

Tree-Ring Society

Code of Conduct

Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy

The Tree-Ring Society is committed to providing a safe environment where the dignity of every individual is respected and therefore has a zero tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and sexual harassment (herein referred to as harassment). The Tree-Ring Society will actively endeavor to eliminate bullying and harassment of all kinds and will not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind, whether it is by members of the Executive Council, contractors, members, authors, conference hosts or any other affiliations with the organization in the course of its operations.

As part of its commitment to an environment that is free of bullying and harassment, the Tree-Ring Society will ensure that this policy is strictly enforced and that there are avenues in which anyone can freely report any breach of this policy with the utmost respect, dignity and confidentiality to the accuser. The Tree-Ring Society Executive Council will investigate complaints or allegations and address accordingly (see Consequences of Breaching Policy below). If there are concerns regarding a member or associate member of the Tree-Ring Society Executive Council, reports may be made to the Finance and Membership Manager, who is an independent contractor and will keep the accuser's name confidential in reporting this to all Executive Council Members not associated with the accusation.

Objective

To provide a safe environment that is free from all forms of bullying and harassment.

Purpose

The purpose of these procedures is to facilitate the Tree-Ring Society's commitment to an environment that is free of bullying and harassment by providing a framework for the informal and formal management of bullying and harassment incidents, issues and complaints.

Scope

These procedures apply where a bullying or harassment incident occurs in a Tree-Ring Society event, meeting, or any other activity in which the Tree-Ring Society is associated. The Tree-Ring Society is a strong and distinguished organization within the global dendrochronological community, and therefore this policy applies to offenses made within the global dendrochronology community, including any and all associations, affiliations or presence within the dendrochronological community, whether directly or indirectly with the Tree-Ring Society.

Procedures and information are provided for:

- a person who has been bullied or harassed (the complainant)
- a witness who has observed a bullying incident
- a person who has had bullying allegations made against them (the respondent)

Bullying, harassment and sexual harassment behavior

Bullying

Bullying is unreasonable behavior directed towards a person or group of people that creates a risk to health and safety. Bullying is repeated behavior that makes another person feel intimidated, stressed, or unsafe and may be direct or indirect.

(a) Direct bullying behavior includes:

- verbal abuse
- putting someone down
- humiliating someone through sarcasm, criticism, or insults
- abusive, belittling or intimidating phone calls, emails or notes
- being humiliated, shouted at and /or threatened, sometimes, but not always in front of others

(b) Indirect bullying behaviors includes:

- unjustified criticism or complaints
- deliberately excluding someone from activities in association with the Tree-Ring Society
- deliberately denying access to information or other resources
- withholding information that is vital to the individual's needs in support of Tree-Ring related activities
- excluding or isolating individuals from activities related to Tree-Ring Society affiliated journals, order of business, conferences or any other activities related to the Tree-Ring Society
- psychological harassment
- deliberately withholding information or resources necessary for an individual to accomplish their needs and/or goals
- cyber-bullying, which includes the use of email, text messages, chat rooms or social media to humiliate and distress.

When determining whether particular behaviors constitute bullying, consideration will be given to whether:

- the behavior is a single occurrence or has been repeated
- the behavior has created a risk to health and safety, including stress

(c) Reasonable and respectful direction or guidance is not bullying. Behavior that is not bullying includes:

- legitimate and constructive advice from individuals, colleagues, associates or members of the Tree-Ring Society's Executive Council, contractors, or any other affiliates
- reasonable direction for compliance with laws and policies
- deciding not to select an individual for an award, an approved article for publication, or an appointed position
- informing an individual about inappropriate behavior
- implementing organizational changes
- constructive feedback

Harassment

Harassment is behavior that causes concern or distress to an individual who perceives that the behavior directed towards them is unwelcome, unjust, or unfair. Harassment may be a single incident or a series of incidents and includes behavior that is discriminatory, offensive, abusive, belittling, humiliating, threatening or intimidating.

Harassment may be an abuse of real power or perceived power to explicitly or implicitly gain favors or to threaten disadvantage. Such perceptions of disadvantage may include lack of collegial acceptance, educational opportunities, or loss of employment or career opportunities.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any form of unwelcome sexual attention or conduct that is perceived by the recipient to be offensive, humiliating or intimidating and that occurs in any instance in a Tree-Ring Society environment or work-related activity and/or event.

Sexual harassment may be written, verbal or physical and includes:

- unwelcome touching, grabbing or other physical contact
- asking for sex or sexual favors
- leering and staring
- displaying sexually offensive material in any format
- sexual jokes, gestures or comments
- questions or discussion about an individual's sex life

In addition, the above types of behavior that can be witnessed by others can cause a hostile environment and will not be tolerated.

Violence

Violence is any incident where an individual is threatened or physically attacked in an environment which is sponsored or affiliated with the Tree-Ring Society. Within this definition:

- 'threat' means a statement or behavior that would cause the ordinary person in the individual's situation to believe they were in danger of being physically harmed;
- 'physical attack' means the direct or indirect application of force by a person to the body of, or to clothing or equipment worn by another person, where that application creates a risk to health and safety.

Violence of any sort is serious misconduct and will be reported to the authorities.

The Offender Means No Harm

The intention or motive in allegations of bullying or harassment of any kind is not relevant when determining whether the behavior was unwelcome. Bullying and harassment focuses on how the conduct was perceived and experienced rather than the intention behind it.

Maintaining a bullying- and harassment-free environment

All Executive Council members, contractors, and affiliates have a responsibility to help maintain an environment that is free of all forms of bullying and harassment. This responsibility includes:

- a) complying with the Tree-Ring Society's Code of Conduct that provides a framework for treating all individuals with dignity and respect
- b) being familiar with the Tree-Ring Society's policies and procedures on bullying and harassment
- c) proactively supporting initiatives that are designed to raise awareness of policies, procedures, and issues related to bullying or harassment, including an annual review of this policy and discussion to reinforce the importance of this policy
- d) encouraging any person who has concerns about possible bullying or harassment to read the Tree-Ring Society's policy and procedures
- e) acting promptly where behavior that could constitute bullying or harassment has been observed, e.g., advising the person(s) involved that the behavior could give offence and to cease immediately
- f) where a situation of alleged bullying or harassment has occurred, to respect the rights of both complainant and respondent in line with natural justice and procedural fairness. This includes refraining from starting or engaging in gossip about the situation or the individual who may be involved
- g) refraining from victimization of any person associated with a complaint

Consequences of breaching this policy

Where it is found that behavior constituting a breach of the Tree-Ring Society's bullying and harassment policy has occurred, immediate action will be taken. Such action includes, but is not restricted to, revocation of membership, articles for publication, and awards that have/had been given to individuals. Action may also include removing the individual from his/her position, whether it be a Council member, contractor, or any other person affiliated with the Tree-Ring Society. Any behavior that breaches this policy may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Understanding the procedures and options

Procedures for resolution of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment issues have been fully described in this document.

It is important to be aware of anonymity constraints before proceeding to discuss an incident with an Executive Council member or contractor. Unlawful activities may require the Council member or contractor to report the activity to law enforcement.

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