**Collaboration chair statement by Peter Steinberg, BNL:**

My name is Peter Steinberg (b. 1969, Chicago, USA, Yale ’92, PhD MIT ’98) and I am a Senior Scientist at Brookhaven National Laboratory. I started at BNL in 1999 to work on the RHIC program, was tenured in 2006 and promoted to Senior Scientist in 2019. Since my PhD days (and even as a summer student at Yale), I have done research in heavy ion physics, both hadronic (QGP) and photon-initiated processes (UPC, including photonuclear and photon-photon). As a grad student I worked on WA98 at the CERN SPS, searching for Disoriented Chiral Condensates (DCCs). I did a postdoc at Columbia University and worked on the PHENIX Data Acquisition system. Finally, I joined the BNL Chemistry Department to work on the PHOBOS detector, and played strong roles in its commissioning and evolution into a running experiment, ultimately being named Project Manager in 2003. While I loved the PHOBOS physics program, and remained active through its decommissioning in 2006 and the end of its physics program around 2010, I started making a transition to working at the LHC starting in 2005. This led to many years working in the heavy ion program in ATLAS, where I served as a physics convenor (2008-2011, during the very start of Pb+Pb data taking, and 2016-2018, during the Run 2 data taking), subconvenor (for ultraperipheral collisions [UPC] from 2019-2021 and 2022-present), as well as the project leader of the ATLAS Zero Degree Calorimeter (ZDC). My interests and work on photonuclear and photon-photon processes UPC led me quite naturally to an interest in EIC physics, starting with the ECCE proposal, for which I was a co-leader of the proposal team, and now ePIC. While I moved from BNL Chemistry to BNL Physics in 2006, to be part of the PHENIX (now sPHENIX) group, I was one of the founding members of the new BNL EIC group, formed just this past October, and I am one of the three elected CC members from BNL. Along the way I received a Fulbright award to teach in Cape Town South Africa (2002-2003) and was awarded an APS Fellowship in 2017.

My research career has involved collaborations with a wide range of sizes. PHOBOS ranged from 50-100 collaborators over its lifetime while ATLAS has grown from 3000 to nearly 4000 collaborators since the start of the LHC. Thus I have seen the advantages and disadvantages of larger and smaller groups. Smaller groups provide more flexibility and creativity but are limited by a smaller workforce, sometimes limiting the physics output. Larger groups can achieve more ambitious goals, but require much stricter organization. The ePIC collaboration, being the size of a RHIC experiment (500-ish collaborators) is small enough that many of us already collaborate on existing experiments, and many others have enjoyed working each other during the EIC proposal and consolidation process. However, ePIC is also large enough that there is an enormous amount of human capital, which can achieve amazing things if everyone can be put to work and make the most of their talents and ideas. The ePIC collaboration is already a diverse and inclusive collaboration (even if not in all senses, at the moment) and the collaboration organization itself should enable all members, from institutions from all over the world, to make effective contributions to ePIC. This should include detector design and construction, software and computing, detector operations and finally physics publications.

The Collaboration Council is essential to this process. It plays many foundational roles in the operations of the collaboration: including admission/dismissal of institutions, oversight of collaboration management (spokespersons and executive board), review and endorsement of policies and decisions. At its best, it provides a voice for individual institutions while also allowing the collaboration to speak with a unified voice. Every institute has core competencies, but also specific goals which are typically well matched to them. They should be able to find a place in the experiment to make their most effective contributions. And yet, sometimes the collaboration will need to find consensus on major decisions, sometimes at odds even with its own management or the EIC project. The ePIC charter, which I helped draft, is just a first step to working out consistent, fair and transparent procedures geared toward enabling both individual and collective success within the collaboration. We have many specific policies to discuss, propose, and enact, and this needs to happen quickly, as the experiment design matures, as the interactions with the project increase, and many roles become established during the coming decade of building ePIC.

I am also deeply interested in helping the collaboration to function efficiently — I ran the ECCE editorial team with Richard Milner, which had to produce not just a final proposal, but had to manage the production and review 900 pages of supporting documentation. ECCE had to develop new systems, and constantly make sure the collaboration could adopt them, and it created opportunities for everyone to make clear contributions and eventually led to publication of many of these notes, which helped advance individual careers, especially of our younger members.

As chair, I would be an effective advocate for the interests of all groups, from the largest laboratory to the smallest university. I will do my best to make the collaboration a functional, productive place for the entire ePIC community, and I would be focused on making the ePIC collaboration council a fair, diverse and transparent body.