

# Botany Conference Code of Conduct

All of the participating scientific societies in BOTANY Conference have adopted the following Code of Conduct. Please read it carefully. Establishing this Code of Conduct is intended to prevent incidents of harassment, discrimination, and violence, and to maintain the high quality of scientific discourse that our members have come to expect from BOTANY conferences.

The BOTANY conference is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and productive meeting environment that fosters open dialogue and the exchange of scientific ideas, promotes equal opportunities and treatment for all participants, and is free of harassment and discrimination. The participating societies in BOTANY conference will make every effort to maintain an environment that is free of harassment, even though we do not control the behavior of third parties.

All registrants, guests, volunteers, exhibitors, staff, contractors, vendors, venue staff, and others in attendance are expected to abide by this Code of Conduct at all venues at BOTANY conference, including ancillary events and official and unofficial social gatherings.

## **Unacceptable behavior includes (but is not limited to):**

- intimidating, harassing, abusive, discriminatory, derogatory or demeaning speech or actions by any participant in BOTANY conference, at all related events and in all communications carried out in the context of BOTANY conference
- harmful or prejudicial verbal or written comments or visual images related to gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, disability, age, appearance, or other personal characteristics
- inappropriate or gratuitous use of nudity, sexual images, or stereotyped images in public spaces (including presentation slides);
- intimidation, stalking or following;
- loud outbursts or sustained disruption of talks or other events;
- unwelcome and uninvited attention or contact
- physical assault (including unwelcome touch or groping)
- real or implied threat of physical harm
- real or implied threat of professional or financial damage or harm

Retaliation for reporting unacceptable behavior is a violation of the Code of Conduct. Vigilantism is itself also a violation, and this includes any communications (including social media) that could be perceived as shaming or threatening. Once a report has been made to the Ombudsperson, all participants must give the process time to work.

Falsely reporting unacceptable behavior is a violation of the Code of Conduct.

The meeting organizers, Society staff and Society executive officers reserve the right to enforce this code of conduct in any manner deemed appropriate. Anyone violating the code of conduct may be: (a) warned to cease the behavior and that any further reports will result in more serious sanctions (b) expelled from the meeting (without refund), and/or (c) prohibited from attending future meetings indefinitely or for a period of time (d) removed from membership in any or all of the partner societies involved in BOTANY conferences and/or e) held accountable through notification of the individual's employer of the action taken regarding this violation.

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The participating societies shall not be responsible for any defamatory, offensive, or illegal conduct of BOTANY conference participants, and shall not be held liable for personal injury, property damage, theft or damage of any kind suffered by the participants at or in connection with the BOTANY conference. By registering for and attending the annual BOTANY Conference, each participant acknowledges that they have read this Disclaimer, and expressly releases the Societies and its board members, directors, officers, employees, or agents from any and all liability in connection with such Conference.

### **Reporting a Code Violation**

If you are being subjected to, or notice that someone else is being subjected to behavior that violates this Code of Conduct, please contact our independent Ombudsman:  
**Marcus Stergio- (msterg5285@gmail.com) cell (617-800-6245)**

All complaints will be treated seriously and responded to promptly.  
All reports are confidential and only the Code of Conduct Committee and anyone involved in carrying out sanctions will be aware of the report if the Ombudsperson deems the incident to be a violation.

If possible, provide the following information, preferably in writing:

- Identifying information (name/badge information, appearance) of the participant doing the harassing
- The behavior that was in violation
- The approximate time and place of the behavior (if different than the time the report was made)
- The circumstances surrounding the incident
- Other people involved in or witnessing the incident

Anyone experiencing or witnessing behavior that constitutes an immediate or serious threat to public safety, or a criminal act should contact 911. Those witnessing a potential criminal act should also take actions necessary to maintain their own personal safety.

### **Process for Investigating a Code Violation**

After a code violation has been reported to our independent Ombudsperson, the Ombudsperson will conduct an investigation to ascertain if the behavior was in violation of the code, including interviewing other witnesses to the event. If an incident is deemed a violation, the Ombudsperson will pass all reported information to the Code of Conduct Committee (composed of one representative from each participating society) that shall deliberate on the nature of the violation, reach a decision on an action to be taken, and convey that information to the Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson will then convey that message and decision of the Committee to the participant that has been reported in violation and, to anyone involved in carrying out sanctions if that is deemed necessary, and if requested, to the person who directly experienced the harassing behavior.

### **Addressing Grievances**

If you feel you have been falsely or unfairly accused of violating this Code of Conduct you should notify our independent Ombudsperson, **Marcus Stergio at msterg5285@gmail.com or cell (617-800-6245)** with a concise description of your grievance.