

Byrd Polar and Climate Research Center: Code of Conduct

The following principles are designed to ensure that members of the Byrd Polar and Climate Research Center meet the highest standard of professionalism and that all members, including our faculty, staff, students, collaborators, and visitors, feel welcome and respected. As a discipline, the geosciences have historically exhibited a lack of diversity resulting in part from a culture of marginalization and discriminatory systems that do not afford all individuals the same professional opportunities. We strive to promote an inclusive environment for all.

This Code of Conduct provides specific expectations for behavior, a transparent process for accountability and responding to infractions, and resources from the university and professional membership organizations in our discipline. These principles will guide our efforts to drive deeper cultural change that will improve our working conditions and maximize our potential.

These principles were adapted from the [Princeton Physics Department, GSA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct](#), and [Ohio State's School of Earth Sciences](#).

Code of Conduct

All members are expected to follow these principles - regardless of whether the setting is in-person or virtual - including on campus, at conferences, in the field, in the community, online, or any other setting where they represent the Byrd Center.

Respect and Support Center Members

- Respect the professional, physical, and personal boundaries of all members of the Byrd Center.
- Be courteous in your interactions.
- Be respectful of other people's opinions. Give members a chance to voice their thoughts (i.e., listen, try not to interrupt).
- Ensure that, when solicited and offered, criticism is constructive and aims to create positive discussion. Do not denigrate the work of others.
- Work to ensure that all members have equal access to professional and academic opportunities.

- Make criteria for selection and decision-making processes explicit.
- Use clear, unbiased criteria when making decisions and taking actions that affect members' professional and academic opportunities. Have open and transparent discussions among individuals making decisions and identify any potential biases.
- For those in positions of power, treat students and others under authority respectfully, without exploitation or denigration. Provide a safe, supportive environment to encourage learning and professional development.
- Do not engage in academic bullying. As described by [Popp et al. \(2020\)](#), this includes but is not limited to:
 - Unfair and unequal working conditions, such as withholding information, collaboration opportunities, or support; assigning inappropriate or too many tasks; threats or refusal of promotions.
 - Scientific misconduct, such as changing authorship positions or taking credit for other people's ideas or intellectual property.
 - Intimidating behavior, such as constantly contradicting or interrupting someone.
 - Attacks on personal integrity and dignity, such as spreading rumors or publicly shaming people.
 - Psychological attacks, such as making degrading verbal or written comments.
- Do not judge, discriminate, or harass anyone based on race, ethnicity, country of birth, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical ability and appearance, religious and cultural beliefs, age, socioeconomic status, and/or any other attribute.
- Do not make unwelcome jokes or disparaging remarks based on race, ethnicity, country of birth, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical ability and appearance, religious and cultural beliefs, age, socioeconomic status, and/or any other attribute.
- When planning field research, external lab work, or any other expeditions outside of the Byrd Center, utilize inclusive safety protocols and risk assessments for all team members including those with marginalized identities regarding race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical ability, religious and cultural beliefs, age, socioeconomic status, and/or any other attribute.
- Take all the reasonable steps necessary to ensure health and safety in the laboratory, field, and other professional settings. Notify the appropriate

authorities of any violations or incidents that appear to create a threat to public health and safety.

- Byrd members will not tolerate divisive behavior. If you witness such behavior and feel safe enough to do so, speak up and intervene.
- Support those who report violations of departmental or university policy.
- Do not engage in professional or personal retaliation against other members.

Commit to Openness:

- Be receptive to discussions of ways to improve the work environment and work relationships, including discussions about cultural differences, racial disparities, and our personal roles in building Center-wide community.
- Challenge your own assumptions about people and become comfortable with recognizing your own privilege and complicity in inequity.
- Embrace opportunities to learn more, attend seminars, and undergo training on recommended practices for creating a safe and inclusive environment for all.
- Take it upon yourself to establish equity* for all people. Consider the particular challenges or barriers to success that colleagues may face as members of under-represented groups.

**Here, equity refers to providing people resources needed to succeed, even if that differs from individual to individual. This is distinct from equality, which gives all individuals the same resources regardless of their starting point.*

Take Initiative:

- Intervene when others are exhibiting conduct unbecoming of a community member.
- Speak up when colleagues are disrespectful of an individual, or of a group or class of people (even when members of that group are not present).
- Seek and support opportunities for education and training on diversity, inclusivity, reporting, and bystander intervention techniques, and encourage others to do the same. See available training below.
- Acquaint yourself with university policy as set forth in OSU policy on [sexual misconduct and non-discrimination/harassment](#); stay up to date with changes in the university policy. See OSU policies below.

- Know methods for reporting problems and violations of the code of conduct. See reporting resources below.

Accountability and Response to Infractions:

"The culture of any organization is shaped by the worst behavior the leader is willing to tolerate." – Gruenert & Whitaker

If an incident occurs, here are the steps that individuals affected or those who observed it can take. Members should be aware of the resources available at OSU and the actions that leadership will take for incidents if notified.



- **Level 1: Have a one-on-one conversation**
 - Do not assume malicious intent but remember that intent does not diminish the impact.
 - In the case of a microaggression, you may ask the individual to clarify their meaning by asking questions such as "What do you mean by that?" to encourage them to consider their underlying biases.
 - Address the discomfort. Although confronting an individual may make them uncomfortable and defensive, convey to them how their words or actions made you or others uncomfortable. Use "I" statements, not "you" statements. An effective conversation should include the following four parts:
 - A description of the concerning behavior
 - The feeling the behavior creates

- The effect that the behavior has
- A desired outcome

All four parts could be contained in one two sentences. *For example, "When you use my lab data without my permission it frustrates me as this undercuts my ability to use it in a first-author manuscript that is necessary for my tenure package. As we discussed when we first started collaborating, I expect that you will check with me and receive permission before using my data in the future."*

- **Level 2: Invite a neutral or trusted third party to the conversation.**

- Mediation services are available through the [Office of Ombuds](#) for faculty and graduate students, the [Office of Postdoctoral Affairs](#) for postdocs, and the [Office of Human Resources](#) for faculty, staff, and graduate students.
- Ask a trusted third party for assistance; ideally someone in a position with power to do something about the incident or at least provide the necessary support, such as a supervisor, department chair, lab or field station manager, program director, a more senior student, or a trusted individual.

- **Level 3: Start a formal process**

As per OSU's [Employee and Labor Relations Investigation Standards](#), a report/allegation can be made by individuals who are directly involved in, who observe, or who reasonably believe violations of OSU policies may have occurred.

- Submit a [Workplace Complaint Form](#) through HR or call 614-292-2800. Michele Cook in the Byrd Center Main Office is the official HR representative who could help with this process if the individual affected feels comfortable asking her. The Byrd Center Director could also be notified if the individual affected is comfortable doing so.
 - Enterprise for Research, Innovation, and Knowledge (ERIK) – Sabrina Blocker (614-247-9446)
 - Arts and Sciences – MJ Tang (614-514-5981)
 - See [Employee and Labor Relations Contacts](#) for a full list of Employee and Labor Relations contacts

- File an anonymous report at 866-294-9350 or [online](#).
 - For instances of discrimination or harassment, contact the [Office of Civil Rights Compliance](#).
 - In emergency situations or incidents involving crime (e.g., cyberbullying), contact campus or local police and/or EMS.
 - For instances involving minors, call 911 (child is in imminent danger) or Children Services Agency (child is not in imminent danger); call University Police at 614-292-2121; and complete a Child Abuse, Sexual Abuse, or Neglect Incident Report and submit it to the Office of Institutional Equity within one business day.
- **At Any Time: Seek Assistance Of** [OSU HR](#), [OSU Employee and Labor Relations](#) contacts, and/or [OSU Ombuds Services](#).

If the situation is not resolved satisfactorily through the processes listed above, members may seek assistance from these three offices.

Furthermore, these offices may be engaged at any point in the process for consultation; individuals do not need to wait until the conclusion of Level 3. Independent, confidential assistance from Ombuds Service is only available to graduate students and faculty members (there are no Ombuds services currently available for postdocs and staff). Members may contact them directly. Jason Cervenec with Byrd Center Education and Outreach can provide additional information and explanations of these services.

For any reporting procedures, documentation of evidence is an important part of the process, especially regarding individuals who continue to offend. If you are documenting an incident involving another person who is being harassed, always ask what they want you to do with the documentation. Documentation could include print and electronic communications and also your written records of an incident. When creating a record about an incident, it is important to do so as soon as possible and include as much specificity as possible. Include:

- Who was present? This includes the names of individuals who were witnesses or bystanders.
- What was said or done? Be specific and include the circumstances.
- When did it happen? Include the date and time.
- Where did it occur?

Resources

[OSU HR Employee Relations Resources](#)

Ohio State University Policies

- [Non-Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct University Policy](#)
- [Sexual Misconduct Policy FAQ](#)
- [Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity University Policy](#)

Reporting

- [The Office of Ombuds Services](#)
- [The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs](#) – services and resources for postdocs
- [Human Resources Services](#)
- [Anonymous Reporting Line](#); phone: 866-294-9350 – for reporting breaches of any university policies
- [Civil Rights Compliance Office](#)
- [Workplace Compliant Form](#) – for staff complaints
- [Protection of Minors](#) – OSU Minors Policy, reporting procedures, and training

Available Training and Information

- [Ohio State Title IX Training – Sexual Misconduct Prevention](#)
- [LGBTQ Student Resources](#)
- [Teaching and Learning Resource Center](#)
- [Office of Student Life Disability Services](#)
- [Ohio State Disability Services – Best Practices and Resources for Faculty/Staff](#)
- [BuckeyeLearn](#) - Ohio State's tool to engage faculty, staff and student employees in training and professional development.