

A Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct for the North American Patristics Society

“The North American Patristics Society is strongly committed to fostering diversity and inclusion in its membership as well as in the methods and topics of its members’ scholarly pursuits. It is our policy to welcome, mentor, and include all qualified scholars in the field without regard to race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, religion, disability, perceived or actual health status, marital or family status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status, criminal record, and all characteristics protected under applicable federal and/or state law. We recognize that our society and our scholarship are strengthened through diversity and inclusion, and we intend for our governance, our policies, the use of our resources, and our programming to reflect our commitment to both.”¹

All members and participants, including employees, contractors, vendors, volunteers, and guests, are expected to engage in consensual and respectful behavior and to adhere to the established professional norms of the North American Patristics Society (NAPS) at all times.

The following set of Standards of Professional Conduct pertains to all venues where officially-sanctioned NAPS meetings, events, and/or other activities occur, whether in person, virtually, by telephone, or through electronic communications such as email or social media.

Expected Behavior

As a learned society, NAPS requires professional conduct of its members as they exchange scholarly research in NAPS supported publications and whenever they convene at the NAPS annual meeting or any other officially-sanctioned NAPS event. All participants at any such event are expected to abide by this Code of Professional Conduct and by all other norms of professional respect that are necessary to promote the conditions for safe and harassment-free interchange even if these norms are not explicitly mentioned within this policy.

Any person who has experienced a serious verbal threat or any physical assault at the NAPS annual meeting or any other officially-sanctioned NAPS event should contact law enforcement officials immediately.

Unacceptable Behavior

- Persistent and unwelcome solicitation of emotional or physical intimacy.
- Persistent and unwelcome solicitation of emotional or physical intimacy accompanied by real or implied threat of professional harm.
- Intimidating, harassing, abusive, derogatory, or demeaning speech or actions by any participant in an officially-sanctioned NAPS event.
- Prejudicial actions or comments related to actual or perceived sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, race, ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic status, age, or religion that coerce others, foment broad hostility, or otherwise undermine professional equity or the principles of free academic exchange. Harassment might also include unprofessional and unethical behaviors, such as intentionally misgendering or making inappropriate remarks about a person’s gender identity or sexual orientation.
- Deliberate intimidation, stalking, or following.

¹ This is a complete iteration of the official “Diversity and Inclusion Policy” that was adopted as part of the 2017 NAPS General Business Meeting held on May 26, 2017 in Chicago, IL.

- Harassing photography or recording without permission.
- Sustained disruption of presentations or other events; including yelling at or threatening speakers (either verbally or physically).
- Physical assault (including unwelcome touching or groping).
- Real or implied threat of physical harm.
- Real or implied attempts at retaliation against any complainant raising concerns about any instance of unacceptable behavior or any violation of these policies.

Unacceptable behavior includes sexual harassment. The Society does not tolerate sexual harassment in any form or in any setting. As noted in the Society’s “Sexual Harassment Statement,” such behavior, which runs counter to the Society’s aim of promoting “healthy and professional relationships between its members,” “often exploits unequal power relations between members. Sexual harassment creates a hostile environment, both inside and outside of conference settings, that demeans our society and especially our most vulnerable members.” The Society has defined sexual harassment as “any unwelcome interactions (verbal, physical, written, electronic) of a sexual nature. Such unwelcome sexual conduct may include, but is not limited to, jokes, flirtation, or innuendos of a sexual nature; sharing of images or objects of a sexual nature; solicitation of sexual favors in exchange for career advancement; and commentary on an individual’s clothing choices.”²

Such examples are illustrative, not exhaustive. According to U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines, the victim of harassment can be anyone affected by the offensive conduct, not just the individual at whom the conduct is directed.

NAPS reserves the right to monitor, access, and read any and all information contained in telephone systems, communication systems, and/or computer systems used for its meetings, offices, or at any other NAPS sponsored event. Members are in violation of NAPS’ discrimination and/or harassment policies if they send, share, or access discriminatory, harassing or otherwise inappropriate messages via any of these systems.

Policy Implementation

This policy and the structure for addressing violations detailed in the NAPS Professional Conduct Investigation Procedure shall be prominently displayed on the official NAPS website. All attendees of the annual meeting or other officially-sanctioned NAPS events shall be required to acknowledge this policy and their willingness to abide by it as part of the registration process for that meeting or those events.

Anyone who is found to have engaged in discrimination or any form of harassment shall be subject to disciplinary action, which may include, but is not limited to, reprimand and/or suspension or termination of the individual’s membership in the Society and/or participation in current or future officially-sanctioned NAPS meetings, events, or activities.

NAPS will constitute and maintain a five-member Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) to receive complaints from and provide resources for any NAPS members or annual meeting/officially-sanctioned event participants who believe they have either experienced or witnessed violations of this policy. Should one or more members of the PCC be compelled to

² This “Sexual Harassment Statement” was also adopted as Society policy at the 2017 NAPS General Business Meeting held on May 26, 2017 in Chicago, IL.

recuse themselves, the NAPS President shall appoint their replacement(s). In the event that the NAPS President is compelled to recuse themselves from appointing replacements, replacements shall be appointed by a majority vote of the NAPS Board of Directors.

The names and contact information for the members of the PCC shall be made available on the NAPS website. All members of the PCC should be knowledgeable regarding the reporting procedure and, as applicable, additional resources. No members of the PCC should endeavor to provide legal advice to individuals who make reports under this policy.

Any person who desires to report a possible violation of this Professional Conduct Policy should promptly contact one or more members of the PCC. Following consultation and, as needed, the advice of legal counsel, the PCC will investigate the complaint in accordance with its established [Professional Conduct Investigation Procedure](#).

Neither the complainant nor any witness will face retaliation for making a complaint in good faith or assisting with an investigation in good faith. False claims, however, made in bad faith may also be considered as a form of professional misconduct and may be subject to complaint and investigation by the PCC.

Reporting an incident of unacceptable behavior does not obligate the reporter to pursue any further action. Depending upon the nature and severity of the report, and in compliance with local, state and/or federal law, the NAPS Board of Directors may contact law enforcement and/or other legal entities and pass on information or data included in a complaint and/or obtained as part of the Professional Conduct Investigation Procedures.

Approved by the NAPS Board May 22, 2024.