

**The Renaissance Society of America, Inc.**

**Professional Conduct Policy**

**Email address for RSA Professional Conduct Committee: [pcc@rsa.org](mailto:pcc@rsa.org)**

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF THE PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMMITTEE**

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 or ethical misconduct in any form and is sensitive to the harm suffered by persons who experience it. The RSA encourages open discussion and debate of ideas. However, freedom of inquiry carries with it the responsibility of professional behavior. Ethical and professional conduct advances academic freedom and the mission of our society. The Professional Conduct Committee (the “Committee”) exists to ensure and advocate for the highest standards of professionalism and mutually respectful engagement among colleagues.

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**RSA PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT POLICY**

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT STATEMENT

At all RSA-sponsored events, exemplary professional behavior is expected of all RSA members, volunteers, guests, Associate Organizations (“AO”) representatives, and participants in AO-sponsored sessions at the RSA conference (collectively, “RSA Attendees”). These standards also cover the meetings of the members of the RSA Board of Directors and RSA committees and sub-committees.

Behaviors, whether in person, virtually, or through electronic media, that violate the Professional Conduct Policy (the “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, including leveraging rank or reputation to intimidate, silence, undermine, dismiss, or disrespect participants or audience members

- Prejudicial actions or comments that coerce others, foment broad hostility or otherwise undermine professional equity or the principles of free academic exchange
- Deliberate misgendering
- Unwelcome comments on a person’s appearance and living space/location
- Unwelcome solicitation of emotional or physical intimacy, stalking or following
- Harassing photography or recording
- Other intentionally disruptive behavior

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

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING UNDER THIS POLICY: RSA ATTENDEES

1a) **Informal discussion.** RSA Attendees may informally discuss possible incidents of harassment or professional or ethical misconduct (collectively referred to below as “Professional Misconduct”) with [any member of the RSA Professional Conduct Committee \(pcc@rsa.org\)](mailto:pcc@rsa.org). To the extent possible, the Professional Conduct Committee will keep informal discussions confidential. Any official discussion or formal review or action will only be taken after a formal complaint is filed.

1b) **Formal complaint.** RSA Attendees may file a formal complaint with the Committee (via email to [pcc@rsa.org](mailto:pcc@rsa.org) or in a letter sent to the RSA office at 365 Fifth Avenue, Room 5405, New York, NY 10016, USA).

Messages to the Committee should include:

- (i) your name\*
- (ii) a brief description of the incident
- (iii) the date, time, and place of the incident

The Committee will keep messages confidential consistent with the RSA’s need to review.

\*Please inform the Committee if you would like to remain anonymous, and the Committee will respect your request. Also note that while the RSA accepts anonymous complaints, they may be harder to thoroughly review.

1c.) While the RSA will accept comments and complaints without regard to a timeline, reporting in a timely fashion is most effective.

1d.) Retaliation or bad faith complaints in themselves are a violation of this Policy.

## RSA'S RESPONSE ONCE A COMPLAINT HAS BEEN RECEIVED

- 2.) The Executive Director may address complaints immediately by removing an individual from the RSA event.
- 3.) Once a formal 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 their case to the Committee.
- 4.) The Committee will use reasonable efforts to maintain confidentiality with respect to its review, consistent with the possible need to disclose information to home institutions or AOs for an effective review and/or as may be required by law.

## SANCTIONS

- 5.) The RSA reserves the right to take any action the RSA deems appropriate in the sole discretion of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. This includes but may not be limited to, (i) removing an individual from an RSA event (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, (vi) reporting the complaint to the individual's home institution or relevant local authorities and/or (vii) striking the name of a prize-winner from the list of winners.

## AO POLICIES RELATED TO PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL CONDUCT

- 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 affiliation with the RSA and participation in RSA events.
- 6d.) The chairs of conference sessions, webinars, symposia, committee meetings, and other RSA-sponsored events have discretion to consider late changes to the panel or event they are moderating (for example, order of presentation or topics). Such changes are not in themselves considered Professional Misconduct and any decision of the chairs must be respected.

## COMPOSITION OF THE RSA PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMMITTEE

- 7a.) The Committee, a non-Board advisory committee as defined in Article VII of the RSA Bylaws, will consist of five members, including one advanced graduate student and the Executive Director, who serves ex officio as a nonvoting member. In making appointments to this committee, the RSA privileges experience with policies pertaining to Professional

Misconduct and to diversity, equity, and inclusion. An effort is made to have diversity of gender, ethnicity, race, and age represented. Any member who deems themselves to be conflicted, or who the Committee deems to be conflicted with respect to a particular complaint, shall recuse themselves, 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 Board of Directors will be the alternate Committee members.

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

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

7d.) The Committee may, from time to time, develop specific procedures for reviewing complaints, determining credibility, and recommending appropriate sanctions at its discretion. In the course of that work, the Committee will create and maintain a charter. It will review and discuss that charter periodically and revise it from time to time as it deems necessary.

7e.) The charter (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 at RSA-sponsored events.

Committee email address: [pcc@rsa.org](mailto:pcc@rsa.org)

Nothing in this Policy is intended to override the RSA Whistleblower Policy which covers RSA directors, officers, current employees, contractors and volunteers of RSA who make good faith claims about violation of law and RSA policies. To the extent that there is any conflict between the Whistleblower Policy and this Policy, the Whistleblower Policy shall apply.

NOTE: The Committee does not review complaints against members of the RSA Board of Directors. Upon receipt, such complaints will be handled by the Executive Committee of the Board. If the complaint is against an Executive Committee member, it will be forwarded in the first instance to the President of the Board (or the Chair of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, if such complaint is about the President of the Board).

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