Preface

The Association for Women Geoscientists (AWG) Bylaws addresses the Association’s stance on discrimination in professional activities. The text of the bylaw is provided below:

Association for Women Geoscientists’ Anti-Discrimination Bylaw

As a professional society, AWG must provide an environment that encourages the free expression and exchange of scientific ideas. In pursuit of that environment, AWG is committed to the philosophy of equality of opportunity and treatment for all members, regardless of gender, gender identity or expression, race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion or religious belief, age, marital status, sexual orientation, parental status, domestic status, disability, veteran status, or any other reason not related to scientific merit. All functions of the Association must be conducted in a professional atmosphere in which all participants are treated with courtesy and respect. It is the responsibility of the chairperson of an AWG committee, of the organizers of any AWG meeting, and of the members themselves to ensure that such an atmosphere is maintained. Furthermore, the rich diversity of the Association’s membership and of the geologic community in general is a resource that should be drawn upon when selecting organizing committees, invited speakers, and nominees for office and for special prizes. Consistent with this Anti-Discrimination Bylaw, the AWG Delegates and Executive Board approved the following statement of policy and disciplinary procedures in February 2017.

Statement of Policy

It is the policy of AWG that all participants in Association activities will enjoy an environment free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. As a professional society, AWG is committed to providing an atmosphere that encourages the free expression and exchange of scientific ideas. In pursuit of that ideal, the AWG is dedicated to the philosophy of equality of opportunity and treatment for all members,
regardless of gender, gender identity or expression, race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion or religious belief, age, marital status, sexual orientation, parental status, domestic status, disabilities, veteran status, or any other reason not related to scientific merit. Harassment, sexual or otherwise, is a form of misconduct that undermines the integrity of the Association and Association-sponsored meetings and other activities. Violators of this policy will be subject to discipline. Other types of harassment and discrimination are described below. Disciplinary measures and processes are described in full detail in Appendix A.

Definition of Gender-Based Discrimination

AWG defines gender-based discrimination as treating someone unfavorably because of that person’s gender. Discrimination against an individual because of gender identity, including transgender status, or because of sexual orientation is considered gender-based discrimination.

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. Behavior and language that are welcome or acceptable to one person may be unwelcome or offensive to another. Consequently, individuals must use discretion to ensure that their words and actions communicate respect for others. This is especially important for those in positions of authority because individuals with lower rank or status may be reluctant to express their objections or discomfort regarding unwelcome behavior.

Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to behavior that is not welcome, behavior that is personally offensive, and behavior that debilitates morale. The following are examples of behavior that, when unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment: sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; verbal comments or physical actions of a sexual nature; sexually degrading
words used to describe an individual or a group of people; a display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; sexually explicit jokes; unnecessary touching.

Definition of Other Harassment

Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. This conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following: epithets, slurs, or stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; denigrating jokes and display or circulation of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group.

Scope of Policy

This Code of Conduct applies to all attendees at AWG activities, including scientists, students, guests, staff, contractors, and exhibitors, participating in the scientific sessions, tours, and social events of any AWG or professional meeting or other activity.

Reporting an Incident

When a violation of the Code of Conduct occurs, the first step is to report the incident. It is likely that you will have to write and sign an official letter of complaint, documenting the nature of the harassment and/or discrimination. In order to provide the best possible investigation of Code of Conduct violations, it is requested that complaints are filed with detail. With that in mind, consider the following tips for filing your complaint:

- Write everything down (times, places, nature of the incident, and comments made). Save all communication that is relevant to the complaint (emails, notes, texts, tweets, etc.)
- Tell someone you trust (the sooner after the incident, the better).
- Be as detailed as possible. Supporting documentation and statements from witnesses should be submitted with your letter.

Any individual covered by this Code of Conduct who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment should contact the Regional Delegate, AWG President, or other Association Officer. Other Association Officers include the President, Past President or President Elect, Senior Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. He or she is not required or expected to discuss the concern with the alleged offender. All complaints will be treated seriously and be investigated promptly. Confidentiality will be honored to the extent permitted as long as the rights of others are not compromised.

The Investigation

1. The Executive Committee will name an impartial investigator, usually an Officer. Any named investigator who believes they have a conflict of interest should not serve as an investigator.

2. In most cases, the person who filed the complaint will be interviewed first and the written complaint reviewed. If the person who filed the complaint has not already filed a formal complaint, he or she would be asked to do so.

3. The details of the complaint should be explained to the alleged offender by the investigator.

4. The alleged offender should be given a reasonable chance to respond to the evidence of the person who filed the complaint and to bring his or her own evidence.

5. If the facts are in dispute, further investigatory steps may include interviewing those named as witnesses.

6. If, for any reason, the investigator is in doubt about whether or how to continue, he or she will seek appropriate counsel.
7. When the investigation is complete, the investigator should report the findings to
the President of the Association or other Association Officer, as appropriate.

Retaliation is Prohibited

AWG will not tolerate any form of retaliation against persons who file a complaint or
assist in the investigation. Retaliation is a serious violation of this Code of Conduct
and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Action

Individuals engaging in behavior prohibited by this Code of Conduct, as well as those
making allegations of harassment in bad faith, will be subject to disciplinary action.
Such actions include a verbal warning and ejection from the meeting or activity in
question without refund of registration fees. Repeat offenders may be subject to further
disciplinary action by AWG, including being banned from participating in future AWG
meetings or other activities and temporary or permanent termination of membership.

Appeal and Questions

In the event that the individual is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, he or
she may appeal to the President of AWG. Any questions regarding this Code of
Conduct should be directed to the AWG President or other Officer.

Enforcement of the Code of Conduct

The Conduct Committee shall have jurisdiction to receive and determine any timely
complaint of the violation of the AWG Code of Conduct by a current member of AWG
in any category of membership whatsoever. In the event that the alleged offender
resigns from AWG subsequent to the filing of a complaint against him or her, the
Conduct Committee shall have discretion to resolve the complaint as if the alleged
offender were still a member. In the event that a complaint alleges conduct which is, or may be, the subject of other legal or institutional proceedings, the Conduct Committee may, in its discretion, defer further proceedings with respect to the complaint until the conclusion of the other legal or institutional proceedings.

The enforcement of the Code of Conduct will occur through the following steps (full details can be found below in Appendix A):

1. **Filing a Complaint**

2. **Preliminary Screening of Complaint**

3. **Notice of Complaint and Informal Resolution**

4. **Response to Complaint**

5. **Initial Determination of the Chair**

6. **Investigation and Recommendation**

7. **Determination of Violation**

8. **Sanctions**

9. **Notice of Determination**

10. **Appeal of Termination**

**Notice of Confidentiality**

The filing of a complaint against an AWG member and all proceedings shall be kept confidential by the Conduct Committee, the Appeal Panel, and the President of the AWG prior to a final determination of the matter, except that information regarding complaints may be shared with the Executive Officer, any staff designated by the Executive Officer to assist the Conduct Committee, and AWG legal counsel. Determinations of violations of the Code of Conduct by the Conduct Committee or by an Appeal Panel shall be kept confidential to the full extent possible, except in the case
of termination of membership, or unless disclosure of the determination to the public is imposed as part of another sanction. The name of each individual whose membership is terminated and a brief statement of the reason for termination shall be reported annually to the AWG Executive Committee. The Committee may disclose such information when compelled by a valid subpoena or by a final court order. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Conduct Committee may publish reports of its determinations in order to educate the membership about the requirements of the Code of Conduct but will not make the identity of the parties public unless legally compelled. Initiation of legal action against the AWG or its officers or employees shall constitute a waiver of confidentiality by the person initiating such action.

Records relating to the investigation of complaints of violations of the Code, whether or not determined that a violation occurred, shall be maintained in a secure place indefinitely. These records should always remain confidential, unless otherwise provided for in the statements above. Permission to use these materials for research and educational purposes may be granted by the Executive Officer within the first fifty (50) years of the closing of the complaint, as long as the materials do not identify the individuals involved. After fifty (50) years, these materials are available for research or educational purposes without special approval as long as the commitment to confidentiality is honored and the materials do not identify the individuals involved.
Appendix A: Enforcement of the Code of Conduct

Jurisdiction

- The Conduct Committee shall have jurisdiction to receive and determine any timely complaint of the violation of the AWG Code of Conduct by a current member of AWG in any category of membership whatsoever. In the event that an alleged offender resigns from AWG subsequent to the filing of a complaint against him or her, the Conduct Committee shall have discretion to resolve the complaint as if the alleged offender were still a member.

- In the event that a complaint alleges conduct that is, or may be, the subject of other legal or institutional proceedings, the Conduct Committee may, in its discretion, defer further proceedings with respect to the complaint until the conclusion of the other legal or institutional proceedings.

1. Filing a Complaint

- Any member or non-member of AWG who perceives that an AWG member has violated the code of conduct may file a complaint with the Conduct Committee.

- A complaint may be initiated by the Conduct Committee on its own behalf.

- Initial telephone contact with the Executive Officer or his/her designee is encouraged to clarify whether concerns about a possible code of conduct violation are covered by the Code. If it appears that a potential complaint may be covered by the Code, a copy of the Code and a complaint form shall be sent to the person filing the potential complaint. Informal dispute resolution and use of other venues of investigation will be encouraged.

- A complaint may not be accepted or initiated if it is received more than 18 months after the alleged conduct either occurred or was discovered. A complaint received after the 18-month time limit set forth in this paragraph
shall not be accepted unless the Chair of the Conduct Committee determines that there is good cause for the complaint not to have been filed within the 18-month time limit. No complaint will be considered if it is received more than five years after the alleged conduct occurred or was discovered.

- A complaint shall include the name and, if known, the address of the person who filed the complaint; the name and address of the alleged offender; the provisions of the Code of Conduct alleged to have been violated; a statement that other legal or institutional proceedings involving the alleged conduct have not been initiated or, if initiated, the status of such proceedings; a full statement of conduct alleged to have violated the Code of Conduct, including the sources of all information on which the allegations are based; copies of any documents supporting the allegations; and, if necessary, a request that the 18-month time limit be waived. Anonymous complaints shall not be accepted. If material in the public domain is provided anonymously, the Conduct Committee may choose to use such material in support of its own complaint.

- An ad hoc committee will be formed to assess each case in order to avoid conflicts of interests during the review process. The Chair of this committee shall be decided by a majority vote of the board when quorum is achieved. The Chair shall designate three members of the board and one member of an outside partner organization to serve on the committee.

2. Preliminary Screening of Complaint

- The Executive Officer or his/her designee shall screen each complaint to determine whether the alleged offender is a member of AWG and whether the alleged conduct is covered by the Code. If the complaint does not include the information required (as described above), the Executive Officer or his/her designee shall so inform the person who filed the complaint, who will be given the opportunity to provide additional information. If no response is
received from the person who filed the complaint within thirty (30) days, the matter will be closed and the person who filed the complaint will be notified.

• If the complaint is complete as set forth above, the Executive Officer or his/her designee shall notify the Chair of the Conduct Committee and provide relevant materials regarding the complaint. The Chair of the Conduct Committee and the Executive Officer or his/her designee shall evaluate whether there is cause for action by the Conduct Committee. Cause for action shall exist when the alleged offender’s alleged actions and/or omissions, if proved, would in the judgment of the Chair of the Conduct Committee and the Executive Officer or his/her designee constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct. For purposes of determining whether cause for action exists, incredible, speculative, and/or internally inconsistent allegations may be disregarded. If cause for action exists, a formal case is initiated. If cause for action does not exist, the complaint will be dismissed at this stage and the person who filed the complaint will be notified.

3. Notice of Complaint and Informal Resolution

• If cause for action is found, the Executive Officer or his/her designee shall provide a copy of the complaint and all supporting materials, and a copy of the Code of Conduct and these Policies and Procedures, to the alleged offender and encourage a settlement through informal means. If a method of informal dispute settlement is not otherwise available to the person who filed the complaint and alleged offender, a mediator who is not a member of the Conduct Committee may be recommended by the Executive Officer or his/her designee. Mediation services will in most cases be by written correspondence or telephone. If informal dispute resolution is declined, the members of the Conduct Committee shall not be informed which party declined.

• Any person appointed to serve as a mediator shall agree to maintain the
confidentiality of the proceedings as set forth in the Code of Conduct and these Policies and Procedures. The mediator shall report to the Executive Officer or his/her designee only whether or not a matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of the parties.

4. Response to Complaint

- If either or both the person who filed the complaint and alleged offender decline informal dispute settlement or if informal dispute settlement fails to resolve the complaint, the Executive Officer or his/her designee shall notify the alleged offender that the case will go forward in accordance with these Policies and Procedures. The alleged offender shall have thirty (30) days after receipt of this notice to respond in writing to the complaint. An extension may be granted by the Executive Officer if good cause is shown, but the extension shall not exceed ninety (90) days.

5. Initial Determination of the Chair

- The complaint and response shall be submitted to the Chair of the Conduct Committee for an initial determination whether there is sufficient evidence to proceed with the case. The Chair may, in his/her discretion, request additional information from the person who filed the complaint and/or any other appropriate source before making the initial determination, provided, however, that the Chair shall not rely on such additional information unless it has been shared with the alleged offender and the alleged offender has been afforded an opportunity to respond. If the Chair shall decide that there is insufficient evidence to proceed, the matter shall be closed and the person who filed the complaint and alleged offender will be notified in writing.
6. **Investigation and Recommendation**

- If the Chair determines that there is sufficient evidence to proceed with the complaint, he/she shall appoint an Investigation Panel composed of the Chair or Co-Chair, three members of the AWG Board, and one outside member (five people in total) to investigate the complaint. The Panel may communicate with the person who filed the complaint, alleged offender, witnesses, or other sources of information necessary to carry out its functions. The Panel shall conduct as much of its business as is practical through written correspondence or verbal communication. Although persons who file complaints and alleged offenders have the right to consult with attorneys concerning all phases of the review process, the person who filed the complaint must file and the alleged offender must respond to misconduct charges personally and not through legal counsel or another third party, unless the person who filed the complaint or alleged offender provides good cause as to why he or she cannot respond personally. The Panel shall submit a written report of its findings and any recommendation for sanction to the full Committee within ninety (90) days, unless a longer period is necessary in the opinion of the Chair or Co-Chair. A copy of the Panel’s findings and recommendation shall be provided to the person who filed the complaint and alleged offender, who may submit a response in writing within a time frame of not more than thirty (30) days.

7. **Determination of Violation**

- The Conduct Committee shall determine whether a violation of the AWG Code of Conduct has occurred on the basis of the complaint, the response, any other information provided to the Investigation Panel, the recommendation and findings of the Panel, and the responses of the parties thereto, provided, however, the Conduct Committee may hear the testimony of witnesses where in its view it is essential to the fairness of the proceeding.
The Conduct Committee may return to any matter for further investigation. Upon completion of its review, the Conduct Committee shall issue a determination of whether one or more violations of the Code of Conduct have occurred, including a summary of the factual basis for this determination, and of the appropriate sanction.

8. Sanctions

In any case in which it has determined that a violation of the Code of Conduct has occurred, the Conduct Committee may impose no sanction or one or more of the following, as appropriate:

- **Reprimand.** In cases where there has been a violation of the code of conduct but the violation did not cause serious personal and/or professional harm, an educative letter concerning the violation, including any stipulated conditions of redress, may be sent to the alleged offender. Failure to comply with stipulated conditions of redress in a reprimand may result in the imposition of a more severe sanction.

- **Denial of Privileges.** In appropriate cases, the Conduct Committee may determine that a alleged offender shall be denied one or more of the privileges of AWG membership and/or the opportunity to participate in AWG-sponsored activities including but not limited to appointment to the editorial boards of any AWG publications, election or appointment to any AWG offices and committees, receipt of any AWG awards, publishing in or serving as an editor of one or more AWG-sponsored publications, presenting a paper or otherwise participating at one or more meetings sponsored by the AWG, or receiving research or scholarship assistance from any program sponsored by the AWG.

- **Termination of Membership.** In cases where there has been a violation of the Code of Conduct and the violation caused serious personal and/or professional harm, the AWG membership of the alleged offender may be
terminated for a period to be determined by the Conduct Committee. Eligibility to renew membership at the expiration of this period may be automatic or may be conditioned on a future determination by the Conduct Committee that eligibility is appropriate.

9. Notice of Determination

- The Chair of the Conduct Committee shall notify the person who filed the complaint and alleged offender of the decision of the Conduct Committee. If a sanction is imposed, the Conduct Committee shall instruct the Executive Officer to take the appropriate actions called for under the Conduct Committee’s determination, except that such notice shall be postponed if an appeal is filed as set forth in this document.

10. Appeal of Termination

- An alleged offender who is found by the Conduct Committee to have violated the Code of Conduct and who receives a sanction may appeal this determination by filing a Notice of Appeal and Statement of Reasons no later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the Notice of Determination. If an appeal is filed, the President of the AWG shall appoint a three-member Appeal Panel of past members of the Conduct Committee to review all information considered by the Conduct Committee and, within ninety (90) days, make a decision to uphold or reverse the determination. The Appeal Panel may set aside the Conduct Committee’s determination that a violation has occurred or it may determine that the sanction imposed by the Conduct Committee is not appropriate and impose a less severe sanction. The decision of the Appeal Panel shall constitute the final decision of the AWG with respect to all matters subject to this paragraph.