



WICGE URGE Pod Complaints and Reporting Policy for Women in Coastal Geoscience and Engineering

Women in Coastal Geoscience and Engineering (WICGE) is committed to maintaining an equitable, positive, respectful working and learning environment and is committed to an environment free of illegal discrimination, harassment, bullying. All members are obligated to support this goal. As a matter of policy, WICGE prohibits sexual harassment and all other forms of discriminatory harassment.

Definitions

Harassment

Harassment includes verbal or physical conduct, which has the intent or effect of unreasonably interfering with any individual's or group's academic or work performance, which significantly affects an individual's ability to participate in the activities of the working group, vessel, or field expedition (whether on or off duty), or which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational or work environment, when such conduct is based upon age, race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, creed, disability or status as a Veteran. *Harassment of any form is against WICGE Policy.*

Harassment can take many forms. It can be blatant or subtle, verbal or physical, printed on paper or communicated electronically. Examples of conduct that can constitute harassment are:

- Outright propositions/improper suggestions or requests for sexual favors
- Threats or promises regarding compliance with sexual behavior
- Sexist, racial or ethnic jokes, slurs or cartoons; lewd or obscene remarks; disparaging remarks relating to gender, race, ethnicity, etc.
- Abuse, insults or jokes concerning sexual orientation, including insinuations or offensive comments about private life or lifestyle
- Sexual or racial innuendoes or offensive sexual or racial statements disguised or presented as humorous
- Unwanted physical contact, including touching, pats, hugs, squeezes, brushing against, putting arm around another person



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- Unwelcome advances such as repeatedly asking someone out on a date in spite of past refusals
- Actions or sounds – whistling, cat-calls, suggestive sounds, obscene gestures, display of offensive pictures or graffiti that would be found offensive by a reasonable colleague
- Stalking or following someone in an unacceptably unprofessional fashion
- Imbalance of attention, whether it be positive or negative, towards one employee or student based upon gender or race that has the intent or effect of providing an inequitable work or educational environment
- Any form of assault—sexual or otherwise

Offensive Conduct

Offensive conduct of a sexual nature or offensive conduct relating to age, race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, creed, disability or veteran status will not in all cases constitute sexual harassment or discriminatory harassment as defined in this policy. However, such offensive conduct can be detrimental to WICGE's working and learning environment.

Therefore, such offensive conduct is also a violation of this policy, even if it does not meet the standard for sexual harassment or other discriminatory harassment.

Retaliation

It is a violation of this policy to retaliate against an individual for making a report of sexual harassment or other discriminatory harassment or for cooperating with an investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment or other discriminatory harassment.

Responsibility

This policy applies to all members of the WICGE. If a member has a complaint against someone who is not in the WICGE membership, WICGE Executive Committee members will support the filer in a complaint to the appropriate institution.

Complaint Process

Any member of WICGE may file a complaint. Complaints may be made to the WICGE by email to WICGE_reporting@gmail.com. The Executive Committee members in charge of receiving complaints will monitor this email account. These members will be trained in handling complaints. Anonymous complaints may be made through a form on the WICGE website. The WICGE Executive Committee at-large may be involved in the investigation of the complaint.

If WICGE is not the appropriate organization in which to handle this complaint, the Executive Committee members in charge of receiving complaints may act as advocates to support the filer in a complaint to the appropriate institution.

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Confidentiality

WICGE, including all persons to whom a complaint has been reported and who have become aware of a complaint must maintain confidentiality to the extent possible given the need to investigate. Local authorities and organizations/institutions may be involved for violations of this policy that are also against the law.

Violations

Individuals found in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary action, which can include the removal of an individual from their place on the Executive Committee or organization membership. Appropriate disciplinary action also will be taken against anyone who engages in any retaliation against a person reporting sexual harassment or other discriminatory harassment or against any other person who cooperates with an investigation into alleged violations of this policy.



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WICGE URGE Pod Research on Complaints and Reporting Policy for Women in Coastal Geoscience and Engineering, Coastal States Organization, American Shore & Beach Preservation Association, and American Society of Civil Engineers.

This is what was found by the WICGE Pod at Women in Coastal Geoscience and Engineering on policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes. Some information was public; answers that were only found through follow up with contacts are noted.

- **The link(s) to the reporting policy at our organization are here:**
 - Women in Coastal Geoscience and Engineering (WICGE) has no reporting policy. The WICGE URGE pod will reach out to WICGE to suggest a reporting policy is put in place.
 - Coastal States Organization (CSO) has no publicly listed reporting policy. The WICGE URGE pod will reach out to CSO for more information and to suggest a policy is put in place.
 - American Shore & Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA):
 - <http://asbpa.org/wpv2/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Harassment-Policy.pdf>
 - American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE):
 - http://ektronstaging.asce.org/uploadedFiles/About_ASCE/Ethics/Content_Pieces/asce-ethics-complaint-form-updated-oct2020.pdf
 - <https://www.asce.org/code-of-ethics/>
- **What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?**
 - **WICGE**
 - Designated individuals/positions for reporting incidents
 - Executive committee, but no specific individual/position
 - Can reports be made online? Where? Anonymously?
 - Complaints are currently made informally through the WICGE gmail account. This is not anonymous or advertised as a mechanism for reporting.
 - Who do reports go to? Who has access to see reports?
 - WICGE email. The Executive Committee members with access to the email account may see reports.
 - Are police included in the process? When and how? Are individuals accompanied by an advocate or someone from the organization?



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- WICGE has acted as an advocate between reporting individuals and their home institutions.
- There is no established process for when police are included. This should be outlined and made available in the reporting policy.
- **ASBPA**
 - Designated individuals/positions for reporting incidents
 - Anyone may file a complaint to any member of the Executive Committee, Staff, or any member of the Board of Directors.
 - Can reports be made online? Where? Anonymously?
 - Complaints may be anonymous
 - Presumably, by email to any member listed above. But there is no online link for reporting.
 - Who do reports go to? Who has access to see reports?
 - The Executive Committee will have access to reports and complete an investigation. The language is unclear who else may see the report: “persons who have become aware of a complaint”
 - Are police included in the process? When and how? Are individuals accompanied by an advocate or someone from the organization?
 - This information is not listed on the Harassment Policy
- **ASCE**
 - Designated individuals/positions for reporting incidents
 - Anyone is able to file an ethics complaint against a member of the ASCE.
 - Can reports be made online? Where? Anonymously?
 - Yes, reports can be made online, but require a signature. You have the option to submit a complaint without a signature, but unclear whether the complaint would be processed without a signature.
 - There is also an ASCE ethics hotline phone number.
 - Who do reports go to? Who has access to see reports?
 - Reports go to staff liaison to ASCE’s Committee on Professional Conduct. Liaison will review charges and confirm that ASCE member is named & that ASCE Code of Ethics has been violated. Once this has been established, form will be distributed to the Committee on Professional Conduct (ASCE CPC) . The Committee consists of at least four past Society Directors. If the CPC finds that an ethics violation has occurred, it will forward its



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recommendations to ASCE's Executive Committee or Board of Direction for a formal hearing.

- Are police included in the process? When and how? Are individuals accompanied by an advocate or someone from the organization?
 - The ASCE CPC investigates complaints and "recommends actions necessary for resolution." The process does not necessarily involve police. It is not specified whether an advocate or someone from the organization would accompany the individual filing the complaint, should the situation escalate to a formal hearing.
- **What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?**
 - **WICGE**
 - Follow-up by supervisor, training (bias, etc.), disciplinary action, termination.
 - No policy is currently in place for outcomes or consequences. This should be drafted and included in the reporting policy.
 - Who decides the outcomes/consequences? What is the process?
 - Follow-up is currently up to the discretion of the supporting members of the committee. A formal process should be established and included in the reporting policy.
 - Are reports tracked? How are they tracked? By who?
 - No reported mechanism for tracking. *Reached out to EC to learn if this is done
 - Are repeated complaints escalated to a disciplinary board? What is the process?
 - No process listed.
 - **ASBPA**
 - Follow-up by supervisor, training (bias, etc.), disciplinary action, termination.
 - Disciplinary action and termination are listed. "The Executive Committee will take appropriate corrective action if misconduct is revealed."
 - Who decides the outcomes/consequences? What is the process?
 - The Executive committee decides the outcomes/consequences. The process is not listed in detail, but an investigation is completed by the committee to determine the outcome.
 - Are reports tracked? How are they tracked? By who?



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- Not listed on policy.
 - Are repeated complaints escalated to a disciplinary board? What is the process?
 - Not listed on policy.
- **ASCE**
 - Follow-up by supervisor, training (bias, etc.), disciplinary action, termination.
 - Follow-up and disciplinary action are considered by the ASCE CPC and the Executive Board on a case-by-case basis.
 - Who decides the outcomes/consequences? What is the process?
 - Outcomes and consequences are decided by the Executive Committee or Board of Direction during a formal hearing (if a formal ethics violation is deemed to have occurred by the ASCE Committee on professional Conduct) (see prior question for more details).
 - Are reports tracked? How are they tracked? By who?
 - It is not stated in Ethical Guidelines how reports are tracked and by whom reports are tracked.
 - Are repeated complaints escalated to a disciplinary board? What is the process?
 - No guidelines are specified for repeated complaints. Each case will be considered by the ASCE CPC individually.
- **What resources are available for individuals reporting?**
 - WICGE
 - Counselors or advocates, especially those of the same race, ethnicity, and gender.
 - WICGE Executive Committee members have acted as advocates, but no formal process for assigning counselors or advocates.
 - Automatic or requested investigation of potential impact on grades or evaluations.
 - N/A - no courses or evaluations in this organization.
 - Protection against retaliation or repercussions, accommodations for continuing work/courses, option for pass/fail or outside assessment.
 - No official policy of protection from retaliation. This should be listed.
 - ASBPA



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- Counselors or advocates, especially those of the same race, ethnicity, and gender.
 - No counselors or advocates listed in harassment policy.
- Automatic or requested investigation of potential impact on grades or evaluations.
 - N/A
- Protection against retaliation or repercussions, accommodations for continuing work/courses, option for pass/fail or outside assessment.
 - Retaliation is listed as harassment and would be grounds for further consequences.
- ASCE
 - Counselors or advocates, especially those of the same race, ethnicity, and gender.
 - No counselors or advocates listed in Ethical Guidelines.
 - Automatic or requested investigation of potential impact on grades or evaluations.
 - There is no mention of automatic investigations of potential impacts on the person filing the complaint.
- **What resources are available to groups raising issues or proposing changes?**
 - WICGE
 - Petitions of # signatures trigger a town hall, meeting with organizational leadership, or policy change. What is the follow-up process for town halls and meetings?
 - Currently there are no formal meetings or town halls held with WICGE leadership. Any individuals or groups raising issues or proposing changes reach out to the WICGE Executive Committee directly.
 - Working groups or committees with power to change or propose changes to policy.
 - N/A
 - Cultural surveys, regular or only after wide-spread reports or high-profile incidents.
 - N/A. WICGE does primary research on the culture of the field with respect to women in coastal geoscience and engineering. But internal cultural surveys are not conducted separately.
 - Leadership proactively asks students and/or staff for input on how to improve.



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- Informally, WICGE Executive Committee reaches out to members for feedback.
- ASBPA
 - Petitions of # signatures trigger a town hall, meeting with organizational leadership, or policy change. What is the follow-up process for town halls and meetings?
 - There is no mention of town halls of this kind on the ASBPA website.
 - Working groups or committees with power to change or propose changes to policy.
 - Any member may serve on a committee to change or propose changes to policy.
 - Cultural surveys, regular or only after wide-spread reports or high-profile incidents.
 - Surveys of this kind are not publicly available on the website if they exist. Available survey results focus on priorities for coastal research and management.
 - Leadership proactively asks students and/or staff for input on how to improve.
 - More information needed. Not available on the website.
- ASCE
 - Petitions of # signatures trigger a town hall, meeting with organizational leadership, or policy change. What is the follow-up process for town halls and meetings?
 - There is no mention of town halls of this kind on the ASBPA website.
 - Working groups or committees with power to change or propose changes to policy.
 - The ASCE provides a contact (email) for the organization's Director of Cultural Belonging & Social Ethos (Lisa M. Black, PhD).
 - There is a Committee on Diversity & Inclusion
 - There is a long list of committees within ASCE that members can serve on. The Young Members Forum (YMF) may be a group with enough momentum to propose policy changes.
 - Cultural surveys, regular or only after wide-spread reports or high-profile incidents.



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- No publically available cultural surveys on their website. ASCE leadership may have access to these statistics.
- Leadership proactively asks students and/or staff for input on how to improve.
 - Unclear. ASCE members that are part of our pod do not feel that leadership proactively asks them for input on how to improve, although opportunities to voice input exist if members seek them out.