

Statement of Values about Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment

The Society for Historians of the Early American Republic is committed to fostering a democratic ethos in scholarship and cultivating close, respectful, and productive exchanges between scholars at every level of experience and recognition. The Society recognizes that a truly democratic and respectful ethos values the inherent worth and dignity of every person, encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her potential, and fosters tolerance, understanding, and mutual respect among its members. SHEAR is committed to fostering a scholarly community in which all members feel a true sense of belonging.

Discrimination occurs when a person or group uses remarks, behaviors, or practices to show intolerance against an individual's race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or status as a veteran or to collectively denigrate the members of such groups. Discriminatory words and acts may range from open aggression to microaggression—the subtle slights, insults, and demeaning encounters that add up insidiously over time. Discrimination undermines the values of SHEAR. SHEAR will actively promote the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion that produce the most vigorous and innovative scholarship.

In upholding the highest intellectual standards of the historical profession and encouraging the broad diffusion of historical insights, SHEAR acknowledges that some ideas or words from the era and topics that we study are ethically problematic in the twenty-first century. In interpersonal relations, there is no legitimate defense for using slurs or epithets. In scholarly settings, we urge that if such terms are used, their use should be critical to intellectual goals, they should be historically contextualized and presented with sensitivity. We also recognize that such ideas and words may be used in contexts that serve legitimate scholarly purposes. Still, dedication to scholarly rigor is not a legitimate defense in the case of epithets or slurs that can be construed as hate speech. SHEAR expects its members to avoid using terms of abuse and to treat one another with due respect and decorum.

The Society also is committed to fostering a scholarly community free from sexual harassment, recognizing specifically the ways in which unwanted and unwelcomed behaviors of the kinds enumerated below harms the lives and often the careers of those subjected to it. Anyone can be a victim or a perpetrator of sexual harassment, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Sexual harassment also injures the discipline: talented individuals become limited in fulfilling their potential as they avoid places and people, limiting their contributions to our collective intellectual work and reinforcing ongoing inequities within the profession.

The following actions, enumerated by the American Historical Association, are also unacceptable in SHEAR settings, whether conveyed through spoken or written word, including e-mail, text messages, and social media:

- Persistent and unwelcome solicitation of emotional or physical intimacy.
- Persistent and unwelcome solicitation of emotional or physical intimacy accompanied by real or implied threat of professional harm.

- Intimidating, harassing, abusive, derogatory, or demeaning speech or actions by any participant in an officially sanctioned SHEAR activity.
- Prejudicial actions or comments related to actual or perceived sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, race, ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic status, age, or religion that coerce others, foment broad hostility, or otherwise undermine professional equity or the principles of free academic exchange. Harassment might also include unprofessional and unethical behaviors, such as intentionally misgendering someone, refusing to use a person's preferred pronouns, or making inappropriate remarks about a person's gender identity or sexual orientation.
- Deliberate intimidation, stalking, or following.
- Harassing photography or recording without permission
- Sustained disruption of presentations or other events, including yelling at or threatening speakers (verbally or physically).
- Physical assault (including unwelcome touch or groping).
- Real or implied threat of physical harm.

Discrimination and harassment offend the Society's core values which include a commitment to the open exchange of ideas, freedom of thought and expression, and equal opportunity and inclusion. By fostering dignity, understanding, mutual respect, and diversity, Society members and guests will contribute to a more democratic, respectful, and productive environment that recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

Acknowledgement and Enforcement of SHEAR Values:

New and renewing members of SHEAR and presenters at the annual meeting will receive this Statement of Values, which will also be publicized prominently on the organization's website. Those who join SHEAR or attend its conference are expected to abide by these values when participating in SHEAR activities.

SHEAR is establishing a standing Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Among that committee's tasks will be to review statements from members regarding any adverse events or interactions that may occur in violation of this Statement of Values. *If you experience or witness an adverse event, you may submit a brief incident description—without identifying names or details—to the members of the DEI committee.*

The committee will create an annual report on DEI initiatives that will be circulated to the Executive Committee and Advisory Council and made available to members on request. In order to raise collective awareness about the kinds of discrimination and harassment that inhibit Society members from doing their best work, the annual DEI report will include anonymized information drawn from any incident descriptions concerning adverse events that have been submitted to the committee. *No names or identifying details* will be released with the annual report; however, it is hoped that including information on adverse events in the report will create a means for victims to gain a sense of redress and for perpetrators to recognize the harm of their words and/or actions. Should patterns of discrimination or harassment emerge, such information will be useful in helping the society to make further plans of action.

The DEI Committee will review and may propose updates to the Statement of Values about Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment annually.