26 July 2026

Re: Complaint from Dr. Nicholas Gessler, received 18 July 2026

Process: The Meteoritical Society Ethics Committee directly received by email a written complaint from Dr. Nicholas Gessler. The Chair reviewed the written complaint with supporting materials and developed an independent assessment. The Chair then distributed the complaint with supporting materials to other members of the Ethics Committee, asking them to each review the items and to each independently send the Chair their assessment. All three independent assessments were in agreement. With that outcome, the Chair drafted a report and shared it with the Ethics Committee members. Members agreed on the report content, and then it was sent to the Meteoritical Society Executive Committee.

Assessment: The Ethics Committee assesses that there is no evidence for a violation of the Meteoritical Society Code of Ethics (https://meteoritical.org/society/governance/code-ethics).

The written complaint included claims of violations in regards to Harassment, Discrimination, and Bullying, Section 2 of the Meteoritical Society Code of Ethics. The matter raised in the written complaint was in regards to a letter of invitation to support visa applications for the 2026 annual meeting. The annual meeting organizers wrote a letter of invitation to support the visa applications for eight individuals at the request of Dr. Nicholas Gessler. In that invitation letter, the meeting organizers stated their knowledge about the eight individuals for whom they were writing the letter, which included a statement that the eight individuals are not scientists engaging in the study of meteoritics and that the eight individuals are not scheduled to contribute to the scientific content of the conference. Nicholas Gessler requested that the invitation letter be re-worded, and the meeting organizers denied that request. The committee does not find evidence of harassment, discrimination, or bullying after reviewing the materials provided that detail this exchange and interaction.

Recommendation: The committee has two recommendations in this matter:

1. The Meteoritical Society should reply to Dr. Nicholas Gessler to inform him that the Meteoritical Society Ethics Committee has reviewed his complaint and concluded that there is no violation of the Meteoritical Society's Code of Ethics. Such correspondence has previously been handled by the Meteoritical Society President, and we recommend that practice to continue.
2. The Meteoritical Society should adopt the following guidance for writing invitation letters to support visa applications and share this guidance with future annual meeting organizers:
    a. Organizers of the annual meeting of the Meteoritical Society should write invitation letters as needed to support visa applications for individuals who have abstracts accepted for presentation at the annual meeting, who will make other contributions as listed on the meeting's program, who are contributing to Meteoritical Society business, or who are known to be active Meteoritical Society members. This fact should be clearly stated in the letter and used as justification to support the letter.

b. Organizers of the annual meeting are discouraged from providing letters of invitation to support other individuals that do not meet these criteria when they are writing the letter in their role as the organizer of the annual meeting of the Meteoritical Society.
c. This guidance only applies to when a letter is written as coming from the organizer of the annual meeting of the Meteoritical Society. All individuals may act as they see fit in their individual capacity.

Submitted by:
The Meteoritical Society Ethics Committee
Chair: Nancy Chabot
Members: Martin Lee, Rhonda Stroud