

Discipline Case Digest



COLLEGE OF
APPLIED BIOLOGY
Professional Accountability

File: 005-03

Allegation:

A complaint was submitted against a College member alleging violation of the College Code of Ethics – a Professional Biologist must not engage in dishonorable or questionable conduct that reflects adversely on the integrity of the biological profession. As well – the Professional Biologist will keep informed of advances in his/her field of expertise, and will express an opinion on a biological subject only when that opinion is founded on a sound knowledge base. The complaint alleges that the subject member made comments publicly that (i) called into question the expertise of other professionals, (ii) used language that was not respectful of these other professionals and (iii) made inaccurate statements that could mislead the public and cause unnecessary panic. In addition to these alleged violations, the complaint also alleged that the subject member was misstating their academic qualifications.

Member Action:

The subject member responded that many of the statements in question were opinions and as a professional they have the right to offer their opinion. The subject member denied authoring one of the more contentious documents but agreed that they could use a more professional and respectful communication style when referring to other professionals whose work they may not agree with.

Decision:

The Discipline Committee was of the opinion that given the elements of fact contained in the statement and given the statement did not state what is contended by the complainant there was no reason to believe the conduct of the subject member in this instance warranted further action by the Discipline Committee. The Discipline Committee recommended that the subject member be more thoughtful and explicit in publishing documents and that the complainant should carefully consider statements of this nature so as to ensure they do not misconstrue their intent and content. The complaint was dismissed.

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Postscript:

Members who have disputes based on differences of opinions should not rely on the College to be an arbiter. Professionals are recommended to engage in respectful dialogue to discuss issues of differing opinions