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EBMC Core, Community, and Visiting Teachers¹—Descriptions, Roles, and Responsibilities

A. Definitions of EBMC Core, Community, and Visiting Teachers:

- All EBMC Teachers have responsibilities relating to the EBMC community.
- EBMC Core Teachers have responsibilities, in addition to transmitting spiritual teachings, in providing spiritual leadership, guiding our sangha of diverse communities, and supporting the spiritual needs of the organization. They provide visioning as well as teaching based upon their length of teaching experience and depth of spiritual practice.
- EBMC Community Teachers provide the spiritual wisdom and heart teachings both from their own direct experience in practice and their studied understanding of the lineage within which they practice. They are entrusted to teach practice/meditation groups, daylongs and class series and have formal training in teaching and leadership.
- EBMC Visiting Teachers offer teachings less frequently than Core or Community teachers, but still maintain the standards of their practice, ethics, responsibilities, and behavior.
- See selection process and qualifications of each category of teacher below. Please also remember that spiritual teaching at EBMC (or anywhere) is not a fundamental “right” but an earned privilege which is accountable to the community through the organization.
- Teachings for ongoing Practice groups are provided by Practice and Meditation Group teachers. EBMC Core, Community and Visiting Teachers may serve in the capacity of Practice and Meditation Group teachers. Please reference Practice and Meditation Group documents for further guidance and process that is specific to the ongoing groups.
- Leadership of Deep Refuge Groups are intentionally based upon a peer-led, non-teacher model of Spiritual Friendship (in other Buddhist centers names as Kalyana Mitta groups). This peer-led model, which can be unique to each DR group that is formed, is not included in this description.

B. Roles and Responsibilities of EBMC Teachers

1. Both EBMC Community Teachers and Core Teachers:

- Help guide the sangha through their understanding and experience of the Dharma.

¹ In addition to these designations, EBMC also has Practice Group teachers, who are determined by each individual practice group coordinating committee. Any Core, Community or Visiting Teacher may also serve as a Practice Group teacher for any Practice Group for which they meet criteria.

- Maintain and cultivate their own meditation and Dharma practice.
- Participate in the EBMC Teacher Sangha at least for 75% of the meetings, unless there is a personal or family emergency.
- Participate in professional development and growth opportunities on an ongoing basis which may include EBMC meetings/activities/trainings.
- Cultivate skill addressing spiritual issues across multicultural experiences.
- Comply with the EBMC Teacher Code of Ethics.
- Maintain the highest ethics of conduct and communication and actively participate in restorative work when difficulties arise.
- Consider participating as a presenter and offer their presence at additional EBMC events, when there is the opportunity to represent EBMC in the larger community, and to help promote EBMC and cultivate donors.
- To encourage collective dialogue and relationship building even when there are varied life experiences, and to refrain from polarizing any conflicts or schisms within the community by dividing practitioners.
- LSangha, with input from Program Committee, will determine ideal numbers for Core and Community Teachers at EBMC.

2. In addition, EBMC Core Teachers:

- Participate in the organizational structure of EBMC (on LSangha or at least on one committee or ongoing volunteer activity), as determined in collaboration with the Center Director and Assistant Director.
- Assist facilitating EBMC Teacher Sangha on a rotating basis, if needed, as determined by the Program Committee.
- Do their best to teach as requested/needed by the Program Committee.
- Actively continue their own personal and professional development as a teacher whether through peer-consultation or mentoring by other teachers. This ongoing support for individual teachers is the responsibility of the individual teacher. At the maturity level of a Core Teacher, this becomes an internalized process that is not dependent upon any organization offering this support.
- Core Teachers are strongly encouraged to mentor new EBMC teachers, and arrange to receive *dana* from the newer teacher for the Core Teacher's support of the newer teacher. The mentoring relationship is unique to each relationship. How this relationship is most beneficial is the first priority to work out, in agreeing to such a relationship. This would include personal expectations, time availability and frequency, content of work together, and skills that need to be developed.

3. EBMC Visiting Teachers:

- Help guide the practitioners through their teaching events.
- Participate in the EBMC Teacher Sangha as much as they can.
- Participate in professional development and growth opportunities on an ongoing basis which may include EBMC meetings/activities/trainings
- Cultivate skill and experience with addressing spiritual issues across multicultural experiences.
- Comply with the EBMC Teacher Code of Ethics.

- Maintain the highest ethics of conduct and communication and be open to restorative work when difficulties arise.
- May make proposals to the Program Committee about events they wish to offer.
- There can be any number of EBMC Visiting Teachers.

C. Qualifications of EBMC Teachers

EBMC represents multiple lineages and wisdom traditions which may have differing ways of training and creating teachers. For EBMC, the competency of the cultural delivery to a diverse audience is as important as the depth of the spiritual content. Therefore, in addition to spiritual practice there are distinct characteristics needed in all EBMC teaching settings. These include:

- Understanding the values of Social Justice work
- Ability to hold multiple points of view simultaneously
- Demonstrated cultural skills and/or anti-ism trainings
- Ability to communicate and work with people individually and in group settings without marginalizing or minimizing anyone's experience
- Ability to express and demonstrate living with the values and ethics of the Dharma
- Providing adequate safety and trust for the audience of practitioners
- Endeavoring to improve one's teaching and learning abilities
- Deepening one's experience and understanding of EBMC's Multicultural Agreements
- Demonstrating Cultural and Personal Humility

With the above in mind, the following are offered as guidelines to consider when looking at the qualifications for EBMC Teachers. These guidelines may vary based upon different practices of different lineages and traditions. These guidelines are offered within the context of Buddhist language because of the strong emphasis of these practices at EBMC, however they are not meant to be the only way to envision criteria. In addition, while a person might meet all the specific criteria, it doesn't mean that they necessarily will be granted teacher status. While the criteria presents some quantifiable reference points, the characteristics above present qualitative considerations which are as much a priority.

1. For both EBMC Core Teachers and Community Teachers:

- Have an ongoing spiritual practice—meditation, retreats, chanting, etc—with at least one dedicated retreat practice period every 12-18 months.
- Demonstrate a commitment to and involvement in multicultural, antiracist, and social justice work and training.
- Be able to communicate clearly what is skillful and helpful in reducing suffering in our individual and collective experience. Teachings styles and methods do not have to be based upon any specific form, but can be inclusive of many diverse methodologies.
- Show a commitment to EBMC's Mission Statement, to uphold and enact
 - Competence around issues of diversity.
 - Ethical and restorative work: taking responsibility for their actions and demonstrating a willingness to self-correct, and to learn and respond.

- Have ability to support the spiritual needs of individuals and groups within the community, including being skilled in group dynamics and processes.
- Are willing to hold their own practice and teachings in a larger context so that different styles, forms and ways of teaching are honored and respected.

2. Additionally, for EBMC Core Teachers:

- Practicing dharma for a minimum of 10 years.
- Teaching dharma for a minimum of 3 years, including experience in daylongs, sitting groups, and class series.
- Ideally to have completed a formal dharma study or dharma leadership training program in one of the primary lineages of Buddha Dharma—Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana. Examples are programs given at Spirit Rock, East Bay Meditation Center, San Francisco Zen Center, Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, Dharmacharya training. Completion of a mindfulness-based stress reduction program (MBSR) training program, yoga teacher training program, and/or other experience of teaching and working with dharma students, is also very relevant.
- Have a willingness to create spiritual community and the organizational infrastructure needed to support that community. This may be through the participation in the operations of EBMC (on LSangha or at least on one committee or volunteer activity)
- Be willing to be consulted by LSangha and EBMC management about the path of most integrity within complex issues.

3. Additionally, for EBMC Community Teachers:

- Practicing dharma for a minimum of 5 years.
- Ideally to have completed a formal dharma study or dharma leadership training program in one of the primary lineages of Buddha Dharma—Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana. Examples are programs given at Spirit Rock, East Bay Meditation Center, San Francisco Zen Center, Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, Dharmacharya training. Completion of a mindfulness-based stress reduction program (MBSR) training program, yoga teacher training program, and/or other experience of teaching and working with dharma students, is also very relevant.
- Have taught at EBMC at least 6 times, either in sitting groups, daylongs or classes.

D. Benefits for EBMC Teachers

Privileges are offered to individual teachers as they become more frequently woven into the life of EBMC. They are offered as support, not unlike Dana, for the precious role of a teacher at the level that they are teaching; they are not meant to be automatic entitlements which are unearned.

1. EBMC Core Teachers

- Receive Parsonage Allowance from LSangha (which means eligibility for tax credit for up to \$40K for income/dana received)
- Have priority but not a guarantee for teaching at EBMC—priorities to be determined by Program Committee.

- Have the ability to use the title of EBMC Core Teacher when describing themselves to the public.
- Receive referrals for individual interviews with sangha members wishing to meet with a teacher to discuss their practice.
- They will have exposure on the EBMC website as Core Teachers.

2. EBMC Community Teachers

- Have the ability to use the title of EBMC Community Teacher when describing themselves to the public.
- Have access to the EBMC Teacher Sangha for mentoring and support.
- Have priority but not a guarantee, after Core Teachers, for teaching at EBMC—priorities to be determined by Program Committee.
- They will have exposure on the EBMC website as Community Teachers.

3. Additionally, for all EBMC Teachers:

The (appropriate) Staff of EBMC and the LSangha will develop and create an annual Circle for Affirmation of the Teaching Community and to value the teaching roles at EBMC. This circle will affirm EBMC's commitment and gratitude to the teachers and also affirm the teachers' intentions to the sangha and the integrity and ethical responsibility of their roles. This event would include an honoring ritual of the teachers and re-commitment of the teachers to the Three Refuges, the EBMC mission and community, and our collective ethical precepts.

E. Procedures in regard to EBMC Teachers

1. Selection of the EBMC Core Teachers

- Nominations of candidates for Core Teacher will be made by October 1st yearly.
- To be nominated, each candidate needs 3 votes from any members of the LSangha or the Program Committee.
- Candidates will be vetted and presented by the Program Committee to the LSangha no later than November 15. Candidates who do not meet criteria qualifications will not be presented to the LSangha.
- Candidates can include current Core Teachers wishing to continue their service.
- LSangha will determine the exact number of Core Teachers, who they will be, and designate their Parsonage Allowance by December 31.
- Nominees will be approved by a simple majority vote of the LSangha members holding office.
- Core Teachers may serve indefinite number of consecutive or non-consecutive terms. Their status needs to be reviewed and voted by the LSangha yearly.

2. Removal of the EBMC Core Teachers

EBMC Core Teachers may be removed from their status, any time during the year, upon a 2/3-majority vote of the LSangha members holding office. If they continue to

teach at EBMC, the Program Committee will determine if the removed Core Teacher will be eligible to hold the role of Community Teacher or Visiting Teacher, unless there has been an insurmountable ethical breach as determined by the LSangha.

3. Selection of the EBMC Community Teachers

Selection of EBMC Community Teachers will be determined and done by the Program Committee on an ongoing basis, at any time during the year, for a term of 2 years for each teacher. Community Teachers are determined by their experience in practice, training and teaching at EBMC specifically. Community Teachers may serve indefinite number of consecutive or non-consecutive 2-year terms. Their status needs to be reviewed and voted by the Program Committee every 2 years.

4. Removal of the EBMC Community Teachers

EBMC Community Teachers may be removed by majority vote of the Program Committee, or will be removed from their status if they have not taught or participated in the EBMC Teacher Sangha for a period of one year or more. They may continue to teach as a Visiting Teacher, unless there has been an insurmountable ethical breach.

5. Selection of Visiting Teachers

EBMC Visiting Teachers may be suggested by sangha members or self-suggested to the Program Committee for consideration. The Program Committee will look at the above criteria as well as any references or previous teaching that the candidate has done. Visiting Teachers, in general, teach less than 5 times a year at EBMC (in sitting groups, daylongs, class series, or other workshops).

6. Record Keeping & Communication

An LSangha representative on the Program Committee will be responsible for maintaining a current active list of EBMC Core and Community Teachers. They will also be responsible for giving that information to Operations so that the website can be current and updated. They will also serve as a liaison between the Program Committee and the Teacher Sangha and attend Teacher Sangha meetings.

7. Evaluation of Teachers

There will always be a multiplicity of teachers who teach with differing perspectives using various methods. The evaluation of Teachers is always a complex process. What is important to consider is the intention or purpose behind the evaluative process. Often, it is not useful to compare these multiple viewpoints. It is many times unpredictable what will enable a practitioner to learn, or to deepen, or to be interested in the Teachings. While charismatic, inspiring teachers can feel to be of a higher quality than others; this is not always the case. In many cases, it is the unassuming teacher with not a large following who is most consistently effective in deepening the spiritual path of practitioners. There are no teachers who are effective with all people. Therefore, there is usefulness in having a range of teachers in all forms of diversity, including diversity in experience and training.

One of the ongoing mechanisms of evaluations are the participant surveys that are given to practitioners by the Event Coordinator at the end of each EBMC event. All

EBMC Teachers have a chance to gauge their teaching intentions with their teaching impact on the community. These participant surveys are usually sent to teachers after each event they teach. The Program Committee will flag any issues of concern arising from the surveys and address them with teachers individually on an as needed basis. All teachers are expected to take this feedback and work with their mentors and, if necessary the Program Committee, to determine how to weave it (or not) into their development and growth as teachers.

The growth and skill development of EBMC Teachers is in the best interest of the organization, the community, and the practitioners. Teaching is a practice and all teachers are necessarily practitioners. Therefore, one of the intentions of taking care of our teachers is to allow the possibility of making mistakes, learning, and further improvement.

If there is an infraction of the precepts, cause of harm, breach of ethics by a teacher, then the Program Committee will evaluate the severity of the incident to see if it is needed to be brought to the attention of the Ethics and Reconciliation Committee. Depending upon the severity, the (appropriate) Staff of EBMC and LSangha may be involved with portions of the process. This process will be articulated and determined in a future stage of development.

For most occurrences of conflict, difficulty, or injury, it is hoped that a restorative process can be created for the growth and support of both the Teacher involved and the practitioner(s) who was impacted.

8. Orientation and Continuing Learning and Development of Teachers

It is the organizational intentions to create a framework for training incoming teachers and providing continuing education for existing teachers on EBMC's core competencies, mission/values, and policies. These would be inclusive of, but exclusive to, topics and best practices in areas such as: EBMC's Multicultural Agreements, Diversity and Anti-oppression training and skills across many aspects of marginalization and experience, Class and Economics, Fragrance Free policies, Gender multiplicities, Mandatory Reporting (Suicidality, Domestic Violence, Harm to self and others, Child and Elder Abuse), MBSR skills, appropriate interventions for Trauma, Abilities/Disabilities, Community-building, conflict resolution, and relational communication skills. These programs will emerge from the collaboration of the Teacher Sangha and the Program Committee with input from the (appropriate) Staff of EBMC and LSangha.

9. Relationships between Teacher and Students

- a. All teachers will practice and adhere to the Five Precepts in guiding their relationships with students.
- b. We acknowledge that single dharma teachers have developed partnerships and marriages with former students. We acknowledge that such a healthy relationship can be possible, but that great care and sensitivity are needed. We agree that in this case the following guidelines are crucial.

- i. A sexual relationship is never appropriate between teachers and their current students.
 - ii. During any formal teaching, any intimation of future student-teacher romantic or sexual relationship is inappropriate.
 - iii. If interest in a genuine and committed relationship develops over time between a single teacher and a student, the student-teacher relationship must clearly and consciously have ended before any further development toward a romantic relationship. Such a relationship must be approached with restraint and sensitivity. A minimum time period of three months or longer from the last formal teaching between them, and a clear understanding from both parties that the student-teacher relationship has ended must be coupled with a conscious commitment to enter into a relationship that brings no harm to either party. The teacher must also explicitly share their intentions and process with whomever is mentoring their teacher role. If there is no mentoring teacher involved, the process around creating relationship for the teacher must be shared with the (appropriate) Staff of EBMC.
 - c. Teachers would best avoid complex multiple relationships (becoming social friends, business associates, clients, etc) with students. While this might not be realistic in all cases, in no way should the teacher use their role as teacher improperly or for personal gain in other aspects of their relationships with students. (see last page of EBMC's Restoration and Resolution documents)
 - d. Teachers need to maintain clear boundaries with students. Teachers should not use students for their own benefit or promotion.
10. All Core and Community Teachers will fill out the attached documents once a year for a peer-discussion at a Teacher Sangha meeting. These documents are meant to help track and support the continuing growth and learning of teachers in our community. After the Teacher Sangha discussion, these forms will be given to the Associate Director for filing (see forms attached).

Note from Leadership Sangha: The LSangha is grateful for the creation and evolution of these guiding documents which acknowledge and honor the unique and multi-faceted history of the organization. We view these as living documents; with EBMC's ten year anniversary approaching, we make a commitment to an ongoing review process of these guiding documents that fosters increased organizational cohesion to best support EBMC's mission