

## **AHA Sexual Harassment Policy**

The AHA is committed to creating and maintaining a harassment-free environment for all participants in the Association's activities. All members and participants, including employees, contractors, vendors, volunteers and guests, are expected to engage in consensual and respectful behavior and to preserve AHA's standard of professionalism at all times. The following policy pertains to all venues where officially sanctioned AHA conferences, meetings, and other activities occur, whether in person, by telephone, or through electronic communication.

The AHA has absolutely no tolerance for sexual harassment in any setting. Sexual harassment is behavior (speech or actions) in formal or informal settings that "demeans, humiliates, or threatens an individual on the basis of their sex," gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation.<sup>1</sup> Sexual harassment can also take nonsexual forms and includes discriminatory remarks or actions based on an individual's sex, gender, gender expression or sexual orientation. "Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal comment or physical conduct of a sexual nature, including situations in which (i) the request or conduct involves any implied or expressed promise of professional reward for complying; or (ii) the request or conduct involves any implied or expressed threat of reprisal or denial of opportunity for refusing to comply; or (iii) the request or conduct results in what reasonably may be perceived as a hostile or intimidating environment. Such examples are illustrative, not exhaustive. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature or consensual personal and social relationships without discriminatory effect. It refers to behavior that reasonably situated persons would regard as not welcome and as personally intimidating, hostile, or offensive."<sup>2</sup>

Finally, according to U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines, the victim of harassment can be anyone affected by the offensive conduct, not just the individual at whom the conduct is directed.

The policy and structure for addressing violations of the policy will be clearly and prominently displayed on the AHA website. All participants in the Annual Meeting will be required to acknowledge the policy and their willingness to abide by it as part of the registration process.

The executive director will provide an annual report of complaints received (with no names used). The report will be circulated to the full Council and made available to the membership upon request.

### **Addressing Violations of the Statement**

Any person who has experienced a serious verbal threat or any physical assault should contact law enforcement officials immediately.

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<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare Association of America, Sexual Harassment Policy  
<http://www.shakespeareassociation.org/about/saa-policies/>

<sup>2</sup> Society of Biblical Literature, SBL Professional Conduct Policy  
[https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/Meetings/Professional\\_Conduct\\_Policy.pdf](https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/Meetings/Professional_Conduct_Policy.pdf)

### ***AHA Annual Meeting***

The AHA will establish a small team to receive complaints from and provide resources for any participant in the annual meeting who has experienced or witnessed violations of the AHA's Sexual Harassment Policy. The contact information of these individuals will be made available in registration materials and on-site at the meeting. At least two of these individuals will be available at any given time, 24/7 during the Annual Meeting. The team is comprised of the Executive Director, Past President, a representative from the Committee on Gender Equity, two rotating members of the AHA Council, and a member at large, appointed by the AHA Council. A member of this team can describe a reporting procedure and can outline the resources that are available (e.g. escort you to a room, call security, contact law enforcement) and provide support while you utilize these resources.

This team is not empowered to investigate claims and acts primarily to provide information about and access to available resources. Neither the team nor any other AHA official can provide legal advice to individuals who make reports under this policy. The Team may, however, recommend to the Executive Director that individuals who violate this policy be asked to leave the Annual Meeting or that the Executive Director impose other sanctions, such as not allowing the individual to attend future meetings. The Executive Director will make this determination after appropriate interviews and consultation with at least one member of the executive committee.

Reporting an incident of sexual harassment does not obligate the reporter to pursue any further action. Information shared with the Team is confidential UNLESS the individual reporting requests subsequent action that involves others, in which case it will become necessary to share this information. This, however, will be at the discretion of the individual making the report. Depending upon the severity and nature of the report, and in compliance with local, state and federal law, the AHA may be compelled to contact law enforcement and/or address the report with AHA officials or the AHA Council.

### ***AHA Sanctioned Activities Other Than the Annual Meeting***

Any individual participating in AHA sanctioned activities other than the annual meeting who has experienced or witnessed violations of the AHA's Sexual Harassment Policy may contact the executive director, deputy director, or president of the Association. The contact information of these individuals is on the AHA website.

Upon receiving a complaint, the executive director will appropriately investigate the accusations (including necessary interviews). If the complainant wishes to proceed, the executive director will refer the matter to the AHA executive committee. In cases which require prompt action, the executive director, in consultation with at least one member of the AHA executive committee, may take appropriate sanctions, which could include ejection from the activity. Where prompt action is not required, violations of the AHA's policy can result in prohibition from participation in future AHA sanctioned activities and/or revocation of membership.

Provisionally Approved June 2, 2018; Adopted August 9, 2018