has had a negative impact on employment.<sup>1</sup>

Gender Expression - The term gender expression means actual or perceived gender-related appearance or mannerisms of an individual with or without regard to the individual's assigned sex at birth. Adding this into the EEO policy will protect employees on the basis of being perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. It will also protect straight and cisgender<sup>2</sup> employees from discrimination if they are not conforming to binary gender-related appearance.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Health, Health-related Needs, and Lifecourse Experiences of Transgender Virginians*, Richmond: Division of Disease Prevention through the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, Virginia Department of Health, J.M. Xavier, J.A. Hannold, J. Bradford, R. Simmons. January, 2007. Page 21.

<sup>2</sup> The term cisgender refers to someone who is comfortable in the gender they were assigned at birth.