This report was prepared by Kristian Gleditsch, acting as the chair of the ISA Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee (members include Aseem Prakash, Annette Freyberg-Inan, Kurt Mills, and Kumiko Haba, with ex-officio Mark Boyer). The report was submitted December 21, 2015 for the 2016 Governing Council meeting in Atlanta.

**Action Items**

- Submitted Petition by ISA-Canada Region
- International Studies Association Conflict of Interest (COI) policy
- Code of Conduct

The Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee has considered three issues over the past year. First, it has considered a request for a change to the current policy on sanctions for late-withdrawal from the ISA-Canada region. Second, it has considered a general Conflict of Interest (COI) policy for the ISA. Third, it has considered a revision to the scope of the ISA Code of Conduct and the associated grievance procedure. In response to the first issue we have suggested that the ISA staff make revisions to the statement on the policy that appears online. For the latter two issues we have recommendations for the Governing Council meeting in Atlanta.

**1. Petition entitled “Requested Policy Change on Late Withdrawals”, submitted by the ISA-Canada region (to Tom Volgy)**

The ISA-Canada region has submitted a petition asking for the late withdrawal sanctions policy to be abandoned (see Annex I). Although the petition is addressed to the ISA Governing Council, the Committee on Professional Rights and Responsibility has been asked to review the concerns and report to the Governing Council.

The petition is in our view one-sided in not considering the rationale for the late withdrawal policy and its intended consequences. The policy on late withdrawals was introduced to address the problems that late withdrawals created for the annual meeting program and panels collapsing due to late withdrawals or no-shows. There is some evidence that these problems have become less severe after the introduction of the policy. It should be noted that individuals who withdraw after the deadline or fail to appear at the meeting take up places in the program that could have been made available to other scholars with submissions that were not accepted. This issue has been discussed in past ISA Governing Council Agenda and Minutes (2005: Agenda p. 24; Minutes p. 3; 2006: Agenda p.25, 67-72; Minutes p.4; 2007: Agenda p32; Minutes p.4; 2008: Agenda p.69; Minutes p3; 2011: Agenda p.23).

Given the clear rationale for the policy and the evidence that this has been effective in reducing the problems motivating the policy, the Committee finds that it is important to defend the current policy.

However, we also believe that the grounds for an exemption from the penalties for legitimate reasons such as illness etc. as well as the appeal process should be made clearer. We have suggested that the second paragraph in the statement on the late withdrawal policy on the ISA webpages (http://www.isanet.org/ISA/Governance/Policy-and-Procedures/ID/22/Withdrawal-Deadline) should be revised as follows:

*Individuals that are subject to potential sanctions for late withdrawals will be notified after the annual meeting. They can appeal to the Executive Director for an exemption. Withdrawals due to legitimate reasons such as illness...*
or family emergencies will not be penalized. Please note, however, that withdrawals past the deadline due to lack of funding and other professional or personal commitments are not considered sufficient reasons for exemption from the penalized withdrawal list.

2. ISA Conflict of Interest Policy

It has become clear that the ISA does not currently have an explicit Conflict of Interest (COI) policy. The ISA Committee on Professional Rights and Responsibility was asked by the ISA Executive Director to draft a proposed COI policy.

This issue has apparently been discussed by the Governing Council in the past, but no policy has been formally adopted. It should be noted that the ISA journals have a separate COI policy, but there is nothing that is generically applicable across the Association.

The committee has proposed a new COI policy in response to this request and recommends that the Governing Council adopts this (see Annex II).

3. Revisions to the ISA Code of Conduct

The current ISA Code of Conduct and associated grievance procedure applies only to relations between ISA between members.

By implication, any incident involving an alleged wrong by a member against a non-member would be precluded from the grievance procedure outline in the policy, as would incidents where a non-member commits an alleged wrong against a member.

It seems unfortunate to exclude any incidents involving a non-member. The committee thus proposes to revise the Code of Conduct so that it applies to all individuals in the context of ISA activities. We have drafted a revision implementing these changes, and we propose that the ISA Governing Council adopts the revised Code of Conduct (see Annex III).

We understand that this is a major change that potentially could open the grievance procedure to a wider range of potential incidents. However, it should be noted that any such incidents would not go away just because they are defined as falling outside the Code of Conduct. Thus, keeping the Code of Conduct narrowly defined to members does not necessarily protect the Association, and it is likely that many issues that could have benefitted from the procedure initially will simply have to be dealt with in other ways.

Some concerns have been expressed about whether non-members can be held accountable to the ISA Code of Conduct. We have been told that the ISA’s legal counsel believes the Association to be on firm legal ground in including non-members, provided a system is implemented where all participants in ISA-sponsored activities affirm to agree to abide by the Code of Conduct upon submission/registration. Something akin to this is already in place for convention submissions, but would need to be implemented for the ISA journals and possibly in some other places. However, this is unlikely to involve any major technical problems.
ANNEX I: SUBMITTED PETITION BY ISA-CANADA REGION

OBJECT OF THE REQUESTED POLICY CHANGE ON LATE WITHDRAWALS

The actual policy on Withdrawal Deadline is unjust and problematic.

THE CURRENT POLICY:

“Every year, ISA has far more people applying than we have space for in the program, and hundreds of worthy applicants are turned away. Because of this, ISA's Governing Council imposed a withdrawal deadline, by which time you could still cancel your participation (and the Program Chair(s) could substitute another worthy participant); if you failed to cancel your professional obligation by that date, you would be penalized by not allowing you on the program for future Conventions.

Please note, withdrawals past the deadline due to lack of funding and other professional or personal commitments are not considered sufficient reasons for exemption from the penalized withdrawal list.”

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

We propose two different courses of actions: a most desirable one and a friendly addendum to the existing policy.

MAIN RECOMMENDATION [THE MOST DESIRABLE OUTCOME]:

The ISA Governing Council should cancel the rule concerning the “Withdrawal Deadline” and should not impose a punishment other than not reimbursing the registration fees.

JUSTIFICATION:

The policy seems to be entirely and uselessly punitive. It is premised on the idea of deterrence, and is falsely premised on the logic that someone withdrawing is using a space that could have gone to someone else. Given that someone whose submission was rejected is not waiting for that newly vacant spot, then the punishment inflicted on the person who is deemed “too late” in dropping accomplishes nothing for the person displaced.

It is in that sense that the rule seems to be set on deterrence, if not revenge, as it aims to scare people, whereas the people who would normally be constrained to drop off “too late” would do it only because of unavoidable reasons which should not be used as justifications for punishment. These reasons are varied and ought not to be held against these people, as not attending is, in and of itself, already a punishment in its own right for them. They may be forced to withdraw because no one can watch their kids, a parent has died, or they are simply broke. It is therefore unjust to punish them because of some abstract wrong they would have done to a hypothetical person that did not get its paper accepted. This rule enforced in the name of an “other” does in no way “speak” for this “other person”.

Moreover, it seems worth mentioning that it is often those who are more precarious for various reasons of class, gender, familial structure, geographic distance, institutional support, etc., who will suffer most from such punishment, and this is why the ISA ought to cancel this ban punishment. In other words, it will be Ph.D. students and adjuncts professors, and possibly women and single parents, who will be most severely affected by this.

We thus feel that this rule is unjust and should be cancelled. To be sure, the ISA system and the registration deadline already provides a cut-off point for people who want to withdraw: those who choose to register do so with the best intention of participating and it should not be held against them if they were to be forced to withdraw passed the deadline. In addition, if there were less of a penalty for pulling out passed the registration deadline, people would pull out earlier because they would not keep trying to make it work until the very last minute (in order to escape the
punishment). Encouraging people to make decisions early on is much more effective and seems rather preferable than trying to get people to commit out of a fear of failure.

That said, after the registration deadline is passed, it would be perfectly understandable that the registration fees are not reimbursed for those who withdraw, but there should not be further punishment with the imposition of a ban. Consequently, people who must withdraw passed the deadline could notify the ISA program chairs as soon as possible and this would perhaps leave time to add people who were rejected or who could have been put on a waiting list.

**Alternate recommendation [for some improvement over the status quo]**

*Should the policy of punishing people who withdraw pass the registration deadline continue to be upheld, then it is our recommendation that it should be reassessed and differentiated for tenured faculty, adjunct professors and, most importantly, Ph.D. students.*

The Ph.D. students and adjunct professors especially fall in a category of people who are more prone to be lacking funds to travel and who may experience problems in attending the conference (because of their more precarious position). We know that all cases cannot be assessed in a unique way and that some standard policy is required, and this is why we consider the non-reimbursement of registration fees to be acceptable, but we strongly feel that the ban of attending the following ISA is highly problematic for doctoral students and adjuncts, as they do not necessarily have the funds each year and they count on their participation to network and kickstart their career.
ANNEX II: INTERNATIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION CONFLICT OF INTEREST (COI) POLICY

All members of the International Studies Association should avoid actual or potential conflict of interests and not participate in any decisions that can lead to direct benefit for that person and/or his/her family. Direct benefit means either financial benefit or any other benefit that could confer any form of financial benefit later (receiving an award that may increase the person's chances later of promotion, etc.). Participation means both discussion and voting.

All officers, employees, and committee members must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest to the ISA executive director when such conflicts may arise. In the event that a potential conflict of interest is identified the matter should be resolved in consultation with the ISA Executive Committee.

In order to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest, committee members should refrain also from receiving benefits from their respective committees while they are members of those committees. For example, a member of the Research Grants Committee cannot be a part of any proposed grant to that committee, even if the person recuses himself/herself from the deliberations around that specific proposal. Further, committee members should recuse themselves from deliberations and decisions where they have substantive conflict.

All ISA members must abide by the ISA’s code of conduct stating the expectations for professional conduct, available at http://www.isanet.org/ISA/Governance/Policy. Note also that a special Conflict of Interest Policy applies for ISA publications, available at http://www.isanet.org/ISA/Governance/Policy.
**Code of Conduct**

1. This code of conduct refers to relations between ISA members and participants in the course of ISA activities.
   1. ISA activities include the ISA’s annual conventions, international conventions, regional meetings, pre- or post-conference workshops, and editing of the Association’s journals.
   2. Some matters of professional ethics are under the purview of specific committees and will be addressed elsewhere. Examples are plagiarism and academic freedom.
2. ISA Office Holders, from the President and Executive Director to members of the Governing Council and Editors of ISA journals, have a special responsibility to uphold and observe the Code of Conduct, promoting in the Association’s activities a professional environment characterized by constructive debate and the treatment of all members and participants with dignity and respect.
3. The ISA recognizes that there is a distinction between victimization through bullying and/or harassment and legitimate, justifiable, and appropriate constructive criticism. Nothing in this document shall be construed as a limitation on the ability of members and participants to constructively evaluate and critique one another’s work.
4. The ISA recognizes its duty to ensure that members and participants are not bullied and/or harassed. It further recognizes that this duty is of wider application and includes all members and participants, regardless of status (full, postgraduate, or retired) or the period of time for which they have been members.
   1. Bullying may be characterized as
      1. Offensive, insulting, intimidating, or malicious behavior targeted at another person or persons;
      2. An abuse or misuse of power intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate, or injure the person or persons at whom such behavior is targeted.
   2. Harassment may be defined as
      1. Unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women. It may be related to age, gender, sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion, nationality, or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or isolated. The key is that the actions or comments are experienced as demeaning and unacceptable by the recipient.
5. The ISA recognizes that members and participants who feel that they have been victims of bullying and/or harassment as defined in this code of conduct are entitled to pursue their case in a safe and non-threatening environment.
6. The ISA is committed to ensuring that complaints brought under this procedure shall not lead to the victimization or harassment of any individual.
   1. The ISA is conscious of the need to avoid escalating disputes when seeking to resolve cases of an alleged breach of this policy.
   2. The procedures for addressing grievances (detailed below) aim to de-escalate any disputes and resolve allegations through consultation, whenever possible.
7. The ISA ensures that procedures are in place to address allegations of bullying and/or harassment. Such procedures shall provide for
   1. Timely handling of such allegations;
   2. Fair and impartial handling such allegations; and
   3. Fair, impartial, and sensitive treatment of all parties affected by such allegations.

**Addressing Grievances**

1. The Procedure for investigating allegations of a breach of this code will normally commence with the mediation process outlined under II below; however, in exceptional cases, the formal procedure may be used without exhausting the mediation process. *As this Code of Conduct applies to relations between ISA members in the course of ISA activities, this Procedure will be undertaken only when the complainant is an ISA member and was a member at the time of the alleged misconduct.*
1. An individual member who considers that he or she is a victim of a breach of this code (Complainant) should, if practicable, seek to resolve the matter informally with the person against whom the allegation is made (Respondent). If this is unsuccessful or inappropriate to the situation, then the Complainant may seek redress through the procedures outlined under II and III.

2. As a general rule, mediation as outlined under II should be attempted first, and the formal procedure as outlined under III used only after reasonable efforts at mediation have failed. In exceptional cases, the ISA President may recommend that the formal procedure be used without exhausting the mediation process.

2. Mediation

   1. If an informal resolution, as described under I.a., is unsuccessful or inappropriate, the Complainants should raise the matter with the ISA by communicating with the President. The Complainant may expect the President to respond within a reasonable time (and recognizing that the President is a non-compensated position with other obligations) and to do the following:
      1. Request an explanation of the nature of the complaint and a description of any informal efforts at resolution that have taken place. This may be done by e-mail or telephone. Both the Complainant and the ISA President will keep records of these communications.
      2. Contact the Respondent, outline the nature of the complaint, and obtain that person’s response to the complaint.
      3. Appoint a mediator to try to resolve the conflict. This will ordinarily involve consultation with both the Complainant and the Respondent. In addition, the President may consult with the Executive Committee in his or her efforts to identify a suitable mediator. The President may appoint him- or herself but is under no obligation to do so.
      4. The mediator will contact both the Complainant and the Respondent. If appropriate and feasible, arrange a joint meeting with the parties to discuss the case.
      5. The mediator will make recommendations to the parties for resolving the matter, without necessarily attributing blame or responsibility.
      6. The objective will be to (re-) establish a professional and respectful working relationship between the parties.
      7. The mediator will prepare a brief written report for the President. This report shall summarize the efforts and the resolution of the dispute. Alternatively, the report may summarize the efforts and report that a resolution has not been achieved and is unlikely occur.
      8. The report will remain confidential. However, the mediator may share this report with the parties to the complaint, if desired by these parties.

2. If the ISA President is the person against whom the complaint is made, paragraph II.b. shall be interpreted as referring to the ISA Executive Director. The same applies to the formal procedure under III.b.

3. Formal Complaint

   1. If the informal procedure fails to resolve the matter, or in cases where the nature of the allegations renders the informal procedure inappropriate, as explained in paragraph I on Addressing Grievances, the complainant may bring a formal complaint under this policy.
   2. A formal complaint should be made in writing to the ISA President, who shall share a copy of the complaint with the Respondent.
   3. A written complaint shall be signed by the Complainant and should include the following information:
      1. The name of the Respondent;
      2. The nature of the conduct about which a complaint is made, including, where possible, dates and times;
      3. The names of any people who may have witnessed the conduct; and
      4. Any action that has already have been taken (either under II. above or otherwise) to resolve the matter.
   4. The ISA President will initiate an investigation of the complaint, which will proceed as follows:
      1. This investigation will be undertaken by a committee appointed by the ISA President in consultation with members of the ISA Executive Committee;
2. This committee will, in most instances, be the standing Committee on Professional Rights and Responsibilities, but the ISA President, in consultation with the Executive Committee, may also refer the matter to a different committee or constitute an ad hoc committee.

5. The investigating committee may require the parties and any witnesses (whether or not identified by either party) to present evidence within a reasonable time of their request. All evidence will be given in writing (including e-mail). Individuals may also be called to present an oral statement. Those who provide evidence should be reminded at the outset that it will be used in order to resolve the matter.

6. The investigating committee will evaluate the evidence using the following criteria:
   1. The allegations involve inappropriate conduct as defined in this Code of Conduct;
   2. The evidence suggests the alleged behavior did indeed violate professional norms of dignity and respect;
   3. The committee may further determine whether the alleged behavior appears to constitute an isolated incident or a pattern of behavior that has consequences for the ability of the ISA to maintain and promote a professional environment in which all members and participants treat one another with dignity and respect;

7. The investigating committee will prepare a report for the ISA President and the Executive Committee. The ISA President and the Executive Committee will review the evidence and may:
   1. Recommend that on the basis of the evidence that the complaint be dismissed;
   2. Make recommendations for informally resolving the matter (without necessarily attributing blame or responsibility). The objective will be to (re-) establish a professional and respectful working relationship between the parties. The committee may use mediation services, as appropriate and as available, to achieve this end;
   3. Decide that there is a prima facie case and make recommendations to the ISA President and Executive Committee for the resolution of the matter.
   4. The recommendations suggested under III.f.iii may include, but are not limited to:
      1. A formal letter of censure; and
   5. The recommendations will have an explicit foundation in the evidentiary findings of the committee;
   6. The Respondent’s failure to cooperate with the committee may constitute grounds for disciplinary action by the committee.

8. The ISA President and the Executive Committee shall determine the resolution of the matter.

9. The ISA President shall communicate the resolution of the matter to both the complainant and the Respondent.

4. An appeal may be made against the outcome of the investigation, either by the complainant or by the Respondent, using the following procedures:
   1. Any appeal should be made in writing to the ISA President (or, if the complaint is against the ISA President, the ISA Executive Director).
   2. An appeal can be made only on grounds of procedural irregularity or where the outcome of the investigation is seen to be manifestly unreasonable.
   3. The appeal must be made within a reasonable period of time.
   4. The ISA President will forward the appeal to the Executive Committee, which will:
      1. Review the appeal, its decision regarding the resolution of the matter, and the report by the investigating committee. Draft a response to the appeal. This response will evaluate whether the appeal has merit. If the Executive Committee determines the appeal has merit it may propose to
         1. Send the matter back to the investigating committee;
         2. Constitute a new investigating committee;
         3. Dismiss the matter; and
         4. Suggest an alternative strategy for resolving the matter.
      2. Forward this response and all documentation to the Governing Council for a final determination.

5. The Governing Council will
   1. Review the Executive Committee’s response to the appeal and all documentation.
2. Decide the course of action to be followed by voting on the proposal put forward by the Executive Committee.


1. A party or witness acting under any stage of this procedure who knowingly makes a statement that is untrue, malicious, frivolous, or in bad faith may be subject to the disciplinary powers detailed under III.e. The investigating committee should investigate any such action and make recommendations as part of its report.

2. At all stages of this procedure the complainant, the Respondent, or a witness in the procedure may be accompanied by a colleague.

3. All information gathered under this procedure will be treated in confidence, while recognizing that some information may be shared among those involved within the confines of the investigation as part of the evidentiary process.

6. VI. This Code of Conduct and its procedures for resolving grievances is not intended to and shall not be a substitute for the rights of any of the parties to seek legal redress.

Any legal action on the part of the Complainant will be exclusively a matter between the Complainant, the Respondent and the authorities in the location where the incident occurred. The ISA will not be a party to such legal action, nor will it accept any financial responsibility for such action.

Adopted by Proposed to the ISA Governing Council on March 15, 2011-March 15, 2016 (Montreal Atlanta Annual Convention)