

APR21-2021-020030

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the APR21 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

Creation, Charge, and Early Accomplishments of the APS Ethics Committee

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The American Physical Society Panel on Public Affairs spent 2017 and 2018 consolidating and refining ethics statements to produce a unified set of Guidelines on Ethics. These Guidelines rest on two pillars, which are telling the truth and treating other people well. Thus alongside fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism, harassment of colleagues and subordinates is recognized as an ethical violation. In order to ensure that these Guidelines are implemented and continue to evolve, a standing ethics committee was established in 2019. In its first two years, the primary accomplishments of the committee have been to conduct a survey on ethics among early career physicists and physics department chairs, and to implement policies for the removal of honors and official leadership positions from individuals found to have violated the ethical principles of the APS.