

PREAMBLE to the SASE CODE OF CONDUCT

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The purpose of this document is to provide an authoritative statement of the expectations for professional conduct for all who participate in the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics' (SASE) meetings, webinars, and other activities. It will be especially useful for those who are new to the profession and/or SASE. The code of conduct ("Code") is a natural outcome of SASE's commitment to maintaining and promoting a professional environment at its meetings and other organized activities, and it is guided by the conviction that the advancement of knowledge flourishes most readily in an atmosphere of constructive debate in which all members treat each other with dignity and respect.

SASE brings together professionals from a variety of backgrounds and from a large number of locations around the globe. We share an interest in the various aspects of socio-economics broadly conceived, but we may differ in our conventions of professional interaction and our cultural traditions. This diversity brings with it the potential for fruitful dialogue about research and policy, but also the possibility of disagreements among members. The Code is designed to ensure that all are treated with dignity and respect; and that sensitivity and consideration guide our interactions while, at the same time, not limiting the substance or arena of our debate.

The SASE Code shall be governed, construed, and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the United States of America. Where no federal law exists, the SASE Code shall be governed, construed, and interpreted by the laws of the state of Maryland.

A. CODE OF CONDUCT

- 1) The Code governs relations between SASE members, SASE staff, and other participants of SASE activities. The Code also governs SASE members, SASE staff, and other participants in SASE activities and interactions with each other in the course of SASE activities.
 - a) "SASE activities" include SASE's annual meetings, regional meetings, pre- or post-conference workshops, webinars, and editing of the Association's journal, *Socio-Economic Review* (SER). A SASE activity may include email exchanges sent to SASE members regarding SASE activities, including, but not limited to communications on the SASE web-site, messaging system, and listservs. However, a SASE activity does not include general postings, tweets, messages or other comments, which are not specifically directed to SASE members and which may appear on the internet through social media or other similar platforms.
 - b) "In the course of SASE activities" relates to any interaction, event or incident that occurs from the beginning of any SASE activity and ends at the conclusion of those

events or activities. Thus, a SASE activity includes interactions such as meals and other related activities that take place during a multi-day conference, but for which the Complainant and Respondent are both attending because of their involvement at the SASE activity.

- 2) SASE Office Holders, from the President and Executive Director to members of the Executive Council and Editors of SER, are charged with upholding and observing the Code and promoting a professional environment characterized by constructive debate and the treatment of all members and participants with dignity and respect in the course of SASE activities.
- 3) SASE recognizes that there is a difference between victimization through bullying and/or harassment and legitimate, justifiable, and appropriate constructive criticism or academic debate. Nothing in this document should be construed as a limitation on the ability of members and participants to constructively evaluate and critique one another's work.
- 4) Nonetheless, SASE recognizes its duty to ensure that members and participants are not bullied, discriminated against, and/or harassed.
 - a) Bullying may be characterized as:
 - i) Any conduct in which a SASE member engages that is offensive, insulting, intimidating, or malicious and is targeted at or regarding another SASE member or a participant of a SASE activity or
 - ii) An abuse or misuse of power by a SASE member, which undermines, humiliates, denigrates, or injures (an)other SASE member(s) or a participant in a SASE activity.
 - b) Sexual and other unlawful harassment is a violation of the SASE Code. Harassment based on a characteristic protected by law, such as race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, religion, disability, veteran status, socio-economic status, or other characteristic protected by law, is prohibited. Harassment may be defined as below, but may not be limited to these definitions.
 - i) Definition of Unlawful Harassment: "Unlawful harassment" is conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment; has the purpose or effect of substantially and unreasonably interfering with a SASE Member's participation in a SASE activity because of the individual's membership in a protected class.
 - ii) Definition of Sexual Harassment: While all forms of harassment are prohibited, special attention should be paid to sexual harassment. "Sexual harassment" is generally defined as unwelcome sexual advances,

requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:

- a. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of any SASE Member's participation in a SASE Activity; *or*
 - b. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a SASE Member's participation in a SASE Activity or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.
 - c. The key is that the actions or comments are experienced as demeaning and unacceptable by the recipient and would be perceived as demeaning and unacceptable by a reasonable person in the recipient's position.
- 5) SASE recognizes that its members and participants at SASE activities who feel that they have been victims of bullying, discrimination and/or harassment as defined in this Code are entitled to pursue their claims in a safe and non-threatening environment.
- 6) SASE will endeavor to ensure that complaints brought under this procedure do not lead to retaliation against any individual.
- a) The procedures for addressing grievances (detailed below) aim to resolve allegations with the Respondent against whom the complaint is brought through consultation, whenever possible. At the same time, SASE recognizes that punitive measures may be required to address some violations.
 - b) SASE is also committed to ensuring that those who file complaints under this Code are not subject to retaliation by respondents or third parties.
- 7) SASE ensures that procedures are in place to address allegations of bullying and/or harassment.
- Such procedures provide for
- a) Timely handling of such allegations;
 - b) Fair and impartial handling of such allegations; and
 - c) Fair, impartial, and sensitive treatment of all parties affected by such allegations.

B. ADDRESSING GRIEVANCES

- 1) An individual who considers himself a victim of a violation of this Code (the "Complainant") should, if practicable, seek to resolve the matter informally with the person against whom the allegation is made (the "Respondent"). If a Complainant believes that it would not be practicable to seek to resolve his or her complaint informally with the Respondent, then they are not required to seek to do so. If informal resolution is unsuccessful or viewed as impracticable by the Complainant and not attempted, then the Complainant may seek redress through the procedures outlined under Sections 2 and/or 3 below.

2) Formal Complaint

- a) If the matter is not resolved informally, whether due to an unsuccessful attempt at informal resolution between the parties or due to the Complainant's choice not to seek informal resolution due to impracticality as set forth above, the Complainant may bring a formal complaint under this Section of the Code ("Formal Complaint").
- b) Neither the SASE Executive Committee, nor any of its members can file a Formal Complaint on an individual's behalf based on an informal or verbal comment made by any SASE member. Any informal or verbal complaint made to a SASE member or a member of the SASE Executive Committee will not be processed under this Code. Instead, in order for a Formal Complaint to be processed under this Code, a Complainant must submit a written Formal Complaint (may be in email form), which must include the following information:
 - i) The name of the Respondent;
 - ii) The nature of the conduct about which the Formal Complaint is made, including, where possible, dates and times;
 - iii) The names of any people who may have witnessed the alleged conduct; and
 - iv) Any action that has already been taken to resolve the matter, if any.
- c) A Formal Complaint must be provided to a member of the SASE Executive Committee. If a Formal Complaint is not provided to a member of the SASE Executive Committee, SASE may be unable to process that Formal Complaint pursuant to the provisions in this Code. The Executive Committee member who receives the Formal Complaint will forward it to the Executive Director for their initial review to determine if the Formal Complaint falls under the Code (i.e., whether the incident occurred in the course of a SASE activity between individuals who are covered by the Code). If the Executive Director is the Respondent in a Formal Complaint, the sitting President will make this assessment.
- d) If the Executive Director or the sitting President (as the case may be) determines that the Formal Complaint is not subject to the Code, the Complainant will be advised that the Formal Complaint will not be considered given that the alleged conduct does not fall under the Code. If, alternatively, the Executive Director or the sitting President (as the case may be) determines that the Formal Complaint falls under the Code, they will provide a copy of the Formal Complaint and all other supporting documents submitted by the Complainant to the Respondent so that the Respondent can submit a response as discussed further below.
 - i) If the Complainant expresses concerns that the sharing of the full Formal Complaint or all of the supporting documents may lead to retaliation from the Respondent, the Executive Director or sitting President may opt to instead summarize the Formal Complaint and the supporting documents to the Respondent, perhaps even omitting the identity of the Complainant.
 - ii) The default practice, however, is to share the Formal Complaint and the supporting documents that the Complainant submits with the Respondent.
- e) The Complainant may request, prior to a full review of the Formal Complaint,

- that the mediation procedure described below (Section 3) be used.
- f) If the Complainant does not request mediation, after the determination has been made that the Formal Complaint falls under the Code and the Respondent has been provided with the Formal Complaint and the supporting documents provided by the Complainant, the Executive Director or the sitting President will initiate a review of the Formal Complaint by appointing a committee to conduct the investigation. This review will typically be conducted by the standing Committee on Membership and Diversity. However, the SASE President may appoint or convene another committee to conduct the review if they believe that a conflict of interest prevents the Committee on Membership and Diversity from conducting the review. If the Executive Director or the sitting President chooses to refer the matter to another committee for consideration, they must first seek and obtain approval (via a two-thirds supermajority) from the Executive Committee.
- g) The committee that is selected to review the Formal Complaint, (the "Review Committee") reserves the right to ask the parties and any witnesses (whether or not identified by either party) to present evidence within a reasonable period of time or not. The Review Committee is not required to ask the parties or any witnesses to present evidence and will only do so where it deems necessary, in its sole discretion. In other words, the Review Committee may choose to limit its investigation to the documents and evidence provided by the Complainant and the Respondent in support of their respective positions. Thus, the burden is on the Complainant and the Respondent to present the evidence they believe supports their position and which will allow the Review Committee to make a determination as to the validity and/or merit of the Formal Complaint. If the Review Committee does ask the parties or any witness to present evidence, the Review Committee will also indicate to the party and/or witness whether the evidence should be given in writing (including e-mail), as an oral statement or through the production of documentation. Again, while the Review Committee may request additional evidence, it is not required to do so. Those who provide evidence should be reminded at the outset that it will be used in order to resolve the matter and that those who provide evidence should maintain confidentiality. If the Review Committee or the Executive Director or the sitting President requests that the Respondent provide information, evidence or testimony and the Respondent fails to do so, such failure may constitute grounds for remedial action, including, but not limited to the removal of SASE membership or other appropriate reprimand.
- h) The Review Committee will evaluate the evidence and consider, among other things, the following criteria:
- i) Whether the allegations involve inappropriate conduct as defined above;
 - ii) Whether the evidence suggests that the alleged behavior violates professional norms of dignity and respect;
 - iii) Whether the alleged behavior appears to constitute an isolated incident or a pattern of repeated behavior;
- i) The Review Committee will prepare a written report for the SASE Executive Committee's review and consideration. This report will summarize the

Investigating Committee's deliberations, render a decision regarding whether the

Code was violated, and recommend a resolution of the matter. This report will be confidential and will only be provided to the Executive Committee. The Review Committee's recommended resolutions and recommended reprimand, if any, must have an explicit foundation in the evidentiary findings of the committee. Recommended resolutions may include:

- i) Dismissal of the Complaint;
- ii) An informal resolution of the matter (without necessarily attributing blame or responsibility). The objective will be to (re-)establish a professional and respectful working relationship between the parties.
- iii) A finding that the Code was violated and that the Respondent should be reprimanded.

The recommended reprimands may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) A private letter of reprimand.
- (2) A public letter of censure. This letter will be made public after the time frame for appeal has passed.
- (3) A suspension of membership of the Respondent, which may be permanent or for a specified period of time. Such a suspension would suspend access to SASE-related funding, and to participation in SASE meetings.
- (4) A ban from the right to publish in SASE's administered journal, *Socio-Economic Review*.

- j) The SASE Executive Director or sitting President shall communicate the resolution of the matter to both the Complainant and the Respondent. The resolution of the matter, as well as the original complaint, will be held at SASE Headquarters. Should a Respondent be subject to a future complaint, the Executive Director will share this information with the adjudicating committee.
- k) The SASE Executive Director will report annually on the use of the process set forth in the Code. The annual report should not name the individuals involved or describe specific allegations. Rather it should summarize the process, in terms of the number of complaints filed; the number of cases referred to committee (and to which committee); the number of complaints upheld and their resolution (censure, membership restrictions, or other penalties).

3) Mediation

- a) If, as mentioned in Section 2 above, the Executive Director or Sitting President has determined that the complaint falls under the Code, the Respondent may request that his/her Formal Complaint first be addressed through mediation. When such a request is received, the Executive Director or sitting President will ask whether the Complainant is amenable to mediation. The Complainant is not

required to mediate the Formal Complaint. Only if both parties agree to mediation will SASE engage the services of a professional mediator.

- b) The mediation process will typically involve the following steps, although the exact structure of the process is left to the professional mediator in consultation with the Executive Director or the sitting President. The mediator is asked to keep detailed records of all communication; these records will be maintained at SASE Headquarters. The mediator typically will:
- i) Request an explanation from the Complainant of the nature of the Formal Complaint, as well as a description of any informal efforts at resolution that have taken place, if any.
 - ii) Contact the Respondent, outline the nature of the Formal Complaint, and obtain that person's response to the Formal Complaint. As in Section 2(d)(ii) above, the Formal Complaint typically should be shared with the Respondent.
 - iii) If appropriate and feasible, arrange a joint meeting with the parties to discuss the case.
 - iv) The mediator will make recommendations to the parties for resolving the matter. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the recommendation may include an attribution of blame or responsibility.
 - v) The objective will be to (re-)establish a professional and respectful working relationship between the parties.
 - vi) The mediator will prepare a brief written report for the Executive Director or sitting President. This report shall summarize the efforts and the resolution of the dispute. Alternatively, the report may summarize the efforts and report that a resolution has not been achieved and is unlikely to occur.
 - vii) The report will remain confidential. However, the mediator may share this report with the parties to the complaint, if desired by either party.
 - viii) Again, it should be noted that, while mediation is an option available to any Complainant, it is not a required part of the formal complaint process. That is, a Complainant whose grievance falls under the Code, but who does not want to opt for mediation, has a right to request immediate use of the formal process outlined in Section 2. A Complainant is not required to agree to mediate the Formal Complaint.

4) An appeal may be made regarding the outcome of an investigation, either by the Complainant or by the Respondent, using the following procedures:

- a) Any appeal should be made in writing to the SASE Executive Committee.
- b) An appeal can be made only on grounds of procedural irregularity or where the outcome of the investigation is seen to be manifestly unreasonable.
- c) The appeal must be made within 30 days of the transmission of the decision to the party appealing.

- d) Upon receipt of an appeal, the Executive Committee will:
 - i) Review the appeal and the report by the Review Committee and respond to the appealing party. This response will evaluate whether the appeal has merit. If the Executive Committee determines the appeal does not have merit, it will:
 - (1) Dismiss the appeal and issue a written report to the appealing party explaining the grounds for dismissal.
 - ii) If the Executive Committee determines the appeal has merit it may:
 - (1) Send the matter back to the Review Committee for reconsideration based on the Executive Committee's evaluation of the grounds for the appeal. In such a case, the Executive Committee should provide guidance to the Review Committee;
 - (2) Constitute a new review committee;
 - (3) Devise an alternative strategy for resolving the matter.
- 5) **Recordkeeping:** This Code and the complaints process detailed above requires the keeping of records regarding previous complaints and the resolution of those complaints. As such, records of all complaints received, and of the disposition of those complaints, are to be kept at SASE Headquarters. When a new complaint is filed, the Executive Director (or, where appropriate, the President) will check these records, and will provide information about past complaints to the Review Committee. As with all information provided in the complaints process, such information is to be treated confidentially by members of the Review Committee.
- 6) **Additional Provisions and Confidentiality**
- a) A party or witness acting under any stage of this procedure who knowingly makes a statement that is untrue, malicious, frivolous, or in bad faith may be subject to the disciplinary powers detailed under Section 2 of the Code. The Review Committee should evaluate any such action and make recommendations as part of its report.
 - b) At all stages of this procedure, the Complainant, the Respondent, or a witness in the procedure may be accompanied by a colleague.
 - c) All information gathered under this procedure will be treated in confidence. Some information may be shared among those involved within the confines of the investigation as part of the evidentiary process. SASE requests that all parties maintain confidentiality regarding all aspects of the process and its outcomes.

This Code and its procedures for resolving grievances is not intended to and is not a substitute for the rights of any of the parties to seek legal redress. Any legal action on the part of the Complainant will be exclusively a matter between the Complainant, the Respondent, and the authorities in the location where the incident occurred. SASE will not be a party to such legal action, nor will it accept any financial responsibility for such action.