



**ETHICS POLICY FOR GLSEN CHAPTER BOARD MEMBERS**  
**Approved by GLSEN's National Advisory Council: December 3, 2005**

**Highest Standards of Conduct**

GLSEN expects of its Chapter Board Members ("Board Members") the highest standard of personal conduct. Board Members will act in an ethical, honest, collegial, and professional manner, and will observe relevant laws and regulations. Board Members should not engage in conduct that negatively impacts, or has the potential to affect negatively, the Chapter or GLSEN or either body's mission or reputation.

The term Board Member used in this policy shall also refer to members of a Chapter's Steering Committee if the Chapter is governed by such a committee instead of a board.

This Ethics Policy provides general guidance on the ethical principles that all GLSEN Board Members must follow. No guideline can anticipate every situation and, accordingly, each Board Member should exercise good judgment when acting as a GLSEN Board Member, and with a sensitivity to the way that others might interpret any actions. Good judgment, professionalism, respect, and the highest ethical principles should guide a Board Member's behavior towards all GLSEN's constituencies, including other Chapter Board Members and staff, GLSEN National Board and Council members, National staff, and donors, supporters, students, volunteers, vendors, applicants, and consultants of the Chapter and GLSEN.

**Obligations to the Chapter and GLSEN**

The Chapter Board is responsible for governing the Chapter and ensuring that it carries out its charitable mission. Each Board Member should perform all duties in good faith and with such care as an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would use under similar circumstances. The Board Member should also act in a manner that the Board Member reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the Chapter and GLSEN.

**Conflicts of Interest**

Board Members must avoid any interest, influence, or relationship that might conflict, or appear to conflict, with the best interests of the Chapter or GLSEN, or which might affect the Board Member's judgment or loyalty. Examples of such conflicts include: ownership of, or a having a financial interest in, or other relationship with, a supplier to the Chapter or GLSEN; having a financial interest in any business transaction with the Chapter or GLSEN; or accepting gifts, entertainment, or other benefit of more than a nominal value from a supplier to the Chapter or GLSEN.

Board Members should avoid these situations and any situation in which the Board Member's loyalty may be divided. The Board Member should disclose to the Chapter Chair or the Chapter's assigned Chapter Organizing staff person of any situation where an actual or potential conflict may exist, and this disclosure must be made in advance of the consummation of any transaction. The Board Member will not participate in any negotiations, deliberations, decision, or vote involving the conflict.

**Confidentiality and GLSEN Property**

GLSEN and the Chapter have spent significant time and resources to develop both proprietary and confidential information related to their operations, including but not limited to, information about GLSEN and Chapter Board Members, staff, donors, volunteers, students, consultants, applicants, vendors, finances, general operations, programmatic work, forms, products, current and future plans, and information exchanged at

GLSEN and Chapter meetings. GLSEN and the Chapter regard all of this information as confidential regardless of its form (“Confidential Information”).

In the normal course of working with GLSEN, Board Members will come in contact with Confidential Information. Board Members shall not disclose, discuss, reproduce, or communicate in any way Confidential Information except to persons within or associated with GLSEN or the Chapter with similar access to Confidential Information or as directed by GLSEN policy. Board Members shall use and disclose Confidential Information only for the benefit of GLSEN and the Chapter and only as is necessary to carry out the Board Member’s work for GLSEN and the Chapter. Confidential Information should never be used for the Board Member’s personal use.

All Confidential Information in tangible form and all property, including, without limitation, all equipment, documents, books, records, reports, notes, contracts, lists, computer disks (and other computer-generated files and data), and all copies thereof, created on any medium and furnished to, obtained by, or prepared by a Board Member in the course of or incident to the Board Member’s work for GLSEN or the Chapter, belong to GLSEN and the Chapter (as appropriate) and shall be returned promptly to GLSEN or the Chapter (as appropriate) at the end of the Board Member’s relationship with GLSEN and/or the Chapter, whether the end of the relationship is voluntary or involuntary. GLSEN takes seriously the protection of its Confidential Information and will strictly enforce its policies related to such information.

### **Communications with the Public**

Board Members should direct all inquiries from the media concerning GLSEN to the Chapter Chair, who will coordinate any response with the Chapter’s GLSEN assigned Community Initiatives staff person and the Communications Director. These staff will work as needed with the Community Initiatives Director, the Senior Director of Programs and the Executive Director. No Board Member should provide any statement concerning GLSEN or the Chapter to the media or any written communication concerning GLSEN or the Chapter for public distribution that has not been previously approved by the GLSEN staff named above.

### **Nepotism**

No persons may be elected, or existing Board Members re-elected, to the Chapter Board if that person is a relative of a sitting Chapter Board Member or a relative of an existing employee of, or paid consultant to, the Chapter, and the sitting Board Member or current staff member’s term of office or employment would overlap with that of the Board term being proposed.

A relative, as used in the preceding paragraph, includes but is not limited to domestic partner, spouse, child, mother, father, brother, sister, grandchild, grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew and in-law, and includes relatives related by domestic partnership, marriage, adoption, or birth.

The existing Board Member must immediately notify the Chapter Chair and the GLSEN assigned Chapter Organizing staff person of a situation that may fall under this section, including the initiation of a relationship that puts an employee, consultant, member, or prospect in violation of this nepotism policy. If a GLSEN Board Member becomes a relative to a GLSEN member, employee, or consultant described above, one of the persons must resign within a reasonable period of time. The Chapter Board may make an exception to this nepotism policy if circumstances require that related persons assume GLSEN positions for a limited period of time, provided that the Chapter Board has obtained prior, written approval of the exception from the Chapter’s assigned Chapter Organizing staff person.

### **Political Activity**

GLSEN is a tax-exempt organization that is prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in any political campaign supporting or opposing any candidate. No person acting in the capacity of a Chapter Board Member shall participate in any political campaign of, in support of, or in opposition to, any candidate, although members acting in their personal capacities may do so.

## **Anti-Harassment/Anti-Discrimination**

### Coverage

At the heart of GLSEN's mission is the creation of healthy, safe, and positive environments and relationships. GLSEN believes in respecting the dignity of every person and is committed to conducting its operations in safe, non-discriminatory, and positive environments. Consistent with GLSEN's mission, the GLSEN Anti-Harassment/Anti-Discrimination Policy (the "Anti-Harassment Policy") forbids any discrimination, harassment, or unwelcome conduct that is based on an individual's race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, ancestry, medical condition, marital status, veteran status, citizenship status, or any other legally protected status of an individual or that individual's associates or relatives. This Anti-Harassment Policy applies to conduct by Chapter Board Members directed towards any person and to conduct by any person directed towards any Chapter constituency, including its Board Members, employees, donors, supporters, students, volunteers, vendors, applicants, and consultants. GLSEN will not tolerate violations of its Anti-Harassment Policy. Prohibited Conduct

The conduct prohibited by this Anti-Harassment Policy, whether verbal, physical, or visual, includes any discriminatory action, or any harassing or unwelcome conduct, that is inflicted on someone because of that individual's protected status. Examples of behavior prohibited by this Anti-Harassment Policy include epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, intimidating acts, and the circulation or posting of written or graphic materials that show hostility toward individuals because of their protected status. Consistent with the GLSEN mission, GLSEN and the Chapter will vigorously enforce this policy against harassment and discrimination without regard to whether the conduct that violates this Anti-Harassment Policy also gives rise to a violation of law.

### A Special Note Regarding Sexual Harassment

This Anti-Harassment Policy forbids harassment based on sex or gender, including gender identity and expression. Any unwelcome conduct based on gender is forbidden by this Anti-Harassment Policy regardless of whether the individual engaging in harassment and the individual being harassed are of the same or are of different genders, regardless of whether the offensive conduct is sexual in nature, and regardless of whether it rises to the level of a legal violation. Examples of behavior forbidden by this Anti-Harassment Policy include: (1) offensive or unwanted sex-or gender-oriented verbal kidding, teasing, or jokes; (2) repeated unwanted sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; (3) verbal abuse of a sexual nature; (4) graphic or degrading comments about an individual's appearance, gender, or sexual activity; (5) offensive or unwanted visual conduct, including leering, making sexual gestures, the display of offensive sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, or posters; (6) unwelcome pressure for sexual activity or offering benefits or threatening retaliation in connection with sexual favors; (7) offensively suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations; (8) offensive or unwanted physical contact such as patting, grabbing, pinching, or brushing against another's body; or (9) conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

### Reporting Responsibility

Every Board Member is expected to refrain from any behavior that reasonably could be interpreted as a violation of this Anti-Harassment Policy. Any Board Member who has experienced, witnessed, or learned of any conduct that is inconsistent with this Anti-Harassment Policy should immediately notify the Chapter Chair (who will notify GLSEN National), the Chapter's assigned Chapter Organizing staff person, or the GLSEN National Executive Director. This Anti-Harassment Policy does not require reporting harassment to any individual who is creating the harassment. GLSEN forbids retaliation against any member, employee, applicant, or other person for reporting harassment or for cooperating in any harassment investigation or proceeding of GLSEN or any administrative or governmental body.

### GLSEN Response

All good faith reports regarding conduct that is inconsistent with this Anti-Harassment Policy will be investigated promptly and thoroughly by GLSEN National. GLSEN may implement certain interim measures while the investigation proceeds. If an investigation reveals that a violation of this Anti-Harassment Policy or other inappropriate conduct has occurred, then GLSEN will take corrective action, which may include disciplinary actions or removal of the Board Member from the Chapter Board. GLSEN may take such corrective action, regardless of whether the conduct amounts to a violation of law or even a violation of this Anti-Harassment Policy. In investigating and in imposing any corrective action, GLSEN will attempt to preserve confidentiality to the extent possible given the circumstances of the situation. If the person who engaged in harassment is not employed by GLSEN, then GLSEN will take whatever corrective action is reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances.

### **Application of Policies**

The Board Member should direct any questions about this Ethics Policy to the Chapter Chair or the Chapter's assigned Chapter Organizing staff person. Exceptions to this Ethics Policy may be made only in writing and only by the GLSEN National Executive Director. Each Board Member is expected to disclose promptly to the Chapter Chair or the Chapter's assigned Chapter Organizing staff person any conduct that may violate this Ethics Policy. Failure to comply with this Ethics Policy will result in corrective action that may include reimbursement to GLSEN for any losses or damages and removal from the Chapter Board. Action will also be taken against persons who fail to report a violation or withhold relevant information concerning a violation of this Ethics Policy.

To the extent this Ethics Policy conflicts with any Chapter or GLSEN policy or procedures, this Ethics Policy shall control.

This section, as well as the sections on **Confidentiality, Anti-Harassment/Anti-Discrimination, and Communications with the Public**, shall continue to bind the Board Member even after the end of the relationship with the Chapter or GLSEN.

The Board Member Certification is on the next page.

### **Certification**

I have read and understand the GLSEN Ethics Policy, and I agree to abide by its terms.

I have no interests or existing obligations that conflict or may conflict with my service for GLSEN or adherence to the Ethics Policy, except as set forth below.

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Signature

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Date

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Printed Name

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Officer Title (if any)

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Chapter