

SOUTHEASTERN SOCIETY OF PARASITOLOGISTS

CONDUCT POLICY

Statement of Policy

The Southeastern Society of Parasitologists (SSP) will afford an environment free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. The SSP will not tolerate actions, statements, or contacts that discourage the free expression and exchange of ideas. This includes unequal treatment or harassment of any person based on their age, gender, gender identity or expression, marital status, sexual orientation, race, color, national or ethnic origin, religious identifications, beliefs or practices, disabilities, political affiliation, veteran status, or any other identity. Harassment, sexual or otherwise, shall be considered as a form of misconduct and violators will be subject to disciplinary actions, including, but not limited to, expulsion from a society function or from the society itself.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment refers to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that are not consensual. It refers to behavior that is not welcome, is personally offensive, creates an unsafe environment, debilitates morale, and, therefore, interferes with a collegial atmosphere. The following are examples of behavior that, when unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment: sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; verbal comments or physical actions of a sexual nature; sexually degrading words used to describe an individual; a display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; sexually explicit jokes; unnecessary touching. What is perceived as acceptable to one person may be unwelcome by another. Individuals may be reluctant to outwardly express objections or discomfort regarding unwelcome behavior or language; therefore, it is recommended that all members maintain a high standard of professionalism where peers are treated with respect.

Other Types of Harassment

Remarks and behaviors based on other protected characteristics are also unacceptable to the Society. These include stereotyping, slurs, derogatory jokes, or statements, and any hostile or intimidating acts.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all attendees and participants at officially sanctioned SSP meetings and functions, including social functions, tours, or off-site activities, and include all members, guests, staff, contractors, and exhibitors.

Reporting an Incident

If any individual covered by this policy believes that they have experienced or witnessed harassment or bullying they should contact the SSP President or President-Elect (hereon, the Society's designated individuals). This initial contact would not constitute a formal complaint unless the complainant explicitly stated otherwise in writing. No complainant will be required to discuss any incident with a respondent, no respondent will be required to discuss any incident with a complainant. All individuals (complainant or respondent) may bring an accompanying individual of their choice with them for support at any point when they discuss the matter with the Society's designated individual/s, or during any course of an ensuing investigation. Because allegations of discrimination, harassment, and misconduct are sensitive matters with the potential

to negatively impact the reputation of individuals, institutions, and/or our Society, confidentiality and discretion throughout the process is expected from all parties involved and is assured from the Society's designated individuals and all involved in the investigation with the exception that the Society designated individual that was initially contacted may confidentially consult with the other Society designated individual and/or SSP Council if deemed necessary by the Society designated individual that was initially contacted. In the event that one of the society designated individuals is the complainant or respondent, the other society designated individual may confidentially consult with another officer of the Society. Regardless, a complainant may speak in confidence with the Society's designated individuals without involving the respondent, an official report to the Society or investigation by the Society. All complaints that are received will be treated seriously and will be addressed promptly if that is the wish of the complainant. Complainants will be encouraged to report to the police any incidents of sexual assault. Note, however, that many local and regional governments consider a variety of behaviors to be reportable crimes regardless of the wishes of the complainant, respondent, or of the Society and that the Society and its officers will comply, to the best of their knowledge, with any reporting laws.

Should the complainant wish for the Society to initiate a formal investigation into the alleged discrimination, harassment, or misconduct, the complainant should e-mail the society's designated individual and state that they would like to officially report an incident and have the Society launch a formal investigation. The Executive Committee of SSP will be notified by the society's designated individual that a formal complaint has been received and that an investigation will be launched but no additional information, such as the names of complainants or respondents or details of the event, will be disclosed.

Investigation

Following the official report of an incident and the official request of an investigation, the Society's designated individual/s, in consultation with SSP Council, will name an impartial investigator, usually an elected officer or Council member, and the respondent will be promptly notified. No one who has a conflict of interest with respect to the complainant or respondent will serve in this role. A complainant will be asked to file a formal written complaint form which the investigator will provide. The respondent will be notified immediately and prior to any discovery procedures. A respondent will be invited to respond to the complaint and allowed to bring evidence. The Council of the Society and/or the investigator reserves the right to interview other individuals as witnesses at its own discretion. The investigator is allowed to seek counsel if they are in doubt as to how to proceed. When the investigation is complete, the findings will be communicated to the elected officers, as well as both to the complainant and respondent. Those officers without a conflict of interest will decide on appropriate disciplinary actions. Officers would be deemed to have a conflict of interest if they worked at or attended the same institution as the complainant or respondent, were in a romantic relationship with the complainant or respondent, or any other instance in which the majority of the officers or SSP Council agreed that there was a conflict of interest.

Retaliation

The Society will not tolerate any form of retaliation against individuals who report an incident, against those who are subject to a complaint, nor against those who participate in an investigation. Retaliation will be considered a form of discrimination in and of itself and as such, can be reported (see Reporting an Incident). Offenders found to have retaliated will be subject to

disciplinary action, up to and including ejection from the Society.

Disciplinary Action

If an individual is found to have harassed, retaliated, or knowingly made a false claim, they will be subject to disciplinary action. These actions might include a verbal warning, a request to leave the meeting or function without refund of fees, and/or ejected from the SSP.

Appeal & Questions

Should any person be dissatisfied with the result of an investigation or disciplinary action, they may appeal to the President of the Society, or to the highest-ranking officer without a conflict of interest. Questions concerning the policy can be directed to an SSP officer or the SSP designated individual.

Expected Behavior

- Treat all participants with respect and consideration.
- Be considerate, respectful, and collaborative.
- Communicate openly with respect for others, critiquing ideas rather than individuals.
- Avoid personal attacks directed toward others.
- Be mindful of your surroundings and of your fellow participants.
- Respect the rules, policies, and property of the meeting venue and SSP.

Unacceptable Behavior

- Harassment, intimidation or discrimination in any form.
- Physical or verbal abuse.
- Disruption of talks at oral or poster sessions.
- Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to, verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, national origin, inappropriate use of nudity and/or sexual images in public spaces or in presentations, threatening or stalking.