

# GRONEN Code of Conduct

*\*The Code of Conduct presented in this document is an excerpt from the official statutes of GRONEN\**

## 1. Background

In pursuing its Purpose and Intent (see Section II. of the Statutes), GRONEN is committed to an inclusive and productive environment, allowing all members and guests (e.g., invited speakers, guest editors, etc.) to exchange ideas and do their best work.

GRONEN seeks to ensure that all its settings and activities are free of inappropriate conduct, including but not limited to, discrimination (both intentional and unintentional), harassment, intimidation, and violence directed at individuals or groups based on, but not limited to, race or ethnicity, sex, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, class, political affiliation, nationality or immigrant status, ability, or religion.

Leaders of GRONEN, including the Executive Board, Leadership Committee, and Strategic Advisory Council, are expected to set a high standard of behavior for the organization. They pledge to serve as ambassadors of GRONEN's Purpose and Intent (see Section II.). This requires GRONEN leaders to be prepared and fully engaged at all times, behave with respect and civility in all discussions and debate, make decisions based on the merit of issues, and act honestly, transparently and ethically.

This code defines inappropriate conduct, sets forth a process for reporting such conduct, and defines how GRONEN may respond to such reports. It also lays out expectations about behavior by GRONEN leadership. By joining GRONEN and through participating in GRONEN activities, members and participants agree to comply with this code.

## 2. Definition of Inappropriate Conduct

Inappropriate conduct may include, but is not limited to, bullying, slurs, epithets, name calling, physical assaults or threats, unwanted touching or persistent unwanted attention or invasion of personal space, inappropriate jokes, repeated, deliberate and inflammatory discussions of divisive issues such as religion, sex, politics, culture or other topics not in any way related to GRONEN policies or agenda, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, and insults and put-downs. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is engaged in without clear affirmative consent. These actions are prohibited both when they are directed at specific individuals and groups or when they create a hostile environment. All members of GRONEN and participants in GRONEN activities agree not to engage in inappropriate conduct. Although anyone can be a victim of inappropriate conduct, GRONEN recognizes that harassment and sexual assault disproportionately target women; people of color; trans and gender non-conforming individuals; and disabled people.

## 3. Scope of Coverage

Violations of the Code of Conduct in GRONEN spaces (meetings, activities) may be reported to the Code of Conduct Committee (CCC) (see Sections XIX., XX) of the GRONEN Statutes). In addition, the CCC can consider complaints about members or regular conference attendees for

violations of the Code of Conduct that occurred outside of GRONEN spaces if there is public and substantial evidence of professional misconduct that has been sanctioned by an employer. GRONEN will not initiate investigations of behavior that occurs outside of GRONEN spaces.

#### **4. GRONEN's Response to Inappropriate Conduct**

As an organization dedicated to fostering excellence and the exchange of ideas, GRONEN takes seriously any report, formal or informal, of inappropriate conduct related to GRONEN activities and will investigate any formal report. We will make every effort to ensure that this commitment is manifest in the policies, programs, and practices of the organization. GRONEN expressly prohibits retaliation against individuals who report inappropriate conduct and will take action against those who retaliate.

#### **5. Code of Conduct Committee**

GRONEN's Code of Conduct Committee (CCC) will be convened when a problem occurs. It shall consist of the President, Vice President, and the Chair of the Strategic Advisory Council. It will elect a Chair for the term of one year. Members of this committee are required to disclose any conflicts of interest in particular activities undertaken. In the event that the CCC is not gender-balanced, additional members of the SAC will be appointed to create gender balance.

#### **6. External Consultant**

GRONEN will engage an External Consultant, who is not a member of GRONEN, and is selected and approved by the CCC, if the CCC deems an outside party is necessary for investigation and deliberation. This consultant will be compensated on an as-needed basis and will have experience responding to and investigating inappropriate conduct claims within organizations.

#### **7. Reporting a CCC Violation**

Reports of inappropriate conduct or retaliation can be made via email to any member of the Executive Board. The Executive Board will notify the CCC Chair. The Chair and the other CCC members will then determine if the matter needs to be referred to the external consultant for review.

The process of reporting differs depending on whether the violation occurred in GRONEN spaces.

#### **8. Reporting Violations that Occur in GRONEN Spaces**

Individuals in GRONEN spaces who experience or witness a violation of the code of conduct in GRONEN spaces have the following options:

- a) Request a confidential consultation with the CCC Chair with a request for resources, information about reporting/resolution options, and to seek support. Reports will be held confidential to the extent allowed by law. (Some behaviors will have to be reported to appropriate authorities, such as those involving a minor or those involving criminal behavior.)
- b) Make a confidential inquiry to the CCC Chair with a request for screening/review and recommendation for resolution (e.g., through a mediated meeting) with the option, but without obligation, to file a formal report.

- c) Make a formal report to the CCC Chair with a request for an investigation or fact-finding inquiry, with possible sanctioning of the accused party. All formal reports will result in a formal investigation unless withdrawn by the complainant.

**Elements of a Formal Report.** A report should include, to the extent possible, the following information in writing:

- a) The name and contact information of the complainant;
- b) The name and contact information of the subject of the complaint;
- c) A statement that other legal or institutional proceedings involving the alleged conduct have not been initiated or, if initiated, the status of such proceedings;
- d) A full description of the conduct alleged to have violated the code of conduct including the sources of all information on which the allegations are based;
- e) Copies of any documents supporting the allegations;
- f) Names and contact information of potential witnesses/references.

**Investigation/Fact-Finding.** Formal reports containing the details noted above will be investigated by the CCC and, if necessary, an External Consultant. The accused party will be notified of the charges and given an opportunity to respond. Each party's statement will be shared with the other. Both parties may provide contact information for individuals to serve as witnesses/references.

**Timeframe.** Formal Reports (other than those addressing violations occurring during the Fall Conference) will be acknowledged as soon as possible by the chair of the CCC and responded to within 30 days. The chair will respond to all reports at the conference.

**Resolution, Outcomes.** The CCC will keep a written record of the process and submit a written final report that will be shared with both parties. Potential outcomes of investigations include the following:

- a) Negative/Inconclusive Finding: If the CCC's finding is inconclusive or negative, the CCC Chair will inform both parties of the finding in writing.
- b) Finding of Code of Conduct Violation: If the CCC finds that a violation has occurred (and has recommended the appropriate sanctions), the CCC Chair will convey the finding and the sanctions in writing in the form of a recommendation to the CCC. Once reviewed and approved (with or without amendment) by the CCC, the CCC Chair will inform both parties of the finding and sanctions in writing.

## **9. Reporting Violations that Occur Outside of GRONEN Spaces**

Individuals who wish to report a publicly documented violation of the Code of Conduct that occurred outside of GRONEN spaces should make a formal report via a form on the GRONEN website. The formal report should include the following information in writing:

- a) The name and contact information of the complainant;
- b) The name and contact information of the subject of the complaint;
- c) A full description of the conduct alleged to have violated the code of conduct and the sanctions levied by another organization (employer, professional organization, or legal body);

- d) Copies or links to any publicly available documents supporting the allegations.

In cases of behavior that occurred outside of GRONEN spaces, the CCC will review all relevant documents that are public or can be obtained through a request related to the situation. This may include articles in the media, published findings from other organizations, and reports that can be made public on request. GRONEN CCC will not conduct original fact-finding activities for reports of misconduct outside of GRONEN spaces, but they can opt to consult with the external consultant or others when deciding whether to impose sanctions.

## 10. Sanctions

Based on a finding of inappropriate conduct, inside or outside GRONEN spaces, sanctions may include but are not limited to any of the following:

- a) Removing the party from a meeting or event without further advance notice or refund
- b) Prohibiting participation in future GRONEN events
- c) Revoking membership or removal from leadership positions
- d) Rescinding awards
- e) Barring from leadership positions
- f) Reporting to appropriate legal authority and/or to that person's home institution
- g) A public statement from the Leadership Committee acknowledging the findings and sanctions

## 11. Appeal

Either party may appeal the findings of the investigation within 30 days of receiving the report. Appeals will be made to the past President (if not a member of the CCC), who may form an appeal committee. The Strategic Advisory Council serves as the adjudication body for appeals. Strategic Advisory Council members who also serve on the CCC cannot be part of the appeal process. Grounds for appeal include a claim of procedural error, substantive or significant, new evidence which was not previously available, evidence of the use of impermissible criteria or objective evidence of bias in the fact-finding and decision process.

## 12. Informal Ethics

As GRONEN's Code of Conduct is implemented, leadership will reinforce the code via informal ethics components. Below is a list of options suggested by Eden (2024)<sup>1</sup>:

- a) Role models and heroes: GRONEN should consider integrity-based awards to encourage role models. Also helpful is some form of recognition of individuals who demonstrate one or more of the values of the organization.
- b) Norms: GRONEN should have norms that support a culture of integrity. Examples may include discussions of the Code of Conduct, speakers on ethics topics such as "small cheats/weak cheating." Both proscriptive and prescriptive norms should be discussed. The organization should encourage "when in doubt, give a shout" (i.e., contact an ethics counsellor if members have questions).
- c) Rituals: The organization should create rituals out of ethical compliance activities such as signing the Code of Conduct. Ethics should be celebrated in the organization, for

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<sup>1</sup> Eden, L. Virtuous circles in the academy: insights from AIB's ethical organizational culture. *J Int Bus Policy* (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s42214-024-00198-z>

example, by setting up rituals, integrity awards and case competitions. An endowed program in ethics could be another example. The organization could also share stories about ethical situations and how they were handled, without naming names. These stories could be shared during orientation and training sessions.

- d) Myths/stories: GRONEN should create a way to tell its Code of Conduct story, for example, by setting up an integrity website, creating a history of its ethical activities.
- e) Language: GRONEN should create a communications strategy using messages, newsletters and signage to communicate its ethical culture throughout the organization and to its stakeholders.

### **13. Policy Updates and Approval**

This Code policy and its enforcement will be reviewed by the Executive Board on an annual basis, updated/amended with the Leadership Committee approval as deemed necessary and appropriate and without notice.