



# **CODE OF ETHICS**

**AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS**

*Established July 2020*

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## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE CODE**

1.01 Establishment. The Code of Ethics (“the Code”) has been established by the National Board of Directors of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) under the authority of Section 8.21 of the Bylaws.

1.02 Purpose of the Code. The AIAS strives to advance leadership, design, and service among architecture students in order to empower voices, ideas, and actions for the future. Members and Chapters of the AIAS are thus dedicated to upholding the AIAS’s values of impact, community, growth, passion, perspective, and balance. The Code establishes a vision for the AIAS community to aspire towards, while enforcing a standard of conduct amongst the membership.

1.03 Type of Code. The AIAS Code of Ethics is primarily an Aspirational Code with some aspects of an Enforceable Code where appropriate.

1.031 Ethical Standards. The Code introduces a set of aspirational Ethical Standards (“Standards”) by which AIAS Members and Chapters can utilize as a framework for continued success and growth. These Standards highlight strategies for elevating the contributions of the AIAS within both academic institutions and society at large.

1.032 Rules of Conduct. The Code includes a select number of enforceable Rules of Conduct (“Rules”) that shed light on particularly relevant areas wherein AIAS members **must** abide by particular standards to meet the needs and agency of the organization. The process for reporting a violation of these Rules can be found in Section 5 of the Code, and information regarding violation repercussions can be found in Section 6: Appendix.

1.04 Structural Framework. The Code leverages the 6 AIAS Values Statements (seen below) as “categories” for the ethical aspirations of an AIAS Member and/or Chapter. Each Standard has been “tagged” with the Value(s) categories that are associated with that particular aspiration. By embedding the AIAS Values within the Code in this manner, as opposed to sectioning Standards by individual Value, the Code is able to indicate that many Standards align with multiple Value Statements simultaneously. This illustrates the interconnectedness of the AIAS Values in a way that Members and Chapters can learn from and embody in their voices, ideas, and actions.

**1.041 Impact.** We advocate for and enact positive change.

**1.042 Community.** We foster an inclusive network of peers that learn from, support, and drive one another.

**1.043 Growth.** We inspire students to reach their greatest potential through meaningful learning opportunities.

**1.044 Passion.** We pursue large goals and aspirations through each member’s enthusiasm.

**1.045 Perspective.** We link the profession’s opportunities to architectural education.

1.046 **Balance**. We promote respectful relationships, an environment of diversity, and a thriving studio culture.

## **SECTION 2: ETHICAL STANDARDS**

### **2.0 CHAPTER STANDARDS**

2.01 Chapters should strive to be transparent to their members, peers, faculty, school administration, and all appropriate parties as it relates to the operations of the chapter.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Community**

*Commentary:*

1. *Operations of the chapter can include but are not limited to: budgeting, governance (changes in leadership and opportunities to engage in leadership), event planning and scheduling, and status in relation to National.*

2.02 Chapters should strive to represent and support their peers, remaining agile and responsive to the changing needs of their student body, in order to create a supportive and inclusive community.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Impact, Community, Growth, Balance**

*Commentary:*

1. *Chapters should make an effort to provide opportunities for members to advocate for necessary adaptations to their operations and governance with respect to their changing environment.*
2. *Chapters should make every effort to provide opportunities for members to advocate for appropriate modifications to their school's studio culture policy and shall promote the ideas/values therein.*
3. *Chapters should make every effort to routinely review the accessibility and inclusivity of events and programming.*
4. *Supportive and inclusive practices can include but are not limited to:*
  - a. *Chapters engaging their membership in order to know how to best serve them, such as holding open forums at general body meetings, and*
  - b. *Chapters advocating in their respective communities on behalf of their members' values with external entities, such as the AIA.*
5. *Faculty advisors should make every effort to encourage awareness of the Learning and Teaching Culture Policies (previously known as studio culture policies).*

2.03 Chapters should strive to promote the value of design.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Impact, Growth, Passion**

*Commentary:*

1. *Individual members and chapters are encouraged to define the value of design within the context of their unique perspective/institution.*

2.04 Chapters should strive to communicate the value and validity of the student voice.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Impact, Community, Balance**

*Commentary:*

1. *By virtue of AIAS membership, the value and validity of the student voice extends beyond the limits of their individual institution. Chapter leaders are encouraged to illustrate the potential impact of the student voice in the context of the architectural collaterals.*
2. *Chapter leaders are provided opportunities to speak on behalf of their Chapter in academic, professional, and organizational settings. Chapter leaders are thus expected to recognize that they have the challenge and responsibility of conveying the opinions of their membership body.*

2.05 Chapters should strive to create a wide range of partnerships, programming, and leadership opportunities that:

- increase the accessibility of the AIAS,
- integrate a diverse membership,
- ensure Chapter leaders are representative of the populations they serve,
- reflect the needs and desires of the student population they are serving, and
- accommodate a broad range of professional trajectories.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Impact, Community, Growth, Passion, Perspective, Balance**

*Commentary:*

1. *Partnerships are encouraged to include other student organizations at a Chapter's institution in order to foster an environment of inclusivity.*
2. *Chapters are also encouraged to collaborate with institutions and organizations beyond their academic institution to further encourage and support students in their pursuits.*

2.06 Chapters should continuously update their governing documents to address changes in their studio environment and in the diversity of student needs.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Impact, Community, Balance**

*Commentary:*

1. *Governing documents include but are not limited to: Learning and Teaching Culture Policies (previously known as studio culture policies), Chapter Bylaws, and any additional elections procedures.*

## **2.1 MEMBER STANDARDS**

2.11 Members should execute community-oriented projects responsibly.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Impact, Community, Growth, Passion, Perspective, Balance**

*Commentary:*

1. *Members are expected to be respectful of existing conditions within the communities they are serving.*
2. *Members are encouraged to embrace efforts to provide both design-build and engagement solutions to address 5 community barriers:*
  - a. *Physical*
  - b. *Educational*
  - c. *Environmental*
  - d. *Socio-Economic*
  - e. *Cultural*

3. *Members are encouraged to reference the AIAS Public Policies Realm 3.0: Society for more information on executing community-oriented projects responsibly.*

2.12 Members should pursue excellence in their academic pursuits.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Growth, Passion, Balance**

*Commentary:*

1. *The AIAS expects members currently enrolled in school to prioritize their academics over their extracurricular engagements.*

2.13 Members should strive to support and mentor their peers in the pursuit of their personal aspirations: both academic and professional.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Community, Growth, Perspective**

*Commentary:*

1. *Members are expected to support their peers in the advancement of their chosen aspirations, whether it aligns with their own ambitions or not.*
2. *Chapters are encouraged to incorporate mentorship practices into their local programming.*

2.14 Members should promote and respect the diversity of commitments and academic circumstances of their peers.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Community, Balance**

*Commentary:*

1. *When working collaboratively, individual members' time management practices should be respected.*
2. *When coordinating programming, Chapter leaders should strive to understand the time commitments of their members such as to maximize the accessibility of events.*

2.15 Members should promote and respect the sharing of opinions, ideas, and thoughts with their peers, educators, and employers.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Community, Perspective, Balance**

*Commentary:*

1. *Members are especially encouraged to discuss professional trajectories, wherein they support their peers in the advancement of their chosen career paths, whether it includes licensure or not.*

2.16 Members should strive to promote the values of the organization within their school community and embody these values when seeking and participating in extracurricular opportunities and endeavors.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Impact, Growth, Passion**

*Commentary: When representing the organization, members are expected to uphold professionalism.*

2.17 Members are expected to conduct themselves in a civil manner.

Associated AIAS Value(s): **Community, Balance**

*Commentary:*

- 1. Members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner wherein they do not harass or discriminate in their professional or academic activities on the basis of race, religion, national origin, political affiliation, age, personal appearance, physical or mental disability, marital status, family responsibilities, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.*
- 2. Members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is neither disparaging or derogatory.*



## **SECTION 3: RULES OF CONDUCT**

### **3.0 GOVERNING DOCUMENTS**

3.01 Members shall comply with the AIAS Bylaws and the Rules of the Board.

### **3.1 LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

3.11 Members shall abide by all applicable local laws and regulations.

*Commentary:*

1. *This Rule will only be enforced when the committee deems the infraction to be a gross violation of the law, and an action unbecoming of a Member of the AIAS.*

3.12 Members shall comply with the rules, regulations, and standards of conduct of their academic institutions.

### **3.2 POLITICAL STATEMENTS**

3.21 When representing the AIAS, members must remain impartial to political causes, parties, and/or candidates.

*Commentary:*

1. *The AIAS is recognized by the IRS as a Section 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Organization, and is thus restricted in its political and legislative activities.*
2. *For further clarification on 501(c)(3) restrictions, contact the AIAS National Board of Directors or National Office.*

### **3.3 CHEATING**

3.31 Members shall not act dishonestly or unfairly in order to gain an advantage when participating in opportunities offered by the AIAS.

### **3.4 ELECTIONS**

3.41 Members shall not knowingly manipulate their local Chapter's elections process, whether conducting or participating.

*Commentary:*

1. *Chapters shall ensure that their election process, as stated in their Chapter By-Laws, is fair, equitable, accessible, and transparent to all members.*

## **SECTION 5: REPORTING A VIOLATION**

### **5.0 COMPLAINT PROCESS**

5.01 Making a Complaint. A complaint can be filed to the Ethics Committee by any individual directly aggrieved by the conduct of a Member by submitting a completed complaint form (see Section 6: Appendix) to the Chair of the Ethics Committee.

5.011 Timing of a Complaint. A complaint form should be submitted to the Ethics Committee Chair within two years of the alleged violation. The Complainant may submit a request to the Chair to extend this time limit if good cause for delay in filing is demonstrated.

5.012 Role of the Complainant. The Complainant must allege the violation of one or more of the Rules found in Section 3.0 of the Code. The burden of proof is on the Complainant.

5.0121 Burden of Proof. The Complainant has the burden of proving the facts upon which a violation may be found. In the event the Complainant's evidence does not establish a violation, the Complaint is dismissed.

5.012 Responsibility of the Complainant. The Complainant shall avoid public disclosure of the complaint. They may discuss the complaint with individuals with direct knowledge of the matter and who may act as witnesses.

5.02 Initial Ruling. The Chair of the Ethics Committee will review all complaints submitted to ensure that the alleged violation is both (a) a not trivial matter, and (b) if true, would be in violation of section 3.0 of the Code. If the Chair determines that the complaint meets this criteria, they will notify the Complainant and Respondent.

5.021 Complaint Dismissal. The Chair may dismiss the complaint if it does not satisfy these requirements, or if the Complainant does not respond to the Chair's requests.

5.0211 Notice of Complaint Dismissal. If the complaint is dismissed, the Complainant and the Respondent will be notified, at which time the Complainant will have 15 days to appeal the dismissal.

5.03 Request for Response. Each complaint that is not dismissed by the Elections Committee Chair will be sent to the Respondent for response, along with a copy of the code and details of the alleged violation.

5.031 Timing of a Response. The Respondent will have 30 days to fill out the response form (see Section 6: Appendix) and send it to the Chair.

5.032 Failure to Respond. If the Respondent fails to respond to requests from the Chair, the Respondent will be issued a 10 day notice after which time the Elections Committee will proceed with their investigation of the complaint without input from the Respondent.

5.033 Responsibility of the Respondent. The Respondent shall avoid public disclosure of the complaint. They may discuss the complaint with individuals with direct knowledge of the matter and who may act as witnesses.

## 5.1 INVESTIGATION OF A COMPLAINT

5.11 Notice of Hearing. The Chair, in consultation with the Complainant and Respondent, may set a date for the hearing that is convenient for all parties involved. The Complainant and Respondent must be notified no less than 15 days prior to the hearing.

5.12 Submission of materials. The parties must submit the following materials to the Chair prior to the hearing:

1. A list of all witnesses, together with a description of their relevance to the hearing. Any witnesses that are not included in this list will not be allowed to testify at the hearing.
2. A copy of any tangible evidence that will be introduced at the hearing. Exhibits that were previously submitted together with the complaint and response forms should be resubmitted.
3. An estimation of the length of time that will be required to present all testimonies and evidence.
4. In the event that either party wishes to challenge the participation of a Member of the Ethics Committee in the hearing, they must submit a request to the chair together with a description of the grounds for the challenge. Grounds include alleged bias prejudice or conflict of interest. The Chair's ruling on this matter is final.

5.13 Details of the Hearing. The hearing will be closed to all but members of the Ethics Committee, and the parties. The hearing will be presided by the Chair, with minutes recorded by a member of the committee designated by the Chair. All attendees of the hearing shall conduct themselves in a respectful manner. Both parties will have the opportunity to question the testimony of the opposing party.

## 5.2 VIOLATION DETERMINATION

5.21 Decision of the Committee. After the conclusion of the hearing, the Ethics Committee will have a closed meeting where they will consider the testimony of both parties. If the committee rules in favor of the Respondent, the complaint will be dismissed. If a simple majority of the committee decides that a rule has been violated, then the Respondent will be subject to one of the five tiers of discipline:

5.211 Tier 1 Offense - Admonition.

5.212 Tier 2 Offense - Censure.

5.213 Tier 3 Offense - Suspension of National competition programming and suspension of local programming to be determined in cooperation with the local Chapter.

5.2131. Specificity of Tier 3 Repercussion. If a Member is found to be in violation of a Tier 3 offense, the Ethics Committee will specifically tailor the associated repercussion to the violation and Chapter in question.

5.214 Tier 4 Offense. Suspension of service on the local Executive Board (if applicable) and suspension of National programming/opportunities, including eligibility for service on the National Board of Directors, eligibility for AIAS Honor Awards, and attendance at National AIAS Conferences.

5.215 Tier 5 Offense - Suspension/termination of membership for a period of time.

5.22 Reporting. The Committee shall publish the rulings and advisory opinions of the Chair and Committee periodically and in a timely manner. Names of parties involved and associated Chapters shall be included in the report, unless otherwise determined by the Committee or the Board of Directors.

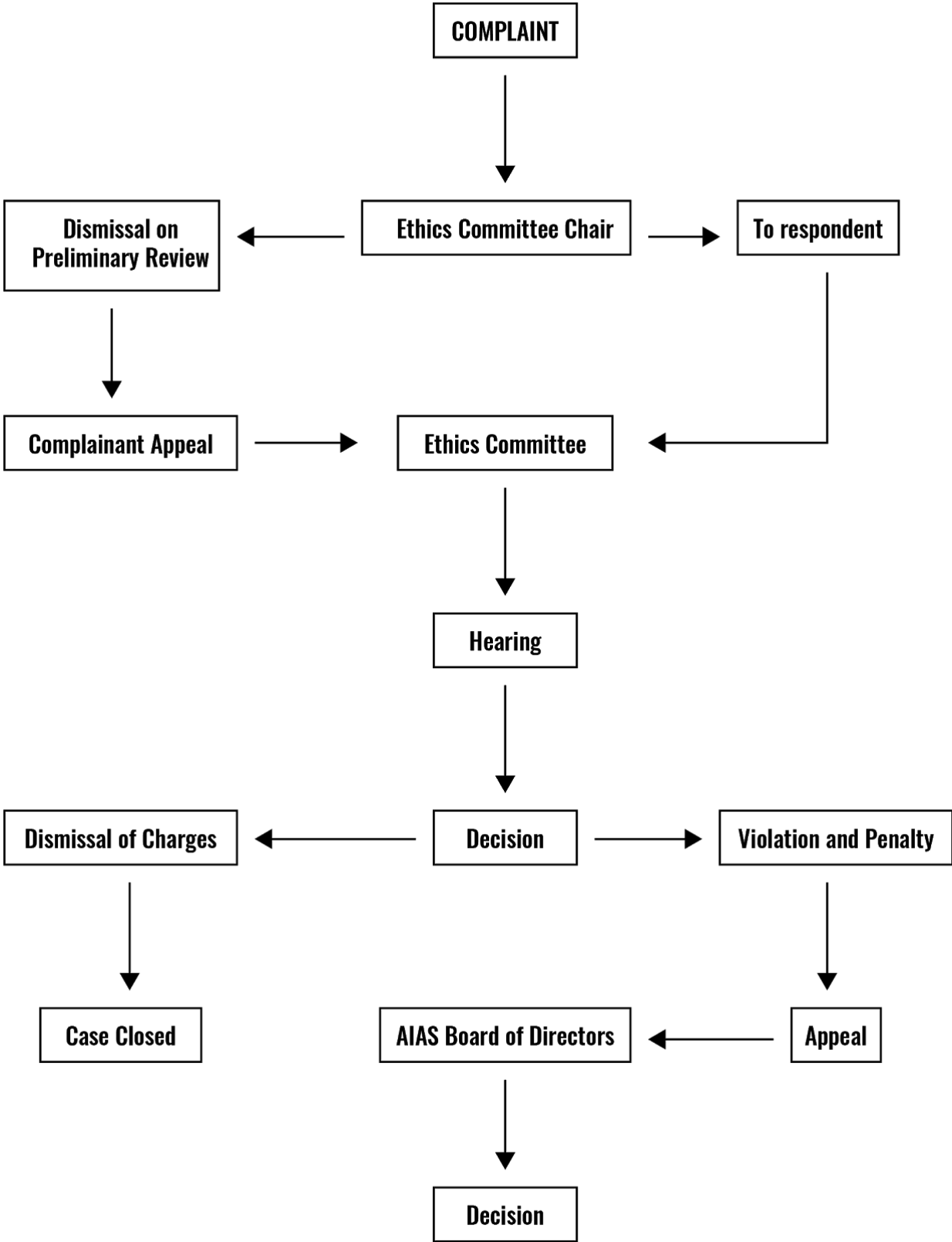
### **5.3 APPEAL PROCESS**

5.31 Circumstances for Appeal. An appeal may be submitted by (1) the Complainant or (2) the Respondent. The two circumstances in which an appeal can be submitted are described below.

5.32 Appeal by the Complainant. A Complainant may file a notice of appeal to the Ethics Committee if the complaint is dismissed by the Chair without a hearing. The Complainant must submit a notice of appeal within 15 days of receiving notice of the decision from the Chair. The decision of the Committee will be final.

5.33 Appeal by the Respondent. The Respondent may file a notice of appeal to the Board of Directors if the Committee rules in favor of the Complainant. The Respondent must submit a notice of appeal within 15 days of receiving notice of the decision from the Chair. The decision of the Committee is not final and will not be implemented until the time to file an appeal has passed, or the decision has been upheld by the Board of Directors. The decision of the Board of Directors will be final.

5.4 COMPLAINT PROCESS FLOW CHART



## **SECTION 6: APPENDIX**

### **6.0 KEY DEFINITIONS**

6.01 Member. A Member is any individual who has paid the dues required of the national office and their local chapter, or has been granted membership allowed by the Nation Bylaws. Membership includes; general members, affiliate members, associate members, faculty advisors, legacy members. National Bylaw Section 2.5 can be referenced for more information on AIAS Membership.

6.02 Chapter. The jurisdiction of each chapter shall be confined to the student body of a single school except as provided for in the National Bylaws. See Bylaw Section 2.3 for more information on Chapters.

6.03 Board of Directors. The AIAS Board of Directors is the governing body that establishes national policy, controls the organization's assets, and promotes the interests of the organization. The Board is composed of the President, Vice President, 4 Quadrant Directors (West, South, Northeast, Midwest), 3 Collateral Liaisons (AIA, NCARB, ACSA), and the Executive Director. Additional members of the Board may be appointed to represent additional organizations and/or particularly underrepresented membership regions as needed. National Bylaw Section 3.021 can be referenced for more information on the Board of Directors.

6.04 Council of Presidents. The Council of Presidents (COP) is the governing body that represents the membership, and exercises oversight of and elects the Board of Directors. The COP meets bi-annually at the Grassroots and FORUM Conferences. The COP is composed of Chapter Delegates from Chapters in Good Standing. National Bylaw Section 3.022 can be referenced for more information on the Council of Presidents.

6.041 Delegates. COP Delegates are typically Chapter Presidents. If a Chapter President cannot attend a COP meeting, another Chapter Member may be designated as the Chapter's Delegate. If no Member from a Chapter can attend a COP meeting, a proxy Delegate from another Chapter in their Quadrant or Region may be selected to participate on their behalf.

6.05 Ethical Standard. Aspirational Statements that set goals for members to strive for.

6.06 Enforceable Rule. Regulations established within the Code that set a standard of conduct for members.

6.07 Complainant. The individual who submits a complaint, alleging a violation of a Rule within the Code.

6.08 Respondent. The individual accused of violating a Rule within the Code.

### **6.1 EXAMPLES OF OFFENSES**

6.11 Purpose of Examples. The following are examples of offenses that should be brought to the attention of the Ethics Committee. For further clarification, please contact the Chair.

6.12 Example Violation of Rule 3.01. A student is a Member their freshman year and they never renew their membership. As a senior the student has included that they are an AIAS Member for

all the years they are in architecture school on their resume. This violates AIAS Bylaw 2.91 Eligibility for Credentials.

6.13 Example Violation of Rule 3.12 - A student has committed plagiarism by copying design work from previous studios. This student's academic institution has regulations against plagiarism.

6.14 Example Violation of Rule 3.21 - Prior to a US Presidential Election, the AIAS Chapter President utilizes the General Body Meeting as an opportunity to advocate for their candidate while in an attempt to influence the votes of members.

6.15 Example Violation of Rule 3.21 - From their own observations, a Chapter Board Member believes that their entire Chapter has similar political values and viewpoints. Using AIAS branding and other resources, they organize a fundraising event to donate funds to a US Presidential Candidate's campaign.

6.16 Example Violation of Rule 3.31 - AIAS posts the top entries for a competition on the national instagram account and asks the membership to "like" their favorite entry. The entry with the most "likes" will be named the winner. A Member Pays for an online bot service in order to add 1,000 likes to the post with their entry.

6.17 Example Violation of Rule 3.41 - A Chapter President throws away ballots to ensure that certain candidates win their elections.

6.18 Example Violation of Rule 3.41 - Rather than host elections, a Chapter Executive Board conducts "interviews" to determine their successors.

## 6.2 REPORTING DOCUMENTS

6.21 Complaint Form. To initiate a case, the complaining party (the "Complainant") must prepare and submit a Complaint Form to the Chair of the Ethics Committee. A Complaint may be filed by a Member, Chapter, or anyone directly aggrieved by the conduct of a Member. The Complaint Form can be found on pages 2-3 of the [Reporting Documents attachment](#).

6.22 Response Form. Every Respondent may, upon receipt of the Complaint from the Chair, prepare and submit a Response Form. The Response Form can be found on pages 4-5 of the [Reporting Documents attachment](#).