DSS Community Agreement

On June 04, 2019, the EDI Committee changed the name of this document from "Code of Conduct" to "Community Agreement." In keeping with ALA mandates, this document is not a policy or code. This document defers to and is in accordance with the ALA Statement of Appropriate Conduct and the Statement of Appropriate Conduct at ALA Conferences. This Community Agreement does extend the baseline expectations for collegial interactions and articulates the values and ideals of the Digital Scholarship Section for its members. This is a living document for the community to revisit and revise as needed over time. Feedback can be provided here.

The ACRL DSS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee is committed to supporting community building through inclusive action and regularly seeks out ways to advocate for more anti-oppressive practices through ongoing dialogue and trainings. To this end, the committee has created mechanisms for individuals engaging in face-to-face and virtual DSS activities to provide feedback about their experiences and share ongoing suggestions for this Community Agreement. EDI is committed to empathetic and active listening of all feedback. The Committee will use this feedback to update the Agreement and develop additional programming to advance our commitment to creating equitable and inclusive physical and virtual spaces. EDI will never share personal or private information with DSS general membership.

Community Agreements

The DSS community agrees to frame interactions in DSS spaces and meetings with the following guidelines in mind. We recognize that we will all make mistakes and may unintentionally harm individuals or groups as we engage as a community, but we agree to take responsibility for the results of our words and actions.

We expect that all DSS meetings will begin with a brief review of these agreements so they may become standard for activities in the Section.

- We will not speak for others, and we will not ask someone else to speak for others.
- We will practice active listening and listen more than we individually speak, paying attention to how much space we take up in the room (or virtual room).
- We value everyone’s voice and encourage everyone to speak up.¹
- We will not become defensive when someone shares the effect our communication has on them.

¹ Moving Beyond Race, https://docs.google.com/document/d/12X9lAXNMPbg1fDFSGqefmz3YjzT8CMeGoE6qGu53HzE/edit#
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- We will respect people’s names and gender pronouns.
- We will give credit where credit is due.²
- We are open to social media use in DSS interactions, but we will ask before mentioning others in the room or sharing photographs, and we will respect people’s decisions.³

Providing Feedback

DSS Exec and EDI welcome your feedback on how to improve this Community Agreement as well as members’ experiences engaging with DSS vis-a-vis this shared Community Agreement. Providing feedback is a form of advocacy; individuals submitting feedback will be referred to as “advocates.” We welcome feedback from advocates who are not DSS members as well.

DSS members are always welcome to contact and speak with a member of the EDI Committee or the DSS Executive Committee. Feedback can also be offered via the DSS Feedback Form (tiny.cc/feedback-dss). Members of DSS EDI share responsibility for monitoring the DSS Feedback Form.

While DSS EDI recognizes that some may wish to offer feedback anonymously, anonymity limits the ability of DSS to take direct action or enact consequences. In order to protect members’ privacy, DSS EDI will expunge personal data from all feedback avenues every six months. Personal or private details of feedback will never be shared with DSS general membership.

How DSS Will Handle Feedback Submissions

A member of DSS EDI will send an initial message to the advocate confirming receipt of the feedback, if contact info is submitted. DSS EDI may follow-up with additional questions to gather more information. DSS EDI will then consult with a member of DSS Exec to determine an appropriate response, which could range from meeting with and listening to the advocate, to enacting consequences. Some possible consequences are listed below. Throughout the entire process, DSS EDI and Exec will strive to respect the advocate’s wishes as we work to ensure a safe, inclusive, and oppression-free space for our community. Anonymous feedback will be handled dependent on the information provided.

In the interest of transparency, after the conclusion of all ALA conferences and on an annual basis, DSS Exec will report to the Section an anonymized summary of all feedback received, as well as a description of the Section’s responses. Reporting out is intended to minimize harm and

² Moving Beyond Race, https://docs.google.com/document/d/12X9iAXNMPbg1fDFSGqefmnz3YjzT8CMegoE6qGu53HzE/edit#
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prevent future violations of community agreements. DSS Exec will also use this information to inform longer-term planning for the Section.

Possible Consequences

Failing to uphold the Community Agreements may constitute a form of “harassment,” particularly if there is an impact to any person such that they advocate for the Community Agreements by providing feedback through the form and/or in person. Hereafter, “harassment” refers generally to actions that violate the Community Agreements, and “harasser” refers to the person making such actions. When the action takes place at a DSS-sponsored event, DSS Exec will consider possible consequences, including but not limited to:

- warning the harasser to cease their behavior and that any further reports will result in other sanctions;
- requiring that the harasser avoid any interaction with, and physical proximity to, their victim for the remainder of the event;
- early termination of a talk that violates the policy;
- not publishing the video or slides of a talk that violated the policy;
- not allowing a speaker who violated the policy to give (further) talks at DSS-sponsored events;
- requiring that the harasser immediately leave the DSS-sponsored event and not return;
- banning the harasser from future DSS events (either indefinitely or for a certain time period);
- publishing an account of the harassment.

For actions that involve a DSS member, whether at a DSS-sponsored event or elsewhere, DSS Exec will consider other possible consequences in addition to the ones above, again including but not limited to:

- suspend or end any event volunteer responsibilities and privileges the harasser holds requiring that the harasser not volunteer for future DSS events (either indefinitely or for a certain time period);
- suspend the harasser’s membership with DSS (for a period of time or indefinitely);
- discuss other possible actions with ACRL and ALA Membership.

Allyship and Active Bystanders

The commitment to building a community that fosters free and open collaboration in a safe and supportive environment is one that must be made by each member of the community. Upholding our community agreements, practicing allyship, and engaging as an active bystander at any level are small actions each of us can take to fulfill this commitment. We understand that traditional practices and professional structures have been part of and often inherently uphold
systemic oppression and marginalization of certain groups. We therefore do not prioritize continuation of “civil” or “professional” norms in behavior and language when they actually continue those biased and oppressive practices. Rather we value and uphold empathetic and sensitive practices that prioritize the valuation of human dignity. Allyship often begins with active listening, leaning into discomfort, and seeking concrete ways to make physical and online spaces more universally accessible and welcoming. Additionally, bystanders have the power to stop insensitivity and oppression and to get help for those who are affected. Active bystanders do not assume the role of judge, hero, or rescuer but rather interrupt, inquire, and offer support. We ask the DSS community, including every individual, to be alert to the welfare of those around you.

The DSS Community Agreement was created by members of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee: Elisandro Cabada, Arianne Hartsell-Gundy, Heather Galan James, Pamella R. Lach, Kristen Mapes, and Teresa Schultz. DSS EDI commits to updating this living document based on feedback received and in consultation with DSS Exec on at least an annual basis.

Our Community Agreement was inspired by the following Codes of Conduct and anti-oppressive practices:

- Code4Lib Code of Conduct
- DLF Code of Conduct
- RDAP Code of Conduct
- Moving Beyond Race 101 (ACRL 2019)
- Mt. Holyoke Active Bystander Training
- The Impact Seat Bystander Protocol

May 29, 2019; updated June 04, 2019; June 12, 2019; June 19, 2019; June 17, 2020 tiny.cc/dss-agreements (web accessible version available).

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