

An Update from the SRCD Task Force on Publications and Ethical Behavior

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1. The membership of the Task Force:

- Sandra Graham, UCLA, Co-chair
- Daniel Keating, University of Michigan, Co-chair
- Lorah Dorn, Pennsylvania State University, Governing Council member
- Shawn Jones, Virginia Commonwealth University, Early Career member
- Linda Juang, University of Potsdam, Member-at-large
- Natalia Palacios, University of Virginia, Member-at-large
- Stephen Russell, UT Austin, Governing Council member
- Dalal Safa, UNC Chapel Hill, Early Career member
- Emilie Smith, Michigan State University, Governing Council member

2. The Task Force has identified the Scope of Work.

A provisional Scope of Work was communicated to the full membership on November 3rd with an open period for comments on the Scope until November 9, 2022. Some relatively small changes to the Scope were made in response to Comments. Below is our finalized Scope of Work.

SRCD Task Force on Publications and Ethical Behavior:

Scope of Work

Charge of the Task Force from SRCD:

To review and make recommendations related to SRCD's publication processes and its Code of Ethics

The Task Force has developed the following Scope of Work:

I. Challenges and controversies involving SRCD publications

- What led up to the resignations of the editors-in-chief of 3 flagship SRCD journals: *Child Development* (Glenn Roisman), *Child Development Perspectives* (Judith Smetana), *Monographs* (Lynn Liben), as well as *Child Evidence Brief* (Rebekah Levine-Coley)?
- What are the expectations about and possible constraints on editorial autonomy articulated in SRCD by-laws?
- In addition to issues arising with respect to the by-laws, relevant information may also be found in contracts. Is there adequate co-ordination among the several parties (Editors, GC, Publications committee) to avoid potential conflicts about multiple obligations across different agreements?
- Are these expectations and constraints associated with by-laws and contracts clearly communicated to journal editors, SRCD governance, and SRCD administration? How do they get enacted in practice?

II. Challenges and controversies associated with ethical behavior of SRCD members and staff

- How did the SRCD Code of Ethical Conduct come into existence in November 2021? What issues was it trying to address?
- What concerns have been raised by asking members and staff to sign the Code, and have those concerns been adequately addressed?
- Independent of the Code, are there issues about ethical behavior of SRCD members and staff that still need to be addressed?

III. The role of SRCD governance and management

- To what extent has SRCD governance and management played a role in the challenges regarding publications and ethical behavior? Who or what else might have played a role in these challenges as well?

- In addition to journal editors, there have been a number of recent resignations of both SRCD governance members and administrative staff. Are these resignations related to the challenges associated with publications and/or ethical behavior?
- Does the organizational structure of SRCD provide clear guidance about the domains of authority allocated to governance and administration?

IV. Recommendations going forward

- What changes to SRCD are needed to address challenges and controversies associated with publications and ethical behavior?
- Are there best practices to be learned from other academic societies of similar size and disciplinary breath and scope?
- What should be the process and timeline for implementing Task Force recommendations?

4. The process by which the Task Force will operate.

The Task Force is committed to a full investigation of the issues identified in the Scope, while maintaining a balance of independence, transparency, and confidentiality. Specifically:

The list of issues to be addressed and individuals to consult noted above is not intended as comprehensive. The Task Force will be consulting widely with SRCD members, as well as current and former staff as it deems necessary.

Individuals who have signed the Code of Conduct that restricts external communication about SRCD matters (Governing Council, Editors, Staff) are released from those restrictions when communicating with the Task Force. A signed assurance of this release will confirm those arrangements for individuals who are providing information to the Task Force.

In lieu of a binding non-disclosure agreement, Task Force members (including Shire Stein in her role as Executive Assistant) have signed a Confidentiality Agreement not to disclose information gathered during its operation. All communications will come from the Task Force as a whole. All records gathered by the Task Force will be available only to the Task Force in a secure site (not including records that are already public, such as the Code of Conduct).

The Task Force will be conducting the bulk of its work over the next 2-3 months. This will involve careful review of relevant documents and interviews with multiple stakeholders, including current and former: (1) journal editors, (2) members involved in governance, and (3) administrative staff. An interim report will be circulated to the full membership several weeks prior to the SRCD Meeting in March, after which a period for comments from SRCD members will be available both prior to the meeting and for one week following the meeting and will be reviewed before the final report is completed. The final report will go first to the SRCD Governing Council, and then to the full membership. We will provide updates on our progress over the next 2 months; these will mainly involve process (how we are gathering information) while keeping the content of our information-gathering confidential until we complete our interim report.

The Task Force will be identifying individuals to interview who may have relevant information for its investigation. Members who have information that they believe to be relevant may contact the Task Force through Shire Stein (sstein@srcd.org), for review by the Task Force, potentially leading to an interview.

Sincerely,

The members of the Task Force on Publications and Ethical Behavior