

Ombudsperson for Nondiscrimination Report

Submitted by Cheshire Calhoun, September 2014

There was a veritable explosion of activity this year compared with previous years. This consisted of:

- two potentially noncompliant job ads
- two complaints of sexual harassment for which there was unsatisfactory institutionally imposed penalty
- a query asking whether the APA keeps records of sexual harassment allegations
- a plagiarism allegation
- a complaint of electronic media incivility
- a request by a third party to respond to an unethical hiring practice
- a contact regarding potential job promotion discrimination
- a complaint about professional misconduct at an APA meeting

Summaries of these cases and how they were handled (excluding identifying information about the complainants and their institutions) were submitted for the National Office records.

As is evident from this list, not all of the concerns brought to the Ombudsperson for Nondiscrimination fell within the formal purview of the Ombuds. In the absence of a general Ombudsperson I treated those cases as I did ones falling formally my purview, gathering the facts, consulting with relevant APA committee chairs (typically the chair of the Committee for the Defense of the Professional Rights of Philosophers), and the Executive Director, and offering informal advice about how to proceed. With one exception, the cases were not candidates for APA sanction, since they concerned either complaints against an individual rather than an institution, complaints that had already been addressed by the institution, or complaints brought by someone other than the affected party.

These cases raised a number of questions requiring clearer APA policy. Those were:

1. What, if any, are the conditions under which an APA member may be barred from an APA meeting?
2. Does the APA intervene in complaints against individual APA members?
3. Should the APA keep records of sexual harassment allegations?
4. Under what conditions, if any, would a job ad specifying that the applicant must be a Catholic priest violate the Nondiscrimination statement?

In response to the first two questions, a Policy Statement on Complaints and Sanctions was added to the APA website. The response to question three was negative; such records would be potentially prejudicial to APA members in the absence of due process. With respect to question four, an ad requiring that the candidate be a priest, and thus male, was treated as noncompliant. Consideration of how to interpret and apply the Nondiscrimination Statement is, however, ongoing.

In addition as ex officio member of the Inclusiveness Committee I contributed to the review of diversity related grant applications, and contributed to the Diversity Syllabi Project.

I also gave a presentation on the history of the revisions to the Nondiscrimination Statement and the creation of the Ombudsperson for Nondiscrimination position for the Pacific APA panel on Implementing the APA's Nondiscrimination Policy.