

## **ASECS Policy on Harassment**

### **I. Statement of Principles (adopted by the ASECS Board on February 22, 2019)**

ASECS is committed to the free exchange of ideas in an environment of inclusion, safety, and mutual respect. All scholarly and professional exchanges across the Society shall be carried out in a manner that conveys respect, preserves dignity, and nurtures the intellectual development both of individual members and of the field. To this end, the Society condemns all forms of discrimination, coercion, violence and harassment, including sexual harassment.

ASECS members and all participants in our events are expected to act in accordance with the highest standards of scholarly and professional conduct and to treat every member with respect regardless of race, class, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, rank, or status. While the Society does not seek to codify manners or squelch robust, even contentious scholarly debate, it expects all members, caucuses, and affiliate groups to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment for the exchange of knowledge and ideas. That expectation entails affirming the diversity of our membership and valuing their intellectual commitments. The values of equity, access, nondiscrimination, and mutual respect shall inform all conduct, whether in a seminar room or at social gathering, in a plenary presentation or a conference session, in publications or electronic communications. Members shall be sensitive to differences of power among our membership and to safeguarding the autonomy and contributions of individuals in less secure and more junior positions.

### **II. Definition of Harassment**

Harassment is behavior (speech or actions) that demeans, humiliates, or threatens an individual on the basis of their sex, gender, religion, race, national origin, disability, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Harassment encompasses racial or ethnic slurs; unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal comments or unwanted physical conduct of a sexual nature, including situations in which the request or conduct involves any implied or expressed promise of professional reward for complying; or the request or conduct involves any implied or expressed threat of reprisal or denial of opportunity for refusing to comply; or conduct that results in what reasonably may be perceived as a hostile or intimidating environment. Such examples are illustrative, not exhaustive. Behavior constitutes harassment if it is *severe*—for example, unwanted physical contact—or *pervasive*—for example, repeated.

### **III. Scope of this policy**

This policy applies after February 22, 2019 and pertains to all venues where officially sanctioned ASECS conferences, meetings, and other activities occur, whether in person, by telephone, or through electronic communication. All members and participants at ASECS activities must abide by the policy. Those who register for the Annual Meeting, whether they are members of ASECS or of ISECS affiliates, exhibitors, staff, or guests—will be required to affirm that they have read and agreed to this policy as part of the registration process.

### **IV. Appointment of an External Ombuds**

Immediately upon the approval of this policy by the ASECS Executive Board, the Executive Board will begin a process to appoint a trained, experienced Ombuds who is not a member of the Society. This person will attend the Annual Meeting, during which time they will be available to consult privately with Society members who seek advice or wish to begin a process to report

cases of harassment or misconduct that have occurred during official Society gatherings and activities since February 22, 2019. The Ombuds will also be available throughout the year to consult with Society members on issues of harassment as defined by this policy. Because the Ombuds's role is neutral and disinterested, the Ombuds's consultations with ASECS members will be kept strictly confidential. In addition, the Ombuds will provide appropriate training in the resolution of harassment and misconduct matters to the members of the Society's Committee on Harassment and Misconduct, as defined below.

Within two months after the conclusion of the Society's Annual Meeting each year, the Executive Director will report to the Executive Board on the activities of the Ombuds during the previous year and the costs to the Society of the Ombuds's activities. The Executive Director will make a recommendation to the Board as to whether the Society's relation with the Ombuds should be continued during the following year or whether a new external Ombuds should be sought. Should the position of external Ombuds fall vacant, a member of the Committee on Harassment will serve as interim Ombuds. At no time, however, will the Society allow the position of external Ombuds to fall vacant for more than two months.

#### **V. Formation of the ASECS Committee on Harassment**

Immediately upon the approval of this policy, the Executive Board will nominate a three-person committee composed of members of the Society in good standing, one of whom will have served on a previous Executive Board. The Executive Board shall appoint one Committee member as chair. The Society's Executive Director will be the only member of the current Executive Board appointed to the Committee and will serve *ex officio* in a non-voting advisory capacity. The Board will also appoint two alternates to the Committee who are members of the Society in good standing and who are not members of the Executive Board. Alternates will be asked to participate in a committee hearing if one or more of the committee members has a conflict of interest in the case.

Members and alternate members of the Committee on Harassment will be chosen from nominees proposed by the Steering Committee, the DEIA, and the membership at large. In appointing the Committee, the Board shall respect diversity in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual preference, seniority in the Society, and academic interests. Committee members and alternates will serve three-year terms. The initial appointees to the committee, excluding the Executive Director, will serve for periods of one, two, or three years to be determined by the Board, so as to insure a committee composition each year of experienced committee members and alternates, and newcomers. The committee members may serve for only one consecutive three-year term but may be reappointed for one additional term after a hiatus of three years. Alternates are permitted to serve one three-year term as an alternate and one consecutive three-year term as a regular committee member.

The three committee members, the two alternates, the Executive Director, and the President of the Society will receive professional training in matters pertaining to harassment and sexual misconduct and conflict resolution from the Society's external Ombuds. This training may take place in person at the Annual Meeting or via video conference at another time convenient for the Ombuds and the committee members and alternates. The training shall be renewed on an annual basis.

## **VI. Procedures of the Committee on Harassment and Misconduct**

The Harassment Committee is charged with receiving complaints from any participant in an ASECS-sanctioned activity who has experienced a violation of the harassment and misconduct policy. Committee members will be on site at the Annual Meeting. Any member of the Committee can describe the reporting procedures and can outline the various resources available to protect members from harassment. Mindful that any complaint of harassment might cause serious reputational damage to the accused, the Committee will also protect their due process rights. However, neither the Committee nor any other ASECS official can provide legal advice to individuals who submit complaints under this policy. The contact information for Committee members will be made available on the ASECS website and in registration materials. Any committee member who has a conflict of interest in relation to either the complainant or the accused will recuse themselves, and their place will be taken by a Committee alternate. The Committee Chair and Executive Director will keep the President of the Society informed of Committee proceedings as they unfold.

The Committee on Harassment will provide the Executive Board of ASECS an annual report of aggregated data about incidents and outcomes. The Executive Director will maintain the confidentiality of the records of the Committee's proceedings.

## **VII. Intake and Investigation of Complaints by the Committee**

1. Complaints of alleged violations of the Anti-Harassment Policy may be made to any member of the Committee.
2. One or more members of the committee, depending on the preference of the complainant, will conduct an initial interview with the complainant. In order to encourage reporting of incidents, the names of the complainant and accused shall be kept confidential to the extent possible. However, neither the complainant nor the accused can be guaranteed confidentiality.
3. If an investigation is warranted, Committee members must obtain the consent of the complainant before continuing an investigation.
4. After the initial reporting, a Committee member will provide information on options available to the complainant. The complaint may be resolved through Committee mediation that might, for example, result in an apology by the accused.
5. If warranted, an investigation may include the whole Committee's interviewing the complainant and the accused (either separately or together) as well as relevant witnesses; it may also include reviewing relevant information such as emails, text messages, tweets, etc.
6. Throughout the process the investigators and committee members will respect the due process protections of the complainant and the accused.

## **VIII. The Adjudication of Complaints by the Committee**

After deliberation, the Committee will report its finding to the President of the Society. If it is concluded that no harassment has occurred, no action will be taken. If the committee concludes that harassment has occurred, then sanctions will be applied.

Sanctions may include:

- 1: A written reprimand and warning.
- 2: A ban on participating in the next Annual Meeting of the Society.
- 3: For the most serious infractions, loss of all membership privileges and eligibility to be published in the Society's journals.

Such sanctions will be determined by the Committee on Harassment.

#### **IX. Non-Retaliation**

ASECS prohibits retaliation against individuals who report sexual harassment or professional misconduct, who cooperate in the investigation of such misconduct, or who serve on the Committee on Harassment and Misconduct. This prohibition protects complainants, the accused, and other persons who have provided or may provide information to the Committee. Penalties may be imposed upon members or affiliates who are found to have retaliated.