The Renaissance Society of America, Inc.

Email address for RSA Professional Conduct Committee: pcc@rsa.org.

Messages to the committee, regarding informal or formal complaints, should include:
(i) your name
(ii) the name of the RSA Attendee whose conduct is the subject of the complaint
(iii) the date, time, and place of the conduct
(iv) a brief description of the incident.

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. 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.

At all RSA-sponsored events (conferences, workshops, and webinars, whether online or in person, and their related activities in both formal and informal situations, including through online platforms, social media, and video-conferencing), 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 of Directors 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
● Unwelcome comments on a person’s appearance and living space/location
● Repeated talking over, interrupting, dismissive or disrespectful behaviors
● Unwelcome solicitation of emotional or physical intimacy
● Deliberate intimidation, stalking or following
● Harassing photography or recording
● 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 REPORTING A PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMPLAINT: RSA ATTENDEES

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

1b.) RSA Attendees may informally discuss possible incidents of harassment or professional misconduct with any member of the RSA Professional Conduct Committee (pcc@rsa.org). To the extent possible, this conversation will be kept confidential, unless or until the complainant decides to proceed with filing a formal complaint. Any official discussion or formal review or action will only be taken after a formal complaint is filed.

1c.) RSA Attendees may file a formal complaint with the RSA Professional Conduct Committee (pcc@rsa.org) or the Executive Director (czecher@rsa.org). Include:

   (i) your name
   (ii) the name of the RSA Attendee whose conduct is the subject of the complaint
   (iii) the date, time, and place of the conduct
   (iv) a brief description of the incident.

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. Reports will be kept confidential consistent with the RSA’s need to review. While the RSA accepts anonymous reports, they may be harder to thoroughly review and take action upon.

1d.) While the RSA will accept complaints without regard to a timeline, reporting in a timely fashion is most effective and productive.
1e.) 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 review and address 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 event (or any individual session). The Executive Director also may bring such complaints or any other complaints and resolutions to the RSA Professional Conduct Committee to review.

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 their case to the RSA Professional Conduct Committee.

4.) The RSA Professional Conduct Committee will use reasonable efforts to maintain confidentiality with respect to its review, consistent with the need to disclose information to carry out an effective review 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 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.

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 events.
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. In making appointments to this committee, the RSA privileges experience with policies pertaining to professional conduct and to diversity, equity, and inclusion. An effort is made to have diversity of gender, ethnicity, race, and age represented. Any member who deems themself to be conflicted, or who the Committee deems to be conflicted with respect to a particular complaint, shall recuse themself, 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 and the Committee Chair.

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

7d.) The RSA Professional Conduct Committee will develop specific procedures for reviewing complaints, determining credibility, and recommending appropriate sanctions in 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 Professional Conduct Policy as a condition of attendance at RSA-sponsored events.

Members of the Professional Conduct Committee for 2023–24 are: Todd Butler (Chair), Celine Camps, Urvashi Chakravarty, John Christopoulos, Paula Findlen, Kirsten Mendoza, and Carla Zecher (ex officio, nonvoting).

Committee email address: pcc@rsa.org

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