TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Amy Burke and Roberto Sarmiento
DATE: December 7, 2018
RE: SLA Whistleblower Protection Policy

Recommendation: It’s recommended that the SLA Board of Directors approve the SLA Whistleblower Protection Policy.

Background: It is best practice for associations and non-profits to have a Whistleblower Protection Policy to protect members, volunteers and staff. On the 990, there is a question that asks if the board has a Whistleblower Protection Policy and it would be beneficial for SLA to change our answer from “no” to “yes” to be fully compliant with IRS regulations and association standards.

SLA Whistleblower Protection Policy

The Special Libraries Association (SLA) Whistleblower Protection Policy encourages officers, directors, staff, volunteers, and consultants to come forward with credible information on illegal practices or serious violations of adopted policies of SLA; specifies that SLA will protect the person from retaliation; and identifies where such information can be reported.

Encouragement of reporting: SLA encourages complaints, reports, or inquiries about illegal practices or serious violations of SLA’s code of ethics or suspected violations of law or regulations that govern SLA’s operations. Appropriate subjects to raise under this policy would include financial improprieties, accounting or audit matters, ethical violations, unfair trade practices, or other similar illegal or improper practices or policies. Other subjects under which SLA has existing complaint mechanisms should be addressed under those mechanisms. This policy is not intended to provide a means of appeal from outcomes of those other mechanisms.

Protection from retaliation: SLA prohibits retaliation by or on behalf of the organization against officers, directors, staff, volunteers or consultants for making good faith complaints, reports or inquiries under this policy or for participating in a review or investigation under this policy. This protection extends to those whose allegations are made in good faith but proven to be mistaken. SLA reserves the right to discipline persons who make bad faith, knowingly false, or vexatious complaints, reports or inquiries or who otherwise abuse this policy.

Where to report: Complaints, reports or inquiries may be made under this policy on a confidential or anonymous basis. They should describe in detail the specific facts demonstrating the bases for the complaints, reports or inquiries. They should be directed to SLA’s Executive Director; if the Executive Director is implicated in the complaint, report or inquiry, it should directed to the SLA’s Managing Director. SLA will conduct a prompt, discreet and objective review or investigation. Officers, directors, staff, volunteers
or consultants must recognize that SLA may be unable to fully evaluate a vague or general complaint, report or inquiry that is made anonymously.

**Acting in Good Faith:** Anyone filing a written complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

**Confidentiality:** Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

**SLA Staff Contact**
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Policy approved by the Board of Directors on {Date}.

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