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AIA New York leads the charge to amend AIA Code of Ethics

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New York, NY According to AIA New York, after supporting a resolution to amend the AIA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct at A'18, the AIA board of directors has ratified the changes, which address issues of sexual harassment and equity.

Earlier this year, Frances Halsband, FAIA, who served as AIA New York's first woman president in 1991, approached the AIANY board of directors with the idea to introduce a resolution at the AIA Annual meeting held during A'18 to amend the AIA Code of Ethics. Halsband's resolution would require the code to include language that explicitly requires members to create harassment-free workplace environments that foster mutual respect and equitable treatment.

AIANY was enthusiastic and, with Halsband, lobbied other chapters to support the resolution as well. At the annual meeting, delegates overwhelmingly voted to adopt Halsband's resolution. After hearing recommendation from the AIA National Ethics Council, in consultation with the Board Committee on Equity and the Future of Architecture, the AIA board of directors adopted the changes in September.

Several existing rules were updated to include language explicitly addressing harassment and equity in the profession:

- Members shall not engage in harassment or discrimination in their professional activities on the basis of race, religion, national origin, age, disability, caregiver status, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation (Rule 1.401).
- Members shall not engage in conduct involving wanton disregard of the rights of others (Rule 1.402).
- Members shall not engage in conduct involving fraud (Rule 2.104).
- Members should provide their associates and employees with a fair and equitable working environment, compensate them fairly, and facilitate their professional development (Ethical Standard 5.1).
- Members shall treat their associates and employees with mutual respect and provide an equitable working environment (Rule 5.101).

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct applies to all AIA members. While its standards are aspirational, the code also includes disciplinary rules, which are mandatory and enforceable.

AIANY hopes that the updated language will help in making sure that our members hold themselves to the highest standards, both with regards to the spaces they design and the organizations they steer.

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