

Introduction to the Code of Conduct for SICB 2022 and SICB+

The conference Code of Conduct covers conduct in-person and with virtual engagement related to the conference and virtual component, SICB+.

As for SICB 2021, SICB has contracted with an external expert, to serve as the Safety Officer for SICB 2022 - Paula Brantner of [PB Work Solutions](#). We will have a training webinar, "Code of Conduct Implementation" available to our session chairs and society leadership and encourage its viewing. Ms. Brantner will receive and investigate any reports of inappropriate behavior at SICB 2022. The Code of Conduct below includes information on how to report bullying, harassment or any behavior that violates SICB's Code.

SICB Annual Conference Code of Conduct and Harassment Policy

(Revised by legal counsel 10/2/17; revised by Executive Officers 10/26/17; revised with input from the Executive Committee 11/10/17. Reporting procedures revised by Executive Officers, 08/27/2019; modified for the virtual meeting by the SICB President, 10/01/2020; modified for SICB 2022 by the SICB President and TBD)

Statement of Policy

The Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology (SICB) is committed to providing a conference environment, whether in-person or online, that fosters open dialogue and the exchange of scientific ideas. In order to promote that environment, SICB is committed to equal opportunity and treatment for all meeting participants, regardless of gender, gender identity or expression, race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion or religious belief, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities, medical condition, genetic information, military or veteran status, or any other reason not related to scientific merit.

SICB strives to create at its conference and with SICB+ an environment free from harassment and discrimination. The SICB annual conference should serve as an effective forum to consider and debate science-relevant viewpoints in a respectful, civil, and fair manner. Conference participants are expected to uphold standards of scientific integrity and professional ethics and must comply with these standards of behavior. Harassment and other forms of misconduct undermine the integrity of SICB conferences and are strictly prohibited.

Scope of Policy

The policies herein apply to all attendees, speakers, exhibitors, staff, contractors, service providers, volunteers, and guests at the annual conference and related activities, including all engagement with online conference activities and content.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment refers to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature; this type of behavior debilitates morale and interferes with effective discourse, and therefore will not be tolerated. Behaviors that may constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to: sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; verbal or written comments or physical

actions of a sexual nature; sexually degrading words used to describe an individual; a display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; sexually explicit jokes; and unnecessary touching. Behavior that is acceptable to one person may not be acceptable to another, so one must use discretion to ensure that words and actions communicate respect for others. This is especially important for those in positions of seniority, as those in more junior positions may be reluctant to express their objections or discomfort regarding unwelcome behavior.

Definition of Other Harassment and Unacceptable Behavior

Harassment on the basis of any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. Harassment refers to behavior that is not welcome or is personally offensive, including but not limited to: epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; display or circulation of written graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual or group. Harassment intended in a joking manner still constitutes unacceptable behavior. Furthermore, disrespectful disruption of presentations and other meeting activities and disrespectful commenting on presentations, individuals or groups, will not be tolerated.

Reporting an Incident of Harassment

If you experience or observe harassment or other unacceptable behavior, we recommend that you write down the details as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible, to help you to recall specific events in the future. If you believe you have experienced or observed harassment, notify SICB in one or more of the following ways.

- The Code of Conduct rapid response line (703) 592-9946.
- Via our confidential reporting web portal <http://burkinc.ethicspoint.com> which connects to SICB's independent Safety Officer
- By contacting SICB's independent Safety Officer, Paula Brantner, via SafeConferences@gmail.com. Please note that the Independent Safety Officer is not onsite at the conference.
- At the meeting registration desk for in-person meetings
- By contacting one of the Society's Executive Officers (President, Past President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Program Officer, Program Officer-Elect).

The person experiencing harassment is not required to discuss the incident with the offending party, unless they feel comfortable doing so. If you feel unsafe or threatened, use a venue phone to ask for security; if the circumstances warrant it, call 911 for medical or police assistance. All complaints will be treated seriously and addressed promptly and appropriately. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent that it does not compromise the rights of others or the need to conduct an adequate investigation and to the extent allowed by law.

Written comments that may be possible in select streamed presentations or presentations uploaded to SICB+, as well as in SICB or conference-related social media beyond SICB's official platforms, are covered in the Code of Conduct. If you experience or observe inappropriate written behavior related to SICB 2022, whether or not in-person, please notify SICB through one of the avenues described above - please include screen captures where appropriate.

SICB Procedures for Responding to Harassment Complaints at the Annual Conference

SICB has outsourced the process of reviewing and investigating when necessary to an outside expert - Paula Brantner of PB Work Solutions.

Ms. Brantner will report the findings of the investigation and recommended actions, if any, to the Executive Director and the SICB President or other Executive officers, as appropriate. The available Executive Officers will then review the recommendations and determine any consequences. The determination will be promptly communicated to the reporting party and accused and implemented.

Notification to the Society is essential to enforcing this Policy. Meeting participants may be assured that they will not be penalized in any way for reporting harassment or discrimination. Any retaliation should be brought to the attention of Ms. Brantner once the initial report has been submitted.

Consequences

As SICB strives to create at its meetings an environment free from harassment and discrimination, SICB will determine the appropriate consequences for holding people accountable for conduct reported under this policy. In the Society's sole discretion, these consequences may consist, at minimum, of a written warning, but may also include ejection from the meeting, reporting the behavior to the violator's Title IX officer (or equivalent), and other penalties, without refund of any applicable registration fees or costs. If an incident is particularly serious or repeated incidents occur with the same individual, that individual may be banned from future meetings, and/or SICB membership may be revoked.

Retaliation is Prohibited

Retaliation against any individual who reports harassment or assists in an investigation is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation is a serious violation of SICB policy and, like acts of harassment or discrimination, will be subject to consequences. If you believe you have experienced or observed retaliation, notify SICB via the reporting channels referenced above and/or Ms. Brantner if you have already initiated a report.

Appeal & Questions

In the event that an individual is dissatisfied with the actions taken as a result of the investigation, he or she may submit a written appeal to SICB's Executive Officers. An appeal may be granted at the discretion of the Executive Officers.

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to an Executive Officer.