**Policy for Web Access**

**Introduction**

The purpose of the Society of Christian Ethics is “to promote scholarly work in the field of Christian ethics and in the relation of Christian ethics to other traditions of ethics and to social, economic, political, and cultural problems; to encourage and improve the teaching of these fields in colleges, universities and theological schools; and to provide a community of discourse and debate for those engaged professionally within these general fields.” (SCE By-Laws, Article II.) “The Society will conduct all its business in a manner appropriate to its purposes.” (SCE By-Laws, Article II. Section 3).

The primary way that SCE creates and supports this community of discourse and debate is through the planning of the Annual Meeting where scholars meet in person to present papers, listen to papers, and engage in conversations during and after formal conference sessions. While SCE has begun a process of adapting to the digital age and making use of the available technologies to foster a community of discourse year-round via online means of communication, at all times such communication must align with the purposes of the Society. Unlike some professional organizations that regularly issue policy reports or white papers (for example, the American Academy of Pediatrics), the SCE does not publish policy reports. We urge the Board to focus primary attention on the Annual Meeting as the vehicle for building a community of discourse in Christian Ethics.

As the SCE has grown and evolved, some questions have surfaced regarding the appropriate use of technology and online platforms for SCE communication. The Board has approved the development and maintenance of a website and the Board has begun a process of communicating with members primarily via email communication instead of postal mail. There is a financial benefit to this transition away from postal mail as the primary mode of official correspondence, and yet members are sensitive to the fact that new questions emerge in this process.

The Board has approved the following in an effort to help the SCE move more smoothly into this new era of online communication.

1. SCE will continue the transition to email as primary mode of official correspondence with members. Every effort will be made to keep member email lists updated. The SCE will only use member emails for official SCE correspondence (for example, the Call for Proposals and the Call to Meeting, etc). Member email lists will not be sold to third-party customers like publishers. All official SCE emails will be easily identified as official SCE business (emails should come from sce@scethics.org or a similar email address and if possible the logo of the SCE and the name of the author of the email- ideally an officer or employee- should appear in the top line of the email). All other email correspondence will result from a member decision to opt in to email communication (for example, signing up with a particular interest group or working group- see #4 below for more on this).

2. SCE will continue to sell the SCE mailing list (mailing addresses, not emails) of members to interested third parties (publishers, academic programs, conferences, etc- not to individuals).

3. Announcements or advertisements from third-party vendors or SCE members will not be distributed in the registration packet at the meeting. However, there will be a table and bulletin board in a central location so that members can post or distribute materials at their own expense. This space will be labeled with a disclaimer (for example: “This bulletin board enables members to post materials of interest to other members, but no materials here have received the official endorsement of the SCE.”) The annual meeting program will encourage members to take advantage of this space for this purpose (to prevent flyers from being distributed in other meeting spaces).

4. Some member groups conduct various kinds of business (networking, mentoring, research assistance, etc) by email and online in between annual meetings. The SCE website has been constructed to facilitate this as smoothly as possible. The SCE website will facilitate these methods of communication as much as possible. Members should give feedback to the Executive Director and Associate Execute Director about suggestions for website improvements.

Currently, Interest Groups/Working Groups/Caucuses each have a page on the website. When the website is working properly, the group page has the following features: 1) Any member of the group can post on the page. 2) Anyone logged into the website can view postings, not just members of the group. 3) Conveners of the group can edit any postings. 4) Conveners can send emails to members of the group through the website page.

In order for this space to be used productively, regular maintenance of the website will be performed and updates will make the platform as user-friendly as possible. Additionally, a disclaimer will be placed at the top of the page when the user navigates to the “Group” page, saying the following: “SCE Group Conveners are responsible for the content on these pages. The information here is not endorsed by the SCE but is made available to members by members.”

5. In limited cases group reports have been made available via email and/or posting to the “Official Documents” tab of the website, but only when the substance of the report was aligned with the mission and purpose of the Society and a procedure was in place to approve the report. Two such examples include the following:

 1) The Women’s Caucus drafted and approved the document “Enabling a Family Friendly Institution: Creative Practices.” This report was approved by the membership at the business meeting during the 2009 annual meeting, and was afterwards posted on the website under “Official Documents.”

 2) The Board established the SCE 2020 Committee on The Future of Christian Ethics during the 2011 meeting, and made the report of the committee available to the membership prior to the 2014 annual meeting.

There is not precedent for enabling groups to distribute reports to the entire membership without a formal review and approval by the membership or the Board. The SCE Board discourages members from submitting reports with the expectation that they be distributed to the SCE membership. If a member or a group wishes to submit such a report, the substance of the report must be aligned with the mission and purpose of the Society. The report must first be approved by the Board and then by the membership before it is to be made available as an “Official Document” on the SCE website.

*Approved by the SCE Board, January 2015 at the SCE Annual Meeting*