

STATEMENT AGAINST HARASSMENT

The Society of Christian Philosophers (SCP) is committed to fostering and maintaining an environment free of harassment on the basis of sex, race, ancestry, place of origin, color, ethnic group, citizenship, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, creed, age, marital/family status, or any other characteristic protected by law. Sexual and other forms of harassment are gross violations of professional ethics; they are inimical to the goal of cultivating an environment of mutual respect wherein freedom of inquiry and productive scholarly exchange of ideas can flourish; and they transgress important values that the SCP-- as a Christian organization-- is committed to uphold.

Emphasis on Sexual Harassment

Although the SCP discourages all forms of unlawful and unethical harassment and discrimination, the SCP has adopted this policy, in particular, to combat sexual harassment. The impact on victims of sexual harassment can be profound. Studies reveal disturbing consequences, such as loss of self-confidence, decline in academic performance, and inhibited forms of professional interaction. A hostile environment laced with sexual harassment or discrimination cannot and does not foster intellectual rigor or valuable, trusting human relationships. Both are necessary ingredients for good scholarship and professional excellence.

Sexual harassment has no place in the SCP.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defines sexual harassment in the workplace or in the academic setting as “The use of one's authority or power, either explicitly or implicitly, to coerce another into unwanted sexual relations or to punish another for his or her refusal; or the creation of an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment through verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.”

In general terms, the EEOC explains “*unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.*”

Examples of Inappropriate Conduct

Examples of sexual harassment and sex-based harassment include, but are not limited to the following:

1. sexist remarks, jokes, or behavior
2. unwelcome physical contact, including touching, pinching or brushing of the body
3. verbal harassment, such as innuendo, suggestive comments, propositions and threats
4. request for sexual favors
5. the explicit or implicit promise of preferential treatment regarding an individual's opportunities in exchange for romantic or sexual attention, activities or sexual favors
6. sexual assault, including attempted physical sexual assault
7. inappropriately drawing attention to the sex, gender-identity, sexuality, or sexual orientation of an employee, colleague, or student

8. insults, including lewd remarks or conduct
9. visual displays of degrading sexual images or pornography
10. repeated pressure to accept unwelcome social invitations

Sexual harassment arises from such behaviors (and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature) when

- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used, implicitly or explicitly, as a basis for employment decisions or academic decisions affecting an individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment.

Reporting Potential Harassment

The SCP does not tolerate inappropriate conduct or sexual harassment and has developed a procedure (outlined below) for responding to reports or complaints of such conduct. Anyone who wishes to report a suspected or possible instance of sexual harassment or discrimination occurring at an event sponsored by the SCP should promptly contact either the SCP Executive Director or the SCP Ombudsperson (typically the Chair of the Diversity Committee).

PROCEDURES IN RESPONSE TO REPORTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION

The SCP is committed to providing an **informal means of resolution** and to providing victims of sexual harassment and discrimination with **guidance and resources**, and to assist them--if requested--to seek redress through formal procedures within the larger organizations or institutions to which they belong.

With limited authority and resources, the SCP recognizes that most events sponsored by the SCP occur either on university campuses or at national meetings of larger societies (e.g., the American Philosophical Association, the American Academy of Religion, the American Catholic Philosophical Association), which have their own formal policies and procedures addressing sexual harassment and discrimination. The SCP intends to supplement these existing avenues, and provide support for its members through the informal procedures, guidance and resources.

Reports of Misconduct

- a. ***Complaints by and against SCP Members.*** Anyone who believes he or she has been subject to sexual harassment or who has witnessed behavior that he or she believes violates this policy should report the alleged conduct to the ***SCP Executive Director*** or to the ***SCP Ombudsperson***. If the complaint involves both the Executive Director and the Ombudsperson or presents them with conflicts of interest (as might be the case if the complaint involved one of their family members, or an advisee), the report may be brought to the President of the SCP or to a member of the SCP Diversity Committee.

- b. ***Findings of Misconduct at Other Institutions.*** Some reports to the SCP's Executive Director or Ombudsperson may stem from findings of harassment or discrimination after formal proceedings within another institution.
- Findings of misconduct at other institutions may form the basis of decisions at the SCP to limit the offending member's participation in SCP events.
 - The SCP President, at his or her discretion, after consultation with the Executive Director and Ombudsperson, may decide to remove the offending member from an SCP leadership position, or ask the person to refrain from participating in SCP-sponsored events.
 - Misconduct at any event or institution may also be considered by the President and Executive Director in making or advising on decisions about SCP funding; though in cases where the President and Executive Director are merely advising on decisions, they are not to disclose the fact that reports of harassment or discrimination findings constitute part of the basis for their advice.
 - The SCP expects those who have been asked not to participate in or otherwise refrain from attending certain events will voluntarily comply with such requests.

SCP Informal Resolution Process

- ***Request for Informal Resolution.***
 - Individuals who wish to pursue the SCP's informal resolution process should communicate this clearly and directly to the Ombudsperson. The SCP will not attempt informal resolution without specific instructions from the complainant.
 - If a complainant does not clearly request the SCP's informal resolution process, SCP will assume the complainant is merely seeking guidance or resources that will help the complainant determine how or whether to pursue redress through formal institutional procedures.
- ***Role of SCP Ombudsperson***
 - The SCP Ombudsperson will oversee the informal resolution process (except where the Ombudsperson is implicated in the report). If the Ombudsperson is unable to oversee the process, the matter will be assigned to the SCP officer to whom the matter was first reported.
 - The Ombudsperson should take appropriate action consistent with and conducive toward the following goals:
 - ensuring that SCP events are entirely free from sexual harassment and discrimination,
 - protecting the privacy of both the complainant and the person responding to the complaint (respondent), and

o lending support to the complainant while at the same time, ensuring fair treatment of the respondent.

- ***Steps toward Informal Resolution***
 - To facilitate accurate communication of allegations, the complainant is strongly encouraged to submit a written account.
 - The Ombudsperson (or assignee) will take appropriate action to gather information, including talking with the complainant, considering options, and understanding the complainant's desired resolution.
 - The respondent would have an opportunity to respond and to participate in an informal mediation.
 - Any informal mediation may, with the agreement of those involved, include involving the SCP Executive Director or member of Diversity Committee.
 - During the informal resolution process, the respondent may be asked to refrain from participating in events sponsored by the SCP for a specified period of time.
- ***Conclusion and Findings***
 - The resolution process concludes when one of the following occurs:
 - (i) the complainant and respondent agree that a satisfactory resolution to the matter has been reached, or
 - (ii) the person handling the complaint deems the process to have reached an impasse.
 - The SCP Ombudsperson or designee will submit a brief, written report to the SCP Executive Director. The report will briefly explain the nature of the allegations and the actions that were taken by the SCP to address them.
 - Where a satisfactory resolution is reached, both the respondent and the complainant will be asked to sign a copy of the report. If no satisfactory resolution is reached, care should be taken in the final report to omit details that would permit identification of either the complainant or the respondent.

Consequences

- a. If the Ombudsperson has determined that there is a strong likelihood that violations of this policy occurred, then it will be recommended that the SCP take appropriate action. Under those circumstances, and if a the respondent is in a position of leadership within the SCP, and has not voluntarily resigned his or her position, the final report *supplemented* with identifying details shall be submitted to the President of the SCP, who will then

consider and decide, in his or her sole discretion, whether the person should be removed from the leadership position.

- b. In cases involving executives of the SCP as respondents, the final report supplemented with identifying details will be turned over to the Executive Director, who will then form a committee consisting of the Executive Director, the Ombudsperson, and three members of the Executive Committee. (Officers who are named in the complaint or have other conflicts of interest will be excluded from this committee; and if it is the Executive Director or Ombudsperson who has the conflict of interest, his or her role in this part of the process will be filled either by the President or by another member of the Executive Committee.) This committee will then decide, in consultation with legal counsel, whether and in what way to investigate the matter further. If advised by legal counsel or if deemed appropriate at the end of a formal investigation and in consultation with legal counsel, this committee is empowered to remove the President from office.

Confidentiality of Information

- a. SCP encourages confidentiality throughout and after the process. Rumor and innuendo are not productive, and appropriate confidentiality protects both the complainant and the respondent. Information about discrimination and harassment that arises out of the informal resolution process, including the information available in the redacted report that is submitted when the process has concluded, will ordinarily not be disseminated to the SCP membership or to the public, except as required by law.
- b. The SCP and its officers shall endeavor to keep information obtained during the informal resolution process confidential; however, SCP cannot guarantee complete confidentiality-- for example, where it would conflict with the resolution process or with the SCP's legal obligations.
- c. Reports on complaints will be retained by the SCP for five years, or such other later period as required by law, and then destroyed. No other written records of discrimination and sexual harassment complaints should be kept by the SCP or its officers.
- d. The Executive Director and the President may, at their discretion, share the redacted reports with the Executive Committee of the SCP if it is determined that a pattern of discrimination or harassment is developing within the SCP that needs to be addressed in a more systemic way. Likewise, the Ombudsperson, on the basis of their awareness of cases that have come to their attention, may recommend—without providing identifying details—that such a discussion be had with the Executive Committee. Prior to initiating such discussion, it is advised that the President and Executive Director consult legal counsel and consider drafting policy to handle the situation that has arisen.

Adopted by the SCP Executive Committee in March 2016.