

## **Professional Conduct: ASHG Leadership Nominee and Applicants Procedures and Policies:**

### **Board of Directors & Committee Service**

**Approved by the ASHG Board of Directors November 2021**

ASHG is a professional society, led by volunteers. As such, volunteer leaders are a visible embodiment of the Society's professional values. In May 2019, the ASHG Board of Directors updated the ASHG [Code of Ethics](#) to include professional conduct standards. To support these values and standards, ASHG has established the following procedures related to the suitability of presenting candidates for election to the Board of Directors and confirming expectations for committee service. These policies and procedures are the result of ongoing deliberations of a Professional Conduct Working Group of the ASHG Board of Directors in 2021 and agreement of the Board.

#### **Policies & Procedures: Board of Directors Nominations**

Board members are nominated and elected to serve on the Board consistent with the [ASHG Bylaws](#) and guide the Society's direction and resources, applying their broad perspective and diverse experience in the genetics and genomics research community. They also serve as the most visible representatives for Society values and expectations and make decisions on policies that affect ASHG members and, by extension, the professional context in which genetics and genomics professionals work. The Society appropriately sets high expectations for its Board members. For these reasons, all Board of Director applicants and nominees will be expected to comply with standards in the Code of Ethics as a condition of being considered for election. The Society also reserves the right to decide that credible and substantial information about conduct inconsistent with ASHG's current standards may be a prudent reason not to present an individual for a leadership position even if there has not yet been a definitive determination establishing misconduct or the conduct at issue occurred prior to the codification of ASHG's values in the current Code of Ethics.

#### **Procedures:**

1. ASHG welcomes and encourages nominations and applications for service on the ASHG Board of Directors.
2. During nomination, nominators will be asked to state whether, *to their current knowledge*, the behavior of the individual they are nominating (whether another member or themselves) has been consistent with the standards articulated in the current ASHG Code of Ethics. If nominating another individual, nominators are not expected in any way to independently investigate or make determinations but rather to attest to their own knowledge of the candidate.
3. Prior to ASHG consideration of candidates, all nominees will be informed of professional conduct expectations and this policy and procedure. Nominees will be given the opportunity to decline consideration, with no imputation of any inappropriate conduct.
4. If nominees proceed to be considered, nominees will be asked to state, confidentially and in writing to a Board representative (the CEO), whether they are now, or have been, subject to an allegation, inquiry, action or decision regarding alleged professional misconduct as that concept is outlined in the [ASHG Code of Ethics](#), or whether they have engaged in conduct that could reasonably give rise to such a claim.
5. If a nominee attests that they are now, or have been, subject to an allegation, inquiry, action or decision regarding alleged professional misconduct inconsistent with the current ASHG Code of Ethics standards, the Society will request that the nominee provide a statement, confidentially and in writing, to the Board's Professional Conduct Working Group for consideration. Disclosure of this information will not automatically disqualify a nominee from consideration, but it will allow the Society to make an informed decision with the benefit of any context provided by the nominee. Based on the nominee's response, the Society may ask the candidate nominee for additional information.
6. Based on its review of this information, the Professional Conduct Working Group will determine, at its sole discretion, whether to recommend that the Executive Committee not include a nominee on the final ballot for election, after first providing the nominee an opportunity to withdraw their nomination. If the Professional Conduct Working Group recommends against including a nominee on the ballot, the reasons for the recommendation will be shared with the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will then follow procedures to finalize the slate, as provided in the Bylaws.
7. ASHG deliberations and decisions will be based on the evidence or information submitted or that is otherwise available publicly or in ASHG's own records, and its judgment of whether inclusion of a nominee on the ballot is in the best interests of ASHG. Except as stipulated in this policy, solicitation of other information from third parties or of new complaints or charges will not occur as part of the deliberations. ASHG will not undertake its

own, independent investigation of the facts presented as part of this process beyond publicly available information, although this process does not preclude any individual from filing a complaint under ASHG's Code of Ethics based on the same underlying facts.

8. Candidates will be informed that, if it is later determined that the candidate omitted or misrepresented relevant information at any point in the process above, ASHG reserves the right to remove the Board of Directors member consistent with the procedures prescribed by its bylaws.
9. The nominee's statement and any subsequent information will be maintained confidentially by the Board's Professional Conduct Working Group. The identity of the individual(s) and nature of the charge reviewed will be held in confidence by the Working Group, unless:
  - a. The Working Group decides that the allegation (even if unproven) is of sufficient gravity that the Executive Committee should be aware of the charge and individual. Such charges (even if unproven) would include but are not limited to rape, other bodily harm, financial malfeasance, etc. If the Executive Committee chooses to bring the recommended slate to the Board of Directors for input, it is at their discretion as to if the allegations are of sufficient gravity that the Board should be aware of the charge and individual.

### **Board of Directors Member Removal**

Removal of current ASHG Board of Directors members will be adjudicated according to the ASHG Bylaws, which state that:

*Any Board member can be removed for cause by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the entire Board of Directors, after an opportunity to be heard. "For cause" may include two (2) consecutive absences from board meetings.*

### **Procedures and Policies: Committee Service Selection**

After selection but prior to committee service, Committee Members will be informed of ASHG's expectation that they have adhered to the ASHG Code of Ethics and will do so during their committee service. Such members will be asked to sign a Volunteer Service Agreement to this effect as a condition of committee service. Candidates will be informed that, if it is later determined that the candidate misrepresented relevant behavior, ASHG reserves the right to remove the committee member consistent with the procedures prescribed by its bylaws and prohibit future service opportunities.

The Society also reserves the right to decide that credible and substantial information about conduct inconsistent with ASHG's current standards may be a prudent reason not to confer an ASHG committee position on an individual even if there has not yet been a definitive determination establishing misconduct or the conduct at issue occurred prior to the codification of ASHG's values in the current Code of Ethics.