

Proposal to Create the Professional Standards and Ethics Committee in ASPA

The Working Group on Revising the Code of Ethics proposes the creation of a Professional Standards and Ethics Committee as a standing committee of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA). The core purposes of the Committee are to advance awareness and commitment to ethical principles and practices in ASPA and to promote the importance of ethics in public service generally. It will advise ASPA's National Council (Council) on measures that could be taken to promote ethics in the public sector and assist the Council in handling ethics complaints brought against ASPA members.

The Professional Standards and Ethics Committee (Committee) will seek to ensure that the training, teaching, and research of ethics by all sections and programs of ASPA are advancing the goal of promoting ethical competence among all those who serve the public. It will look to the Ethics Section to take the lead in activities related to teaching and research. It will monitor the ASPA Code of Ethics and suggest changes in the practices for implementing the Code to the Council. The Committee will reach out to other professional associations to expand the recognition of the ASPA Code, understand the ethical standards of specialized professionals in public service, and identify ways for the respective codes to complement and reinforce each other.

ASPA bylaws¹ provide for removal of members by the Council. The Committee will advise the Council on the process to be used and investigate at the Council's request allegations of misconduct. Specific policies and procedures for handling complaints will be recommended by the Committee within its first year for Council review and approval.

The Committee would handle other matters and address other issues referred to it by the Council.

Specific Provisions

1. Membership

- The Committee will have eight members: seven appointed for staggered two-year terms and the chairman of the Ethics Section as an ex officio member. Members may be reappointed one time to a second consecutive term and may be appointed anew after at least two years absence from the Committee.
- The Council will appoint five members for staggered two-year terms with one member appointed by the representatives from each of five districts, and each president will appoint one member for a two-year term. Thus, there will be five council-appointed members and two president-appointed members.

¹ Under Article II, Section 5, Termination or Denial of Membership, of ASPA's Bylaws, "Membership shall terminate ...when in its sole and absolute discretion the Council determines that any member appears to have acted in violation of the Society's Code of Ethics as published from time to time".

- Arrangements for initial appointments: In the first year, the president will appoint one person for a two-year term and the past president will appoint a member for a one-year term. Members will be appointed by Council Districts 1, 3, and 5 for a two-year term and by Districts 2 and 4 for a one-year term. In the second year, the new president will appoint a member for a two-year term, and two members will be appointed by Districts 2 and 4 for a two-year term. Thus, after the first year, terms will be staggered.
- The Committee will select the chairperson from its appointed members on an annual basis. The chairperson may be selected for a second consecutive year.

2. Duties/Responsibilities:

- Monitor and promote ethics
 - Recommend ways to increase the awareness of ethical standards and expand ethical competence inside and outside ASPA and recommend activities to increase the utilization of the ASPA Code of Ethics by members, chapters, and sections.
 - Monitor ethical issues and shortcomings in public administration and advise the Council on all matters regarding ethics.
 - Produce training materials for chapters or sections.
 - Produce ethics orientation materials for new ASPA members.
 - Highlight major ethics issues and challenges in a panel or report at the national conference and suggest topics for regional conferences and chapters.
 - Coordinate with ASPA's Ethics Section that will take the lead in advancing teaching of and research on ethics.
 - Work with other associations of public professionals in promoting ethical competence and commitment to action.
 - Advise National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration on ethics in MPA and MPP programs
- Review of Code of Ethics
 - Review practices supporting the implementation of the Code of Ethics at least every three years and recommend changes for review by the Council.
 - A major review of the Code of Ethics may be undertaken by the Council upon the recommendation of the Committee or on its own initiative. A working group will be appointed including the Committee and other members that reflect the diversity of ASPA membership to make recommendations for revisions to the Council.

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- Handling complaints about ethics violations by members
 - Recommend procedural guidelines to the Council for handling ethical complaints brought against members.
 - Review complaints: At the request of the Council, the Committee will collect information about ethical complaints and make recommendations regarding actions that should be taken by the Council.
- Address other issues referred by the Council.
- Annual Report: The Committee will develop an annual summary of ethics actions and issues in ASPA for the Council. After review by the Council, the report will be made available to all ASPA members.