

Date: September 3, 2013
To: IEEE Directors Parviz Famouri and Karen S. Pedersen
Subject: IEEE Code of Ethics
From: Lynn Conway and Leandra Vicci

Dear Prof. Famouri and Ms. Pedersen,

We're writing regarding proposed changes to IEEE's Code of Ethics, in which "We, the members of the IEEE . . . do hereby commit ourselves to the highest ethical and professional conduct and agree: . . ."

<http://www.ieee.org/about/corporate/governance/p7-8.html>

The proposal involves changing the words: "To treat fairly all persons regardless of such factors as race, religion, gender, disability, age or national origin," to these: "To treat fairly all persons and to not engage in discrimination based on race, religion, gender, disability, age, national origin, or sexual orientation."

<http://theinstitute.ieee.org/briefings/business/proposed-changes-to-ieee-code-of-ethics>

Due to an apparent oversight, the proposal is inconsistent with the IEEE Policy on Nondiscrimination:

"IEEE prohibits discrimination, harassment and bullying against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religion, gender, sexual or affectional orientation, gender identity, appearance, matriculation, political affiliation, marital status, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law. IEEE expects that its employees, volunteers, members, and other constituents of the IEEE, when and where ever those individuals are conducting IEEE business or participating in IEEE events or activities, shall maintain an environment free of discrimination . . ."

<http://www.ieee.org/p9-26.html>

The proposal is also inconsistent with codes of conduct in our leading research universities and high-technology corporations, codes that include protections for transgender people:

www.hrc.org/corporate-equality-index

We suggest correcting the oversight as follows: "To treat fairly all persons and to not engage in discrimination based on race, religion, gender, disability, age, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity and expression."

Sincerely,

Lynn Conway
Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Emerita
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
<http://www.lynnconway.com>
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/lynnconway>
IEEE Life Fellow
Member, National Academy of Engineering

Leandra Vicci
Lecturer and Director of the Applied Engineering Laboratory
Department of Computer Science
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
<http://www.cs.unc.edu/~vicci/>
<http://www.linkedin.com/pub/leandra-vicci/51/b70/2b8>
IEEE Life Senior Member

[Additional IEEE cosigners \(names/dates\):](#)