

The Renaissance Society of America, Inc.

RSA PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT POLICY

RSA PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT STATEMENT

As an international, multidisciplinary organization, the RSA seeks to provide an inclusive and productive environment for its diverse members. Professional norms require that we treat others equitably and with respect. Accordingly, the RSA does not tolerate harassment or professional misconduct in any form (in speech, writing or act; based for example on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, ability, status or age) and is sensitive to the harm suffered by persons who experience it. While we encourage open discussion and debate of ideas, and certainly tolerate differences of opinion, freedom of inquiry carries with it the responsibility of professional behavior. Ethical and professional conduct advances academic freedom and the mission of our Society.

At the RSA Virtual 2021 conference and its related activities in both formal and informal situations, including through the meeting platform, social media, Zoom and other online platforms related to the RSA Virtual 2021 conference (collectively, the “RSA Annual Meeting”), these professional norms cover all RSA members, volunteers, guests, Associate Organizations (“AO”), AO representatives and participants in AO-sponsored sessions (collectively, “RSA Attendees”).

These professional norms also cover the meetings of the members of the RSA Board and RSA committees and sub-committees, in both formal and informal situations.

Behaviors, whether in person, virtually or through electronic media, that violate the Professional Conduct Policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Threats or actions that cause or threaten personal harm
- Threats or actions that cause or threaten professional harm, punishment or retaliation
- Intimidating, harassing, abusive, derogatory or demeaning speech or actions
- Prejudicial actions or comments that coerce others, foment broad hostility or otherwise undermine professional equity or the principles of free academic exchange
- Deliberate misgendering
- Comments on a person’s appearance and living space/location
- Microaggressions, such as repeated talking over, interrupting, dismissive or disrespectful behaviors
- Unwelcome solicitation of emotional or physical intimacy
- Deliberate intimidation, stalking or following
- Harassing photography or recording
- Sustained, unprofessional disruption of talks or other events
- Other intentionally disruptive behavior[1].

Harassment can pertain to and/or be based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, ability, status, or age.

PROCEDURES FOR FILING A PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMPLAINT: RSA ATTENDEES

1a.) The RSA Professional Conduct Policy covers RSA Attendees. If you experience professional misconduct or harassment at the RSA Annual Meeting by an employee of the RSA or conference vendor or exhibit staff, the complaint will be forwarded by the RSA Professional Conduct Committee to the appropriate employer.

1b.) RSA Attendees may file complaints about harassment or professional misconduct with the RSA Professional Conduct Committee (pcc@rsa.org) or the Executive Director (czecher@rsa.org). Include: (i) your name; (ii) the RSA Attendee whose conduct is the subject of the complaint; (iii) the date, time, and place of the conduct; and (iv) a brief description of the incident. Note that only the RSA Attendee who experienced harassment or professional misconduct can make the complaint. Complaints will be kept confidential consistent with the RSA's need to investigate. While the RSA accepts anonymous complaints, they may be harder to thoroughly investigate and take action upon. However, the RSA encourages any attendee who witnesses any of the behaviors proscribed in this policy to consider talking to the person who was targeted by the behavior.

1c.) Reporting in a timely fashion is most effective and productive.

1d.) Reporting harassment or professional misconduct in bad faith or retaliating against someone for reporting harassment or professional misconduct will be considered harassment and handled in the manner set forth in this RSA Professional Conduct Policy.

PROCEDURES FOR FILING A PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMPLAINT: RSA RESPONSE

2.) The Executive Director may investigate and resolve any informal complaints or complaints which require prompt attention and can be resolved (in whole or in part) by removing an individual from the RSA Annual Meeting (or any individual session). The Executive Director also may bring such complaints and shall bring any other complaints and resolutions to the RSA Professional Conduct Committee to investigate and resolve.

3.) Once a complaint against an RSA Attendee has been investigated and deemed credible, the RSA Attendee whose conduct is the subject of the complaint has the right to present his or her case to the RSA Professional Conduct Committee.

4.) The RSA Professional Conduct Committee will use reasonable efforts to maintain confidentiality with respect to its investigation, consistent with the need to disclose information to carry out an effective investigation and/or as may be required by law. (See also Sections 5 and 6b regarding sharing information with the individual's home institution and Associate Organizations.)

PROCEDURES FOR FILING A PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMPLAINT: SANCTIONS

5.) Sanctions: The RSA reserves the right to take any action the RSA deems appropriate in its sole discretion. This includes without limitation, (i) removing an individual from the RSA Annual Meeting (or any portion thereof) without a refund, (ii) sending a letter of warning, (iii) forbidding participation in RSA events for a specified period of time, (iv) removing an individual from elected or appointed position(s), (v) revoking an individual's or AO's RSA membership or affiliation upon approval of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, (vi) reporting the complaint to the individual's home institution and/or (vii) striking the name of a prize-winner from the list of winners upon approval of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

POLICIES RELATED TO PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMPLAINTS: ASSOCIATE ORGANIZATIONS

6a.) AOs submit conference panels for which the AOs are listed in the program as sponsors. With sponsorship comes the responsibility of the AOs for their representatives and participants in AO-sponsored sessions.

6b.) If the RSA Attendee whose conduct is the subject of the complaint is present at the conference as an AO representative or participant in an AO-sponsored session, the RSA will give that organization notice of the complaint.

6c.) Repeated complaints may adversely impact the AO's participation in the RSA and RSA Annual Meetings.

CONSTITUTION OF THE RSA PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMMITTEE

7a.) The RSA Professional Conduct Committee will consist of six members, including one advanced graduate student; the Executive Director serves ex officio as a nonvoting member. Each member will normally represent a different discipline and a different university. An effort will be made to have diversity of gender, ethnicity, race, and age represented. Any member who deems himself or herself to be conflicted, or who the Committee deems to be conflicted with respect to a particular complaint, shall recuse himself or herself, and the remaining Committee members shall handle the complaint. In the event that there are fewer than three members who are not conflicted, the President and Vice President of the RSA will be the alternate committee members.

7b.) The members will be appointed by the RSA President in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Board and the Committee Chair.

7c.) The members will hold three-year terms, nonrenewable, and the terms will be staggered.

7d.) The RSA Professional Conduct Committee will develop specific procedures for investigating complaints, determining credibility, and deciding upon appropriate sanctions in its discretion.. In the course of that work, the Committee will create and maintain a best practices document. It will review and discuss that document periodically and revise the document from time to time as it deems necessary.

7e.) These procedures (and subsequent amendments) will be approved by vote of the RSA Board of Directors.

7f.) All RSA Attendees will consent to the Policy as a condition of attendance in the conference.

Members of the Professional Conduct Committee are: Patricia Akhimie (Chair), Celine Camps, Urvashi Chakravarty, Kirsten Mendoza, Jessie Ann Owens, Todd Reeser, and Carla Zecher (ex officio, nonvoting).

Updated 26 March 2021

[1] Derived from the MPSA website, <https://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/legal-resources/know-your-rights-at-work/workplace-sexual-harassment/>.