



## **Professional Culture & Climate Subcommittee (PCCS)**

### **Division of Planetary Sciences of the American Astronomical Society**

# **Code of Conduct**

The goal of the Professional Culture & Climate Subcommittee (PCCS) is to create a safe and productive environment for all subcommittee members as well as all members of our community. All PCCS members are subject to the [AAS Code of Ethics](#) and [AAS Anti-Harassment Policy](#). In addition, the PCCS has the following rule and guidelines for its members. This policy applies to all members of the PCCS, and applies to PCCS-related interactions and meetings, as well as interactions involving PCCS members that occur outside of formal meetings. This Code of Conduct is tailored to PCCS spaces such as our telecons and email discussions, but its expectations for inclusive behaviors by PCCS members applies outside our spaces as well.

#### **The only rule:**

*What happens during the PCCS meeting stays in the PCCS meeting.*

Because of the sensitive nature of our work, there is a need for members to be comfortable sharing information and opinions that they might not normally share with work colleagues. All specifics from meeting discussion, including those recorded in meeting notes, whether written, visual, or audio, shall be held in confidence.

#### **Guidelines:**

##### Videoconferencing

We will use a videoconferencing platform (e.g., WebEx) for our meetings. Participants are strongly encouraged to turn on their cameras to facilitate identification of the speaker, and recognition of those who wish to speak next. Visual contact also provides additional social cues that assist with our sensitive conversations. However, we recognize that there may be instances in which a participant may be unable to have their camera on or does not feel comfortable doing so. While use of the cameras is encouraged, it is not required.

While folks may not generally feel comfortable bringing their entire self into work settings (including video), we value every aspect of our members and encourage everyone to being their entire selves to meetings. We condone and encourage working



out during our meetings, involving your pets and children, etc. We also recognize that not everyone has the same access to comfortable surroundings and that jokes or dismissive comments about someone's appearance or the appearance of their background will not be tolerated.

Incorporating multiple means of communication into meetings serves to increase participation from all meeting members. Specifically, we recognize that chat is a more comfortable way to communicate for some people and in some conversations and situations. Thus, comments or questions can be submitted via the chat window, as well as verbally. Someone is assigned at each meeting to specifically keep an eye on the chat.

### Feedback is a gift

Our overriding goal is to not cause harm. However, the topics discussed at our meetings are sensitive and highly nuanced and sometimes harm occurs, regardless of intent. This harm may not always be recognized by all, and anyone who does recognize an incident is encouraged to point this out. This can be via an explicit "hey now, that doesn't sound right/kind ..." interjection, or a simple "ouch," etc.

When you receive such feedback, please acknowledge the harm (e.g., "oops") and listen, then think. Feedback is a gift; it truly is, even if it is sometimes a difficult one to receive. We ask that you recognize this and accept the gift as intended: an opportunity to do better.

### Goal of diversity and elevation of minoritized voices

The charge of PCCS is to ensure that diverse voices are heard and considered in DPS activities. Thus, PCCS members are expected to listen to community members and to solicit relevant perspectives, concerns, and ideas from all people. Additionally, PCCS members are encouraged to contribute their own perspectives, concerns, and ideas into conversations. They are also invited to advocate for perspectives that they identify with, *as they are comfortable doing so*. The group is intentionally kept small for logistical purposes, but we try to incorporate as many axes of minoritized identities as possible. As a result, some members may be the only person present who is a member of a particular minoritized community, and they may be asked to speak on the understanding of members of that community. As a group, we need to be mindful of tokenist dynamics and continue working to ensure negative aspects of those dynamics don't come into our group discussions.



In such conversations, differences of opinion or contradictory needs might be expressed. In these cases, it is especially important to elevate the voices of those most impacted and/or those whose voices are often ignored. Listening to and thinking about feedback (above) is also paramount.

### **Reporting: How and to whom to make an incident report**

We encourage reporting of issues that cannot be handled by direct feedback as described above, either because the scope is larger or those other measures have been tried and haven't worked, or it's an ongoing issue.

If you experience or witness any behavior that violates the AAS Ethics or Anti-Harassment Policies, any witness or victim should report the incident to the AAS according to their policies via their complaint form here:

<https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/53297/index.html>

If you (any member of the PCCS) are being made uncomfortable by another member of the PCCS, notice that someone else is being made uncomfortable, or have any other concerns, please contact one of the co-chairs. If the person responsible is a co-chair, they will recuse themselves from handling your incident, and the other co-chair will assign a co-chair *pro tempore* for dealing with this incident. The co-chair(s) will respond as promptly as they can.

The co-chairs will take all good-faith reports of concern, and especially those of harassment, by PCCS members seriously. This includes harassment outside our spaces and harassment that took place at any point in time. The co-chairs reserve the right to exclude people from PCCS based on their past behavior, including behavior outside PCCS spaces and behavior towards people who are not in PCCS.

All PCCS members will respect confidentiality requests for the purpose of protecting victims of abuse. Should other methods fail to improve the situation, co-chairs may publicly name a person about whom harassment complaints were received, or privately warn third parties about them, if doing so is believed to be necessary to increase the safety of PCCS members or the general public. Harassment victims will not be publicly named by PCCS without their affirmative consent.

### **Consequences: How this Code of Conduct will be enforced**

PCCS members asked to stop any harmful behavior are expected to comply immediately. If a participant engages in harmful behavior that is not remedied when requested, including but not limited to harassment, the co-chairs may take any action



they deem appropriate to prevent further harm and to mitigate existing harm. For significant or repeated harmful behaviors, consequences may include but are not limited to:

- Expulsion from all PCCS spaces.
- After conclusion of DPS harassment investigation, people in violation may be named to other DPS members or the general public.
- Escalation of the report of harmful behavior to AAS or DPS leadership.
- After examining conduct and determining harassment, identification of the participant as a harasser to the DPS committee for further action, if warranted.

### **Communication of this Code of Conduct**

This policy will be sent to new members and membership is contingent upon agreement. To keep this document updated, it will be shared with all committee members yearly by the chair for review, and potentially edits, by PCCS. The latest version will also be posted publicly on the PCCS website.

### **Resources**

AAS Ethics website, including links to full policies, process of actions, and the Ethics Committee: <https://aas.org/ethics>

PCCS Website: <https://dps.aas.org/leadership/climate>

Charge to the PCCS: <https://dps.aas.org/content/charge-professional-culture-and-climate-subcommittee>

*Some parts of this policy are based on an example policy from the Geek Feminism wiki, created by the Geek Feminism community: [http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Community\\_anti-harassment](http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Community_anti-harassment)*

*PCCS Code of Conduct main text was last updated: 24 February 2021*



## Appendix 1: Why PCCS developed and adopted a Code of Conduct

As summarized in Diniega et al. (2021), a Code of Conduct outlines guidance and/or expectations for member/attendee behavior and contributions. By standardizing and making transparent these expectations, all team members are able to have their personal needs and capabilities taken into consideration without the need for large/extra advocacy (i.e., “special treatment”). This improves inclusivity and accessibility for all, but especially for those with lower power due to not “fitting the norm” or those at a disadvantage due to less familiarity with the group and its typical dynamics.

While all PCCS members were already expected to comply with the AAS Code of Ethics and anti-harassment policy, there are important group “norms” and expectations that are specific to the sensitive environment and activities of PCCS, designed to increase the safety of all PCCS members and especially of those that traditionally have been excluded from planetary science endeavors.

In past years, the PCCS chairs have explained to new members some of the behavioral norms of the group (and asked them to err towards observation for the first few meetings). However, this sort of informal sharing is (1) inefficient and (2) has high potential for inconsistency, incompleteness, and/or misunderstanding across the full group. In 2020, the PCCS decided to instead develop and adopt a formal Code of Conduct so as to formally recognize and make transparent the important group “rules” and behavior norms. To develop this document, two PCCS members (one new and one involved with PCCS for a few years) drafted a Code of Conduct, based on their understanding. The full group then discussed and clarified norms and expectations, and suggested edits, over the course of ~2 months.

An additional benefit of the Code of Conduct is that a clear record now exists that can be referenced by PCCS members. One year’s document will serve as the starting draft for the next year’s Code of Conduct, making it easier for the full group to evaluate processes and expectations, and adjust as needed.

Finally, the PCCS elected to publicly post their Code of Conduct so that it will be transparent to the broader community. This document is hoped to help elucidate what the PCCS does (and what its members are expected to do), especially for those interested in the subcommittee. Additionally, the PCCS document may serve as an example for other groups interested in developing a Code of Conduct.

**Reference:** Diniega, S., et al. (2021). Ensuring a safe and equitable workspace: The importance and feasibility of a Code of Conduct, along with clear policies regarding authorship and team membership. *Bulletin of the AAS*, 53(4).

<https://doi.org/10.3847/25c2cfcb.414c64ae>

*Appendix 1 was last updated: 21 September 2021*



**Appendix 2: Agreement for 2020-2021 PCCS Subcommittee**

This Code of Conduct was finalized, adopted, and verbally agreed to by all PCCS Subcommittee members on March 9, 2021. The appendix describing motivations for this document was added September 21, 2021 (Appendix 1). Electronic signatures, confirming that all PCCS members\* “read and agree to abide by the DPS PCCS Code of Conduct,” were then collected, and appended to this document on September 27, 2021.

\*Including our DPS Committee liaison, Krista Soderland.

### PCCS Code of Conduct Signatories

Fill out this form to indicate you have read and agree to the Division of Planetary Sciences (DPS) of the American Astronomical Society Subcommittee on Professional Culture & Climate (PCCS) Code of Conduct.

👁 sdiniega@jpl.caltech.edu (not shared) [Switch account](#)

\* Required

Name (as it will appear on the signatory list) \*

Your answer

Date \*

MM DD YYYY

\_ / \_ / \_

I have read and agree to abide by the DPS PCCS Code of Conduct as revised on 21 September 2021. \*

Yes

No

Submit
Clear form

Signatures collected via google form September 21-27, 2021:

Ingrid Daubar
Krista Soderlund
Serina Diniega
Jennifer Piatek
James H. Roberts
Jodi Berdis
Michaela Leung
Joseph Masiero
Ed Rivera-Valentín
Julie A. Rathbun
Shawn Brooks