



# SOUTHWEST CENTER *for* HUMAN RELATIONS STUDIES

## **Events Safety and Inclusiveness Policy and Procedures**

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The Southwest Center for Human Relations Studies (SWCHRS), home to NCORE, is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and inclusive space for all meeting participants. This policy applies to all SWCHRS activities, including:

- Conferences, symposia, workshops, and events sponsored, co-sponsored, or in cooperation with SWCHRS
- SWCHRS and SWCHRS-related planning meetings or events
- Exchanges among committees or other bodies associated with SWCHRS activities, publications, and communications sent through communication channels related to SWCHRS, including social media

SWCHRS's statement on conference safety and inclusiveness outlines the expectations for all meeting participants, including all members, speakers, exhibitors, sponsors, volunteers, guests, and SWCHRS staff. Cooperation is expected from everyone throughout the activities. Attendees should always be mindful of differences in privileges and power between and among each other.

SWCHRS provides national and international continuing education and professional development activities for education, networking, and collaboration among higher education and allied communities. We value our learning community members and want all attendees to have an enjoyable, safe, and fulfilling experience. Thus, SWCHRS endeavors to provide a harassment-free conference experience for everyone. Discrimination, intimidation, or harassment based on (listed alphabetically) age, citizenship status, cultural expression, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex assigned at birth, sexual orientation, size, or veterans' status is not tolerated.

### **Expected Behavior**

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We expect all participants in SWCHRS activities, such as NCORE, to abide by this policy in all venues, including ancillary events and unofficial social gatherings:

- Exercise consideration and respect in your speech and actions.

- Refrain from demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behavior and speech.
- Be mindful of your surroundings and your fellow participants.
- Alert SWCHRS staff if you see someone in distress, or violations of this policy, even if they seem inconsequential.
- Alert the proper authorities in the event of a dangerous situation.
- Communicate professionally and constructively, whether in person or virtually.
- Handle dissent or disagreement with courtesy, dignity, and an open mind.
- Be respectful when providing feedback and be open to alternate viewpoints.

## **Unacceptable Behaviors**

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Intimidation, discrimination, or harassment of meeting participants is not tolerated. Examples include offensive verbal or written comments and hostile behavior in physical or virtual spaces. Intimidation, discrimination, or harassment committed jokingly or disguised as a compliment still constitutes unacceptable behavior. Sexist, racist, and all other types of exclusionary jokes are prohibited.

Sexualized language and imagery are not appropriate for any SWCHRS event. Sponsors, exhibitors, and speakers may not use sexualized language, images, activities, or other material or create a sexualized environment. Note that sexualized language does not include conference presentations and books on publishers' displays based on qualitative interviews or different lived experiences that contain first-hand descriptions of oppression due to sexual harassment.

### ***Unacceptable at any SWCHRS activity:***

**Abuse:** Any action directed at an individual that (a) interferes substantially with that person's participation or (b) causes that person to fear for their safety. These actions include threats, intimidation, bullying, stalking, or other types of abuse.

**Discriminatory Harassment:** Any conduct that discriminates or denigrates an individual based on gender, gender identity or expression, race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion or religious belief, age, marital status, sexual orientation, immigration status, disabilities, veteran status, or body size or any other characteristic protected by law in the location where the SWCHRS events take place.

**Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal/physical conduct of a sexual nature. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Unwelcome advances or propositions, particularly when one individual has an authority or power imbalance over the other
- Inappropriate touching of an individual's body
- Degrading or humiliating comments about an individual's appearance
- Displaying or distributing sexually explicit images or messages

***Examples of specific unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:***

- intimidating, harassing, abusive, discriminatory, derogatory , or demeaning speech or actions by any participant in SWCHRS events and one-on-one communications carried out in the context of SWCHRS events;
- offensive, degrading, humiliating, harmful, or prejudicial verbal or written comments or visual images related to gender, gender identity or expression, race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion or religious belief, age, marital status, sexual orientation, immigration status, disabilities, veteran status, or body size.
- unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal/physical conduct of a sexual nature
- inappropriate or gratuitous use of nudity, sexual images, or stereotyped images, to display or distribute sexually explicit or otherwise offensive or discriminatory pictures or messages, display of sexual images in public areas
- deliberate intimidation or stalking
- harassing photography or recording
- Sustained interruption or disruption of events
- Unwelcome and uninvited attention or contact
- Physical assault (including unwelcome touch or groping)
- The actual or implied threat of physical harm
- The actual or implied threat of professional or financial damage or injury

## **Reporting Inappropriate Behavior**

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Any individual who experiences harassment (*as described above*) at any SWCHRS event is encouraged to use the following procedures to report unacceptable behavior.

<b>Attendee Procedures for Reporting an Experience with or Witnessing Unacceptable Behavior</b>
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- ⇒ ***Procedure 1-*** If the situation appears to be an emergency (e.g., requiring medical assistance or if there has been an overt threat of violence), please call 911. If not, move to procedure 2.
- ⇒ ***Procedure 2 -*** In the event of unacceptable behavior, you may wish to inform a person in authority. You can call or text (405) 243-0286. Those acting on these cases include SWCHRS staff members or SWCHRS designated representatives tasked to handle such complaints. These individuals can provide information about the process for handling complaints or immediate onsite needs. *There may be cases where a person informed of harassment must file a complaint. (e.g., Title IX issues in the United States and venue or employer-specific policies)*

- ⇒ **Procedure 3—Any investigation or further action requires written communication** to SWCHRS using the form for Reporting Violations of the SWCHRS Events Safety and Inclusiveness Policy.

Prompt reporting is critical so SWCHRS staff can stop the conduct before it is repeated. Therefore, all written reports will be followed up promptly, with a further investigation to confirm or resolve disputed facts. SWCHRS staff will strive to keep the individual's identity confidential when conducting investigations.

**SWCHRS prohibits any threats or acts of retaliation against individuals who report unacceptable behavior or provide information in connection with a report by another individual. SWCHRS condemns threats or acts of retaliation and will handle reports of such in the same manner as the original report.**

#### **SWCHRS staff procedures upon receiving a verbal report of Unacceptable Behavior**

- ⇒ **Procedure 1.** SWCHRS staff will lend a sympathetic ear.
- ⇒ **Procedure 2.** If a person wants further action, SWCHRS staff will explain the procedures for reporting unacceptable behavior. In general, at this step, SWCHRS staff will not attempt to mediate or resolve complaints informally.
- ⇒ **Procedure 3.** Suppose an immediate emergency extends to more than one individual. In that case, event organizers may need to take more decisive actions, such as addressing the event attendees, barring further event attendance and participation by specific attendees, or imposing requirements on an attendee's further involvement.

*Such decisions will be kept as minimally intrusive as possible and must be made with the awareness that an allegation is not the same as a determination of guilt.* Any post-event investigations, sanctions, or other actions are handled using the form for Reporting Violations of the SWCHRS Events Safety and Inclusiveness Policy.

#### **SWCHRS staff procedures upon receiving a written complaint of Unacceptable Behavior**

When receiving a report of unacceptable behavior, the SWCHRS's Director will review and direct appropriate follow-up.

- ⇒ **Procedure 1.** The SWCHRS Director or SWCHRS staff designee will investigate the complaint.
- ⇒ **Procedure 2.** The SWCHRS Director, in consultation with SWCHRS staff, will review all materials and determine whether the complaint violates the SWCHRS Events Safety and Inclusiveness Policy to make a final, binding decision regarding policy violation and the consequences of any such breach.

⇒ **Procedure 3.** On behalf of SWCHRS, the Director will inform the complainant and subject of the decision(s). *There may be cases where a person informed of harassment must file a complaint. (e.g., Title IX issues in the United States and venue or employer-specific policies)*

### **Possible actions resulting from a confirmed report of harassment**

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The SWCHRS Director may take actions including, but not limited to:

- Exclusion from SWCHRS leadership positions
- Remove an individual from any SWCHRS event without warning or refund.
- Prohibit an individual from participating in future SWCHRS activities, including publishing in SWCHRS publications.

**Any individual who knowingly makes a false allegation of harassment may be subject to appropriate sanctions, including all of the above.**

SWCHRS endeavors to keep proceedings under this policy as confidential as possible. Participants in any proceeding under this policy, including the complainant, subject, and witnesses involved in resolving the complaint, must adhere to this confidentiality policy. However, participants may consult legal counsel at their own expense, provided they have first agreed to keep the matter confidential.

### **Appealing Sanctions**

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If an individual feels they have been falsely or unfairly accused of violating the SWCHRS Events Safety and Inclusiveness Policy, they may appeal within thirty (30) days after notification of the decision. The individual's appeal must be submitted to the Senior Associate Vice President for the University of Oklahoma Outreach, who will endeavor to resolve appeals within sixty (60) days after the appeal is made. The appeal will be decided upon based on consideration of the applicable record by the Senior Associate Vice President for the University of Oklahoma Outreach, whose decision is final.

### **Attendee Procedures Appealing finding Unacceptable Behavior**

- ⇒ **Procedure 1.** Submit an appeal to ***SWCHRSappeal@ou.edu*** with a concise grievance(s) description.
- ⇒ **Procedure 2.** The Senior Associate Vice President for the University of Oklahoma Outreach will thoroughly investigate the appeal.
- ⇒ **Procedure 3.** The Senior Associate Vice President for the University of Oklahoma Outreach will review all materials and determine whether the complaint violates the SWCHRS Events Safety and Inclusiveness Policy or upholds the appeal. On behalf of SWCHRS, the Senior Associate Vice President for the University of Oklahoma Outreach will inform the complainant and subject of the appeal decision(s).

## **Warnings and Disclaimers**

This SWCHRS Events Safety and Inclusiveness Policy is not intended to limit open discussion of the merits of work or issues presented at SWCHRS events. It applies only to **behavior** at SWCHRS events and activities.

SWCHRS assumes no liability or responsibility for the actions of any member or other activity participant.

SWCHRS is not responsible for protecting the safety of members or participants in SWCHRS activities. Individuals who feel their safety is at imminent risk due to harassment or other reasons are encouraged to take appropriate steps to ensure personal safety.

## **Disclaimer**

By registering for and attending SWCHRS events, each participant acknowledges reviewing this disclaimer and expressly releases SWCHRS and its executive committee and national advisory council, employees, or agents from liability concerning such meeting as provided herein.

Thank you for helping SWCHRS provide welcoming and safe events!