

Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy for the Students for the Exploration and Development of Space USA (SEDS-USA)

Proposed governing policy pertaining to the conduct required of SEDS members, enforcement of said conduct, and disciplinary action in the case of infringement.

Developed and proposed on 20 July 2019 by Caitlyn Singam, Joalda Morancy, Megan Bennett, and Melanie Crowson.

Acknowledgements

Policies written in this document were informed in part by language presented in the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) [Code of Ethics](#) and [associated documentation](#); the [Code of Ethics](#) for the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE); [Harassment Policy](#) of the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO) and existing [federal law](#) on the topic of discrimination and harassment.

Amendments made¹:

- [06] [01] [2020] by [Libby Loyd]²: [Added] [Added portion at bottom for student to sign and return. Ideal for situations where we are funding travel/room & board / etc. to students to ensure that we are not held liable if they choose to violate these terms.]

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Section I: Introduction

1. Objective

The Students for the Exploration and Development of Space (henceforth referred to as 'SEDS' or 'the organization') is committed to upholding the very highest standards of ethical conduct and to providing an equal-opportunity environment for students of all demographic/socio-economic and academic backgrounds. This includes but is not limited to; race, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, ethnicity, disability, veteran or military status, pregnancy, genetic information, marital status, citizenship status, or on any other legally protected classes. As such, all members and affiliates (e.g. advisors, etc.) must conduct themselves in a highly ethical manner as detailed herein, and in accordance with the letter of the law as applicable to their place of residence and/or work. Membership in SEDS, attendance at a SEDS event, sponsorship by SEDS (i.e. through a scholarship, etc.), etc. constitutes an agreement to abide by the policies set forth in this document. Any violation of this policy will result in repercussions deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors and Board of Advisors, as addressed in Section IV.

2. Scope

Membership in SEDS is contingent on agreement to abide by the ethical standards and conduct established in this document; violation of any of the policies stated herein is sufficient grounds for disciplinary action as described in the policy, including possible dismissal from the organization, restrictions from attending future SEDS events, or reporting the details of the violating conduct to appropriate authorities (e.g. a member's educational institution, chapter sponsor, or to other SEDS-affiliated organizations) depending on the severity of the infraction (and as described within the policy). The policies set forth in this document apply to all attendees, including members, students, guests, staff, advisors, contractors, session chairs, organizers, exhibitors and speakers (all of whom are henceforth referred to as 'SEDS affiliates'), participating in local and national SEDS activities, events, programs, meetings, services, workshops, symposia, tours, social events, online interactions or any



other SEDS-sponsored activity or a related social gathering (all of which are encompassed by the term 'SEDS activity')³, and are effective immediately once an individual or group enters a relationship or affiliation with SEDS.

It is expected that SEDS members, board, staff, advisors, speakers, and other participants will report any witnessed harassment or discrimination as set forth in this policy to the appropriate authority (law enforcement, university faculty, SEDS officials, or SEDS staff unrelated to/or affiliated with the accused). So that the proper actions can be taken and any situation remedied. In cases where the policies set forth in this document directly contradict or otherwise disagree with the policies set forth by any SEDS subsidiary (e.g. chapter, online community, or individual) who claims a relationship with SEDS or can be proved to have had a relationship with SEDS (e.g. SEDS member, scholarship recipient, etc.), then it shall be this policy of SEDS USA that is relied upon and adopted for guidance in pursuant investigations and actions.

3. Executive Summary

Members of the Students for the Exploration and Development of Space organization are expected to act honorably and ethically such that:

- Acting lawfully, in accordance with national, state, and local legislature.
- Promoting the fair and ethical use of space, space-based resources, and equal-opportunity access to educational resources in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) as well as other fields, in accordance with organizational priorities and the SEDS mission.
- Never jeopardizing the safety, property, professional reputation, or employment status of members of the public or other individuals through wrongful action or the issuing of inaccurate statements.
- Treating all other individuals - regardless of SEDS affiliation, demographics, academic background, or current position/rank within the organization - with respect, fairness, and integrity, and with regard to all individuals' inherent rights to autonomy and recognition for their contributions.
- Being fastidious in presenting information - about themselves (e.g. experience/training/contributions, etc.), other individuals, and SEDS/other subjects - with utmost accuracy and objectivity.

- Being honest with the organization and with others about qualifications, education/training/experience, being responsible enough to recognize and acknowledge to the appropriate individual(s) in a timely manner when unable (or likely to be unable) to complete duties, and generally being a responsible team member within the SEDS community.
- Avoiding any conflicts of interest - whether of a professional, financial, or personal nature, only making personnel-based decisions based on merit, rather than on personal preference, acting as fair adjudicators when called upon to do so.
- Giving equal opportunities (e.g. giving every individual an equal chance to apply for an opportunity) to all individuals regardless of major, demographics, or personal preference; appropriately crediting other individuals for their contributions; be willing to accept and give justifiable constructive criticism in a respectful manner to facilitate professional development.
- Never accepting bribes, participating in underhanded deals, or otherwise engaging in any untoward interactions either on an individual level or on behalf of SEDS.
- Being vigilant in ensuring SEDS events and chapters operate according to the principles of ethical conduct, and raising any concerns through appropriate channels in a timely manner.
- Acting as representatives for SEDS by setting an example of ethical and professional behavior for colleagues.

Section II. Anti-harassment policy

1. Objective

SEDS is unequivocal in its stance against behavior that can be considered to be harassing, discriminatory, disruptive, disrespectful, or unprofessional in nature. The policy established in this section aims to ensure that a professional environment is maintained at all SEDS-affiliated events, in all SEDS chapters, and within the national organization.

2. Definition

'Harassment' is defined as the following:



- a. Repeated actions or statements towards a person or group that are unwanted and/or unwarranted, and that an individual or group continues to repeat despite being told to stop; and/or
- b. Offering an individual or group favor(s) or potential favor(s) off-the-record (i.e. through back-channels) of a professional or personal nature in exchange for a
- c. Any and all requests or demands of a sexual or romantic nature⁴
- d. Threats against an individual's person or property.
- e. Verbal or written requests or conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual or creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive environment.
- f. Use of sexual epithets, written or verbal references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, comments on an individual's body or comments about an individual's sexual activity.
- g. Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons.
- h. Leering, whistling, brushing against another person purposefully, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments or sexual jokes.
- i. Assault or coerced sexual acts.

3. Unwanted Behavior

The offender(s) interpretation that the harassed party's statement is supportive of the offending party's behavior (e.g. interpreting 'no' to mean 'yes' or 'maybe') is not sufficient grounds to participate in the acts as outlined herein. Harassment as recognized by SEDS includes, but is not limited to, unwanted interactions of a personal unwelcome visual, verbal, or physical conduct, including but not limited to:

1. Verbal: Comments, jokes or epithets that are offensive by reason of, or that make derogatory references concerning any protected characteristic; repeated sexual innuendoes, sexual epithets, derogatory slurs, sexual jokes, propositions, threats, or suggestive or insulting sounds or foul or obscene language; questions about another's sex life or experiences, requests for sexual favors, or repeated unwelcome requests for dates.
2. Visual/Non-Verbal/Recorded: E-mail, voice-mail messages, or any electronic communications that are offensive by reason of, or make derogatory references concerning any protected characteristic;

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- suggestive objects or pictures; graphic commentaries; obscene emails, text messages, or instant messages; leering; or obscene gestures.
3. Physical: Unwarranted physical contact including touching, grabbing, groping, or fondling; interference with an individual's normal movement, or assault.
 4. Other: Making or threatening reprisals as a result of a negative response to harassment; or participating in functions connected in any way with an AIAA Activity that are offensive to others on the basis of any protected characteristic.

Any attendee who is asked to stop behavior(s) in violation of this policy, as listed above is expected to comply **immediately**.

Section III. Anti-discrimination policy

1. Statement of equal rights

All individuals within SEDS community shall have the same rights for equal treatment by SEDS and their individuals while participating with SEDS in regards to all opportunities including but not limited to; ^{[[SEP]]}A. Competitions. ^{[[SEP]]}B. Scholarships. ^{[[SEP]]}C. Running for or working in any elected or staff positions. ^{[[SEP]]}D. Participation at events, gatherings, meetings, summits and conferences.
E. Job fairs.

2. Protected Characteristics

Discrimination and harassment on the basis of an individual's gender, race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, veteran, pregnancy, or other legally protected status at any SEDS activity or a related social gathering will not be tolerated.

3. Unwanted Behavior

Unwanted behavior includes but is not limited to jokes, comments, pictures, threats, physical gestures, and/ or exclusion of certain parties based on their protected characteristics, that create an environment of hostility, isolation or undesired treatment. Discrimination is not taken lightly and will be dealt with swiftly and fairly in accordance with Section IV, Consequential Procedures.



Section IV. Misconduct Procedures

In the case of possible violation of the said policy, the following actions will take place: 1. Inquiry, 2. Investigation, 3. Final Decision, and 4. Appeal.

1. Inquiry

Any complaints from individuals complainants, anonymous sources, or SEDS-USA members shall be recorded as being received, acknowledged, and forwarded to the current SEDS-USA Board of Directors. The Board shall then assess each allegation to determine whether it falls within the definition of misconduct as set forth in the policy.

If it is decided that the allegation does not fall within the definition of misconduct, it shall be dismissed, and a statement shall be issued to all members involved. If it is decided that the allegation does fall within the definition of misconduct, and is sufficiently credible and specific, an investigation shall be initiated.

2. Investigation

The purpose of the investigation is to develop a factual record by reviewing the allegations in more detail and examining the evidence in depth, leading to recommended findings on whether ethical misconduct has been committed, by whom, and to what extent.

The investigation should be led by a committee consisted of one Board of Advisors member, one Board of Directors member, and one staff member. The committee initiates the investigative process by giving written notification to both complainant and respondent that an investigation will occur and requesting any additional information deemed by either party to be needed or relevant to the investigation.

Throughout the investigation, all evidence should be thoroughly documented. The committee should interview each respondent, complainant, and any other available person who has been reasonably identified as having probative/pertinent information regarding any relevant aspects of the investigation, including witnesses identified by the respondent.



The committee is responsible for developing a written draft report of the investigation that should include:

- Describes the allegation(s) of ethical misconduct;
- Identifies the respondent;
- Identifies and summarizes the records and evidence;
- Includes a statement of findings for each allegation;
- Indicates which element of the Code was violated in each offense found.

3. Final Decision

Once the committee has reviewed and discussed the final investigative report, the committee findings will be confirmed via a majority vote of board and staff members, a majority being at least five board and staff members or 75% percent of board and staff members [if there are less than seven active members].

If the majority vote confirms that no misconduct or violations occurred, a statement shall be issued to all members involved, and the committee shall work to assist in the protection and restoration of the reputation of the persons alleged to have engaged in misconduct, but against whom no finding of misconduct is made.

If the majority vote confirms that a violation or violations of the Code has occurred, the Board of Directors shall discuss and determine any sanctions to be imposed as a result. Board members of SEDS are allowed to suggest removal from the host chapter and/or the national organization, remove said offender from current and future SEDS-USA events, and other actions. Any state legislature pertaining to the situation shall be considered.

4. Appeal

The appeal is offered so the accused offender has the opportunity to present evidence in their defense or material that may contradict that of the complainant. Appeals will be reviewed by at least three members of the board and staff who were not active in the decision making process for the final action. All appeals will be considered but are not guaranteed to cause action. Once appeals are conducted, there is no further action despite the outcome



(action of final decision is recalled or stands). SEDS has all rights to determine the proper route of action for the well-being of its members as a whole.

Student Acknowledgment of the SEDS Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy

As a member of Students for the Exploration and Development of Space, I recognize and understand that I must uphold this policy at all times while participating in a SEDS function or event.

I agree not to participate in any behavior that others may deem as discriminatory, harassing, and/or illegal.

I understand that SEDS may revoke my membership and participation at any further SEDS sponsored events or functions if I so choose to violate these terms.

I understand that SEDS has the right to inform my local SEDS chapter and University if I violate these terms.

I acknowledge that I have read and that I understand the Students for the Exploration and Development of Space Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy, and that I also understand my obligation as a member to abide by its terms.



Student Name (printed): _____.

Student Signature: _____.

Date: _____.

