

SICB Annual Meeting Code of Conduct and Harassment Policy

(Revised by legal counsel 10/2/17; revised by Executive Officers 10/26/17; revised with input from the Executive Committee 11/10/17)

Statement of Policy

The Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology (SICB) is committed to providing a meeting environment that fosters open dialogue and the exchange of scientific ideas. In order to promote that environment, SICB is committed to equal opportunity and treatment for all meeting participants, regardless of gender, gender identity or expression, race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion or religious belief, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities, medical condition, genetic information, military or veteran status, or any other reason not related to scientific merit. SICB strives to create at its meetings an environment free from harassment and discrimination. The SICB annual meeting should serve as an effective forum to consider and debate science-relevant viewpoints in a respectful, civil, and fair manner. Meeting participants are expected to uphold standards of scientific integrity and professional ethics and must comply with these standards of behavior. Harassment and other forms of misconduct undermine the integrity of SICB meetings and are strictly prohibited.

Scope of Policy

The policies herein apply to all attendees, speakers, exhibitors, staff, contractors, service providers, volunteers, and guests at the annual meeting and related activities.

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; this type of behavior debilitates morale and interferes with effective discourse, and therefore will not be tolerated. When unwelcome, behaviors that may constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to: 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; and unnecessary touching. Behavior that is acceptable to one person may not be acceptable to another, so one must use discretion to ensure that words and actions communicate respect for others. This is especially important for those in positions of seniority, as those in more junior positions may be reluctant to express their objections or discomfort regarding unwelcome behavior.

Definition of Other Harassment and Unacceptable Behavior

Harassment on the basis of any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. Harassment refers to behavior that is not welcome or is personally offensive, including but not limited to: epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; display or circulation of written graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual or group. Harassment intended in a joking manner

still constitutes unacceptable behavior. Furthermore, disrespectful disruption of presentations and other meeting activities will not be tolerated.

Reporting an Incident of Harassment

If you experience or observe harassment, we recommend that you write down the details as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible, to help you to recall specific events in the future. If you believe you have experienced or observed harassment, notify SICB meeting staff by email at noharassment@sicb.org, by phone at (703) 915-7709, at the meeting registration desk, or by contacting one of the Society's Executive Officers (President, Past President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Program Officer). The person experiencing harassment is not required to discuss the incident with the offending party, unless they feel comfortable doing so. If you feel unsafe or threatened, use a venue phone to ask for security; if the circumstances warrant it, call 911 for medical or police assistance. All complaints will be treated seriously, and addressed promptly and appropriately. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent that it does not compromise the rights of others or the need to conduct an adequate investigation and to the extent allowed by law.

SICB Procedures for Responding to Harassment Complaints at Annual Meetings

1. Any SICB representative receiving a complaint will immediately notify the SICB Executive Director, Meeting Director, Meeting Manager, or a SICB Executive Officer (President, Past President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, or Program Officer). The Executive Director and the SICB President should be made aware of the situation immediately unless such individual is the subject of the complaint. All complaints will be investigated fairly, thoroughly and as promptly as possible, and corrective action will be taken where warranted.
2. The Executive Director and the SICB President, or SICB Officers designated by one or both of them to serve this function, (along with the SICB President-Elect and the Past President, if available) will then determine whether the matter requires an investigation. If so, they will name at least two impartial investigators to conduct an investigation. Any individual who believes he or she has a conflict of interest should not serve as an impartial investigator. If the Executive Director and the SICB President (along with the SICB President-Elect and the Past President, if available) determine that no investigation is necessary, they will determine if any other action is appropriate.
3. The selected independent investigators will review the complaint and interview the complainant. They will then document and report to the Executive Director and the SICB President, or their designates, who will determine if further investigation is required or recommend other appropriate action, including, where it is deemed advisable, consultation with legal counsel.

4. If appropriate, the investigators will then meet with the alleged offender, explain the details of the complaint, and give them a reasonable chance to respond to the allegations and bring evidence of their own.
5. If the facts are in dispute, the investigators will take any additional steps necessary to determine the facts, such as interviewing witnesses. The investigators will seek appropriate counsel from the Executive Director and SICB President, or their designates, if they are unsure how to proceed at any time.
6. The investigators will report the findings of the investigation to the Executive Director and the SICB President or other Executive officers, as appropriate. The available Executive Officers will then determine an appropriate action, which may include a disciplinary action. The determination will then be promptly communicated to the complainant and alleged offender.
7. Notification to the Society is essential to enforcing this Policy. Meeting participants may be assured that they will not be penalized in any way for reporting harassment or discrimination.

Disciplinary Action

Individuals who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, as will individuals who act in bad faith by making maliciously false accusations. In the Society's sole discretion, this disciplinary action may consist, at minimum, of a written warning, but may also include ejection from the meeting, reporting the behavior to the violator's Title IX officer (or equivalent), and other penalties, without refund of any applicable registration fees or costs. If an incident is particularly serious or repeated incidents occur with the same individual, that individual may be banned from future meetings, or SICB membership may be revoked.

Retaliation is Prohibited

Retaliation against any individual who reports harassment or assists in an investigation as defined herein is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation is a serious violation of SICB policy and, like acts of harassment or discrimination, will be subject to disciplinary action. If you believe you have experienced or observed retaliation, notify SICB meeting staff by email at noharassment@sicb.org, by phone at (703) 915-7709, at the meeting registration desk, or by contacting one of the Society's Executive Officers (President, Past President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Program Officer).

Appeal & Questions

In the event that an individual is dissatisfied with the actions taken as a result of the investigation, he or she may submit a written appeal to SICB's Executive Officers. An appeal may be granted at the discretion of the Executive Officers.

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to an Executive Officer.