

SEAC POLICY STATEMENT ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

SEAC Task Force on Sexual Harassment and Assault and SEAC Executive Board, August 14, 2018

Adapted and modified from the Society for American Archaeology Statement on Sexual Harassment and Violence,

<http://www.saa.org/AbouttheSociety/StatementonSexualHarassmentandViolence/tabid/1547/Default.aspx>, accessed 2018. Used with permission from the SAA Board of Directors.

SEAC policy is that that sexual harassment and assault are classified as scientific misconduct because such conduct causes harm to, interferes with, or sabotages scientific activity and careers. Sexual harassment and assault creates a hostile environment that reduces the quality, integrity, and pace of the advancement of science by marginalizing individuals and communities. It also damages productivity and career advancement, and prevents the healthy exchange of ideas (adapted from the American Geophysical Union).

Archaeologists' learning and work environments are the context not only for the many duties of professionals in our field but also for cultivating confident and effective future generations of archaeologists. Today, archaeologists have many roles: instructional staff and students in classroom, lab, and field settings; curatorial staff in non-profit and government museums; cultural heritage managers and educators in governmental, tribal, and public utility settings; supervisors and employees in private cultural resource/heritage management firms; and participants in professional meetings and conferences. All of these contexts bring practitioners into contact with members of an increasingly diverse population of students, employees, and colleagues.

The Southeastern Archaeological Conference (SEAC) places high value on assuring that educational and work experiences in archaeology are optimal for all to develop and practice relevant skills and knowledge. Intimidation, harassment, and assault based upon sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, national origin, religion, or marital status, actual or perceived, has been legally recognized as having a chilling effect on learning and workplace experiences, not only for the targets of such behavior but also for others witnessing it. SEAC will not tolerate such behavior.

The U.S. federal government has implemented laws for educational and workplace settings to ensure that all students and employees, regardless of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, national origin, religion, or marital status, have access to an equal educational and work experience, free from discrimination, harassment, or assault. Other national, tribal, state, provincial, and local governments have also passed legislation prohibiting such behavior. Policies and practices of institutions in which archaeologists work often describe in detail the nature of such intimidating or violent behavior and how persons who have been targeted, or others who witness such behavior, can seek redress.

It is imperative that all SEAC members educate themselves on their country's, nation's, state's, province's, institution's, and SEAC's laws, regulations, policies, and procedures pertaining to sexual, gender and other forms of harassment and violence, and abide by these when teaching, learning, working, and engaging in collegial interactions. Those who serve as instructional staff or principal investigators have special legal and ethical responsibilities and should be aware of these in all situations.

SEAC's Executive Board is especially concerned that archaeological field schools and research experiences follow the guidelines and procedures of their sponsoring agency and/or institution, which the Board believes hold regardless of the location of the instructional site. Members of field schools—both instructional staff and students—must be informed of their obligations, rights, and avenues of redress.¹ The Board stresses that in all other contexts, practitioners must conduct themselves in accordance with relevant laws and regulations and have an ethical responsibility to intervene in cases where they observe peers violating relevant laws.²

To facilitate this, the SEAC Executive Board has compiled an outline for a [Code of Conduct](#) for a field school or field project and a [SEAC Background and Resource Guide for Addressing Sexual Harassment and Violence](#), containing relevant definitions, U.S. federal government legislation and their relevance to archaeological settings, suggestions for prevention, and bystander awareness, as well as what to do if one has a grievance.

¹ Muckle, Bob (2014). "On Sexual Harassment and Assault in Archaeology," The SAA Archaeological Record 14, no. 5:32-33. See <http://onlinedigeditions.com/publication/?i=232900>.

² Wood, Bernard (2015). "Zero tolerance. Period." Science 350, no. 6260:487-487. See <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/350/6260/487.full>.