Report of the Ombudsperson Concerning Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Adam Hosein, September 2021

This is the first year of my three-year term as APA Ombudsperson (which began in January 2021).

Summary of Activity

So far in the year 2021, I have been contacted by seven people with requests for assistance. Two complaints concerned conduct during APA sessions: a complaint about gender discrimination by the chair of a session and a complaint about disability discrimination during a presentation. I had a request from a junior faculty member and a senior faculty member regarding recurring patterns of gender-based discrimination in their departments, including with respect to the assignment of benefits and burdens. One graduate student contacted me regarding problems of bullying, retaliation, and a hostile departmental environment, especially with respect to race and gender. I received an inquiry for advice about the composition of a search committee. I received one request regarding an APA ad in Jobs for Philosophers (JFP) proposing that the ad be removed for reasons relating to sexual orientation discrimination.

In most cases I provided information about the procedures for filing a formal complaint. In several cases I provided support by working with the people who contacted me to navigate their university’s anti-discrimination processes. In one case I was able to resolve the issue raised by arranging an informal discussion between the parties involved. In one case I worked with a student to provide
them with senior mentorship from philosophers outside of their department. I provided informal suggestions about the composition of search committees. I have been working with senior leadership to clarify our policies regarding JFP ads and sexual-orientation discrimination.

In all the cases above concerning gender-based discrimination I received requests for help in arranging an APA site visit. But upon advice from Amy Ferrer and the Chair of the Committee on the Status of Women, I told the people concerned that this would not be possible due to the status of the site visit program.