During the last year, the Professional Rights and Responsibilities committee has considered and recommended revisions to the Association’s Code of Conduct and to the Association’s Conflict of Interest Policy. We also have discussed and recommended an ISA policy change related to non-discrimination. With respect to each of these issues, the PRR committee has asked the Governing Council to consider revisions to the Code and the adoption of a new policy. We look forward to the Governing Council’s discussion of these items at its 2017 Baltimore meeting.

1. **Code of Conduct revisions: complaints procedure**
   Our committee strongly supports revisions to the ISA’s Code of Conduct, as a means of improving the mechanism by which complaints related to Code violations are received and adjudicated. First, the current Code of Conduct does not offer a mechanism by which individuals other than the President or the Executive Director can receive complaints. There may be situations, however, in which an individual may be uncomfortable reporting a violation to one of those individuals. We therefore seek to broaden the set of individuals able to receive complaints to any member of the ISA Executive Committee.

   Second, in its current form, the Code of Conduct requires mediation prior to the filing of a formal complaint (and after the filing of an informal complaint/grievance). The committee, however, was concerned that an individual who brings a complaint may well be past the stage of desiring mediation. Moreover, the mediation requirement could serve as a deterrent to the reporting of complaints. Therefore, the PRR committee recommends that mediation be described as an optional process, which may (at the complainant’s request) come after the filing of a formal complaint.

2. **Code of Conduct revisions: conflict of interest policy**
   The Committee also, in response to a concern raised by a member of the ISA Executive Committee, considered a revision to the Association’s conflict of interest policy. In its current form, the policy states that “all members of the International Studies Association should avoid actual, potential, and the appearance of 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. Participation means both discussion and voting.”

   The current policy does not mention conflicts of interest related to one’s home academic institution. One might imagine, though, that participating in a review of proposals from one’s institution may compromise, or give the appearance of compromising, the objectivity of members (in ways that could benefit or harm the proposal at hand). The committee discussed the importance of avoiding the appears of conflicts or bias, as well as actual bias and conflicts of interest. Following the practices of other entities – such as grantmaking entities in a range of disciplines and countries – we recommend that the Conflict of Interest policy be amended to add “and/or his/her home academic institution” to the above statement.
3. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The PRR committee deliberated extensively regarding non-discrimination. Our deliberations were in response to proposals from members; at the 2016 annual meeting, Ron Hassner proposed to the Governing Council that the ISA affirm that calls for discriminating against scholars on the basis of real or perceived affiliations or group memberships of various sorts are contrary to the spirit and purpose of the ISA. This proposal was debated in the Governing Council at its Atlanta meeting, with several members offering amendments and revisions; the language affirmed at the March 2016 Governing Council meeting was then referred to the PRR for further consideration.

In addition, shortly after the 2016 annual meeting, a group of ISA members, led by Zeev Maoz and including several past presidents of the ISA, asked the Association to consider amending its constitution to include (in Article 3) a statement that the association will not support or oppose “political parties, policies or candidates” (current language does not include “policies”); and that the association “will not consider any proposal which restricts ISA membership or activities on the basis of nationality, race, religion, or gender” (adds new language to Article 3). This request also was referred to the PRR.

In its deliberations, the PRR considered the issues raised by both of these proposals as very much related, and we sought to identify the best means by which the Governing Council and the Association could strengthen its commitment to non-discrimination, in a way that was consistent across the associations policies and procedures; that facilitated the Association’s response to current and future calls for action based on, for instance, group membership and national affiliation; and that was less likely to generate unforeseen complications in the future.

To these ends, the PRR recommends that the ISA Governing Council adopt the following as ISA policy [A Policy Recommendation]:

“The International Studies Association does not condone discrimination based on any real or perceived affiliation or group membership, including those based on citizenship, color, gender, gender identity, marital status, national origin, physical ability, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Such discrimination is antithetical to the spirit and purpose of this organization.”

Related to this policy recommendation, the PRR committee also proposes that the Governing Council amend the “Core ISA Policies” document, to make “Policies Governing Conventions and Conferences” consistent with the above non-discrimination statement.

The current guidelines [see http://www.isanet.org/Portals/0/Documents/ISA/Core%20ISA%20Policies.pdf] include (pp. 8-9) the following language related to conference site selection:

“Non-discriminatory provisions: ISA is committed to high standards of professional conduct and ethics in choosing a site, planning, conducting its meetings, and including protection of academic freedom, equitable access to opportunity, and a commitment to non-discrimination. We will meet in only those cities in North America and overseas where all of our members are welcome; and we will not meet in any city with known discrimination practices against any groups of its citizens. In order to protect the association from unknown actions between the time of signing of contracts and future actions of state or local governments, we include the following language in all new contracts: “ISA reserves the right of termination of this agreement, without penalty or liability, if the government of the city in which the hotel is located establishes or enforces laws that, in the estimation of ISA, abridges the civil rights of any ISA member on the basis of gender, race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, physical disability, or religion.”

We propose revising the final sentence as follows:

“ISA reserves the right of termination of this agreement, without penalty or liability, if the government of the city in
which the hotel is located establishes or enforces laws that, in the estimation of ISA, abridges the civil rights of any ISA member on the basis of citizenship, color, gender, gender identity, marital status, national origin, physical ability, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Such discrimination is antithetical to the spirit and purpose of this organization.”

Finally, and in recognition that some ISA members have expressed a desire to enshrine non-discrimination in the ISA’s Constitution, the PRR committee also discussed the possibility of including the above non-discrimination Policy Recommendation as a Constitutional Amendment. While PRR committee members agree enthusiastically on the importance of non-discrimination as a core principle of our association, committee members were divided on the need for a Constitutional Amendment. That said, we also recognize that some members, including several past presidents of the Association, have asked for such an amendment, so we also have brought it to the Governing Council for consideration at its 2017 meeting:

Proposed Constitutional Amendment [same language as Policy Recommendation above]: “The International Studies Association does not condone discrimination based on any real or perceived affiliation or group membership, including those based on citizenship, color, gender, gender identity, marital status, national origin, physical ability, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Such discrimination is antithetical to the spirit and purpose of this organization.”