SBL Professional Conduct Policy

The members of the SBL constitute a community of scholars dedicated to promoting the critical investigation of biblical literature and history, together with other related literature, by the exchange of scholarly research in published form and in public forum.

While freedom of inquiry is at the heart of this enterprise, such freedom carries with it the responsibility of professional conduct. As a learned society, the SBL requires professional conduct of its members as they exchange scholarly research in SBL publications and when they convene at SBL meetings and programs.

Professional conduct includes, but is not limited to, conduct based on respect for others which does not in any way exploit power and/or status differences such as those that exist between faculty and students, between senior and junior colleagues, between employers and those seeking employment, or between those who grant access to publication or presentation and those who seek such access. It also includes conduct based on respect in peer to peer relationships. Professional conduct is free of all forms of harassment and discrimination.

Discrimination means a distinction, whether intentional or not, relating to personal characteristics of an individual or group, which has the effect of imposing burdens, obligations, or disadvantages on such individual or group not imposed on others; or which withholds or limits access to opportunities, benefits and advantages available to other members of the SBL. Discrimination on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, color, ethnic group, citizenship, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, creed, age, marital/family status, or any other characteristic protected by law is prohibited by SBL in all of its sanctioned activities (including regional, annual, and international meetings, sponsored events and programmatic activities, and committee and editorial board meetings).

Harassment may be defined as vexatious comment or conduct in relation to a person or group of persons on the basis of personal characteristics (i) which has the effect or purpose of creating a hostile or intimidating environment; or (ii) which has the effect or purpose of offending or demeaning a person or group of persons; or (iii) which functions implicitly or explicitly to limit participation in a professional program, activity, or opportunity. It is also the case that the victim of harassment can be anyone affected by the offensive conduct, not just the individual at whom the conduct is directed. In other words, what one or two persons may consider joking around may be unwelcome to and offensive to a bystander.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal comment or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a person who knows or ought reasonably to know that such conduct is unwanted, including situations in which (i) the request or conduct involves any implied or expressed promise of professional reward for complying; or (ii) the request or conduct involves any implied or expressed threat of reprisal or denial of opportunity for refusing to comply; or (iii) the request or conduct results in what reasonably may be perceived as a hostile or intimidating environment. Such examples are illustrative, not exhaustive. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature or consensual personal and social relationships without a discriminatory effect. It refers to

behavior that reasonably situated persons would regard as not welcome and as personally intimidating, hostile, or offensive.

The SBL is committed to the creation and maintenance of a discrimination- and harassment-free environment in all of its sanctioned activities. The professional conduct of all members who participate in such activities is essential for preserving this standard. SBL is also committed to preventing harassment by or toward its employees and third parties involved in its activities, including contractors, vendors, volunteers, or guests.

Any person who has experienced a serious verbal threat or any physical assault should contact law enforcement officials immediately.

Any person who desires to report a possible violation of the SBL Professional Conduct Policy at an SBL sanctioned event should promptly contact the SBL Executive Director, the Chair of SBL Council, or the Professional Conduct Committee Chair. SBL has established Professional Conduct Investigation Procedures that provide guidelines for gathering information, maintaining confidentiality to the extent possible, reaching an initial determination, allowing for an appeal, and determining disciplinary action. SBL will carefully investigate all complaints according to these guidelines. No individual will be retaliated against for making a complaint or assisting with the investigation of a complaint.

Anyone who is found to have engaged in discrimination or any form of harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include, but is not limited to, reprimand and/or suspension or termination of the individual's membership and/or participation in current or future SBL operated, sponsored or affiliated events.

This policy was approved by the SBL Council November 2015.