

## **Australasian Colloid and Interface Society (ACIS)**

### **Equity and Access Policy – updated March 2020**

The aim of this policy is to promote equity and access in the operations and dealings of the Australasian Colloid and Interface Society (ACIS) and the Colloids community in order to formally foster a culture of inclusiveness, whilst actively working to eliminate all forms of discrimination within ACIS. ACIS recognizes that the adoption of policies that promote fairness and oppose all forms of discrimination will continue to strengthen the whole of ACIS and contribute to a vital, representative, organization that utilises the skills and talents of a diverse membership.

ACIS will monitor its performance in terms of equity by producing and publishing on its website statistical summaries of its main initiatives and committees, specifying gender and other appropriate indicators of an equitable and accessible community.

### **Governance**

#### **1. Directors**

Directors of ACIS are generally appointed by election. All members will be encouraged to nominate for election particularly those from equity groups (Indigenous, women, disability, ethnicity, and gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender). The constitution allows for the occasional appointment of a Director by the Board under a range of circumstances, should this occur, this will be done with due consideration given to diversity of representation on the Board.

The ACIS Board regularly forms committees. Appointments to these committees, particularly the chairing of these committees, will be done with due consideration to diversity of representation. This consideration should be included in the minutes with the appointment.

#### **2. Activities**

ACIS organises a number of conferences and other events as part of its operations. The organization of these events will be conducted in a manner that ensures equity and access principles are upheld, and such that representatives of equity groups are given opportunities to fulfil prestigious roles as well as having full opportunity to participate in all the activities of ACIS. The provision of facilities that enable and promote equity group participation in the activities of ACIS should also be pursued (e.g. facilitating the organisation of crèche at meetings and conferences, ensuring disability access to events).

- **Conference Policy**

The ACIS Board recognises the positive impact that a conference speaking invitation or official involvement in running of a conference can have on the track record and visibility of its members. We also recognise that some sections of the scientific community are often underrepresented in

conference programs, and that this can affect diversity in the long-term. Our policies are developed to promote quality and equality.

- Complaint Procedures

All complaints are to be addressed in a fair, timely and confidential manner to alert the organisation of unacceptable conduct, implement prevention strategies, ensure the case is dealt with promptly, and help to minimise the harm suffered by the individual. Principles of procedural fairness and natural justice require that the alleged harasser be fully informed of the complaint made against them and given an opportunity to respond. Complaints can either be conducted in an informal or formal manner. Informal complaint procedures emphasise resolution rather than factual proof or substantiation of a complaint. Formal procedures focus on proving whether a complaint is substantiated. Informal attempts should not be exhausted at resolution before formal action commences. When a complaint is made and the harasser admits the behaviour, investigation is not required and the complaint is resolved through conciliation or counselling of the harasser. If ACIS committee members observe unacceptable conduct occurring, independent warning action may be taken even though no complaint has been made. When the allegations are denied, the complainant wishes to make a formal complaint and investigation is required to substantiate the complaint. Members of the ACIS community have the right to formalise their complaint and/or approach an external agency.

If a report is made at an ACIS Conference regarding a violation of the event code of conduct - the details will be passed to the Conference Chair or ACIS President, who shall at the earliest possible time convene a meeting constituting four of the following people 1. Conference Chair or Vice Chair; 2. ACIS President or Vice President; 3. Chair or delegate of the Equity Committee, 4. A representative of the conference secretariat or, in the event that the above combination is not available, a member of the current Board. At least two members of the group should be female/non-binary. The group shall determine the immediate course of action and make a recommendation to the ACIS Board on whether further action should be considered.

- Speaker Invitations

Invitations for all ACIS endorsed events, and in particular ACIS Plenary Lecturer, Keynote speakers and invited speakers are made to high quality researchers that represent the broad diversity of our community. We aim to achieve a balance across gender (i.e. 50% representation) and ensure that minority groups are appropriately represented based on their prevalence in the society or academic community<sup>1</sup>. The ACIS Board will endeavour to achieve this balance through equal female/non-binary and male representation on the organising committees of events, and for session chairs, as well as through invitations to high quality speakers of both sexes.

Our conferences provide a limited number of privileged opportunities to a small number of participants. These are characterised by plenary lectures, keynote lectures, financial support and other situations in which a speaker is given a special opportunity such as an extended time allotment. To ensure that more delegates have access to these opportunities, privileged speakers in one year's ACIS Conference should not include privileged speakers from the previous two conferences. The Local Organising Committee of each event will be in charge of producing an equity and access statistical summary on the final program, including data on the representation of equity groups amongst privileged speakers.

### 3. Awards

The Society will actively work to eliminate bias in the selection of awards and will measure the representation of equity groups in awards received and in the nominations for awards. Members of the awards committee should educate themselves on issues such as inherent bias, indirect discrimination and other equity issues, in order to inform their decision making.

### 4. Measurement and Reporting

The performance of the Society with regard to equity and access will be measured on an annual basis and reported to the membership. The President of ACIS will include a statement on the equity and access performance of the Society in the address to the Annual General Meeting and a report of the equity and access performance of the Society will be included in the annual report. This report should include clear equity and access goals for the future and measure the performance against previously set goals.

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*<sup>1</sup> Women are not a minority group as they make up a little more than 50% of the general population. Additionally women study science and start scientific careers in roughly equal numbers to men, as such they should be equally represented in the important activities of the society. The percentage of female staff in the natural and physical science departments of Australian universities in 2011 was 34, 20 and 15% respectively at levels C, D and E (Bell and Yates, 2015, "Women in the Science Research Workforce: Identifying and Sustaining the Diversity Advantage Report" ARC LP110200480). The level of under-representation of women in senior scientific positions has barely changed over the past 30 years, indicating that the current under-representation will continue unless substantial change is made to eliminate bias against women in science.*