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Policies for a Member-Run Organization

Over the past year, The Oceanography Society Council (<https://tos.org/governance>) has been addressing several organizational policy issues. Some of our policies and procedures needed updating because the Society has grown and matured, and government agency policies have changed. What was appropriate for a small organization when it was founded 30 years ago may not be a good fit for today's larger and growing organization that is much more diverse.

One particular policy issue that has become very public over the past year relates to professional ethics, including issues of sexual harassment. This issue has been in the news frequently, touching many organizations. The Oceanography Society has always been a welcoming community that emphasizes open expression and exchange of ideas with equal opportunity and fair treatment of all, free from all forms of discrimination or harassment. This policy has long been posted on our website (<https://tos.org/about>). Fortunately, the TOS Council is not aware of any problems in this area related to TOS activities; however, it still is imperative that our written policies express our implicit expectations.

To that end, the TOS Council has developed a much more detailed and stronger policy that provides clear reporting and enforcement mechanisms for claims of harassment while participating in TOS-supported professional activities. (Note that the new policies also address publication ethics.) It is important that participants know that TOS has taken actions to ensure that its activities are as safe and as welcoming as possible. I would like to thank the Seattle office of the Fisher Phillips law firm, a group with particular expertise in workplace law, and Jennifer Freyd of the University of Oregon, a psychologist who specializes in the study of harassment, sexual violence, and impacts on individuals and institutions, for providing reviews of this TOS policy at no cost.

This policy review and update has also served as a good reminder that TOS is a member-run organization in which input is always welcome. Our operations and policies are transparent and responsive to the needs and wishes of our members. Your feedback makes TOS a stronger organization. Thank you!



Alan C. Mix, TOS President