

Introducing the AIB Code of Ethics

Submitted by Denis Arnold, Chair of the AIB Ethics Policy Committee

Dear AIB Colleagues:

On behalf of the AIB Ethics Policy Committee, I am pleased to introduce AIB's new Code of Ethics. Approved by the AIB Executive Board in June, the Code applies to all AIB members and was introduced at a plenary session at the 2018 Annual Meeting in Minneapolis. You might wonder, "Why does AIB need a code of ethics?" The ultimate justification of the Code is multi-dimensional. First, as a professional organization with the pursuit of knowledge and education as its primary aims, AIB must ensure trust and confidence in its membership through self-regulation that is consistent with scientific integrity and universally recognized ethical norms. Second, AIB must also ensure that its members are treated ethically in the context of AIB matters, activities, and structures.



Denis Arnold

The AIB Code is itself grounded on the following assumptions. First, scholarly integrity is an essential component of scholarship, and a necessary condition for the advancement of knowledge. Second, personal respect is the cornerstone of internationally recognized ethical norms such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and International Labour Organization standards. Third, self-regulation can only take place with clearly articulated standards, procedures, and consequences for misconduct. The Code of Ethics provides our organization with the policies, procedures, structures, and enforcement mechanisms that it needs to self-regulate with integrity.

On a more practical level, AIB program chairs and editors have been confronted with numerous cases of unethical conduct that have required actions on their part. They now have clearly articulated policies and procedures to address such cases. The Code will help to ensure the integrity of AIB activities and publications and provide appropriate substantive and procedural standards for the assessment of alleged misconduct. Furthermore, the Code provides clear guidance so that any AIB member with an ethics-related concern may determine what behaviors are unacceptable, report misconduct, or make inquiries with appropriate AIB leaders.

The Code of Ethics joins the AIB's two existing ethics codes, the Code of Ethics for the AIB Leadership and the Journals Code of Ethics (the previous *Journal of International Business Studies* code was expanded into a somewhat more general code so that it could cover the *Journal of International Business Policy* as well). The three codes are complementary and together provide comprehensive ethics guidance for all AIB members.

The code itself emerged as the product of a deliberative and consultative process. The Code's historical development may be summarized as follows:

1. In June of 2016 the AIB Executive Board tasked Lorraine Eden to develop a Code of Ethics for AIB members. Lorraine has been the driving force behind the development of the code and has utilized her extraordinary energy and formidable organizational skills to bring the code to fruition.
2. The process itself benefited from consultation with more than two dozen codes of ethics of other professional associations that informed the drafting of our Code. The Executive Board reviewed and provided extensive feedback on multiple drafts of the Code during 2016 and 2017.
3. In early 2018 a significantly revised draft was circulated for comments to AIB Fellows, Chapter Chairs, and select AIB members with expertise in ethics and law. This feedback was subsequently incorporated into a new draft.
4. In March 2018, the new draft was circulated to the AIB general membership for comment, and your feedback was subsequently incorporated into the document.
5. AIB's lawyers next provided crucial legal advice on the document and that advice was incorporated into a penultimate draft.

6. The penultimate draft was then circulated for comment to select AIB members who played a substantive role in the drafting of the Code.
7. On June 24, 2018, the final version of the Code of Ethics was approved by the AIB Executive Board.
8. On June 27, 2018 a special plenary session “Introducing AIB’s Code of Ethics” was held and recorded at the Annual Meeting in Minneapolis.
9. The newly created Ethics Policy Committee then made recommendations to the AIB Executive Board for revisions to the previously existing Code of Ethics for the AIB Leadership (Leaders COE) which is binding on all members of organizational structures that have managerial, custodial, decision-making or financial authority on matters pertaining to AIB. This was done to ensure that the two Codes were consistent (the Journals Code of Ethics was already consistent).
10. The AIB Executive Board approved revisions to the Leaders COE on October 11, 2018.

Our Code is truly the product of a deliberative and consultative process, reflective of the broad membership of AIB. The AIB website features a dedicated section on ethics that includes the Codes and various other resources for members. AIB members must formally acknowledge and agree to adhere to the AIB Code of Ethics when they initially join the AIB and each time they renew their memberships.

The core components of the Code for members include:

- a. **Competence and Expertise:** Adherence to the highest professional standards in research, education, editing, publication, and service.
- b. **Professional Activities:** Respect for civil and human rights.
- c. **Conflicts of Interest:** Appropriate attention and disclosure regarding both actual and potential conflicts of interest.
- d. **Public Communications:** Adherence to the highest standards in public communications about one’s research, teaching, and professional activities
- e. **Research and Publication:** Adherence to the highest professional standards with particular attention paid to AIB conference program submissions and to the AIB Journals Code of Ethics.
- f. **Teaching and Education:** Adherence to the highest professional standards in teaching, mentoring, and evaluation.

While ultimate responsibility for the Code and its enforcement lies with the Executive Board, the Code established two new standing committees. These are the Ethics Policy Committee and the Ethics Review Committee. The Ethics Policy Committee is responsible for the interpretation, implementation, and dissemination of the AIB Code of Ethics, the AIB Journals Code of Ethics, and the Code of Ethics for AIB Leaders. The Ethics Review Committee is responsible for investigation of ethics violations and the enforcement of the AIB ethics codes. The members of the Ethics Policy Committee are Denis Arnold (UNC Charlotte) (Chair), JT Li (Hong Kong UST), Anne Tsui (Notre Dame), Rosalie Tung (Simon Fraser), and Alain Verbeke (Calgary); with the AIB Managing Director and AIB President or delegate serving as *ex officio* members. The members of the Ethics Review Committee are Paul Vaaler (Minnesota) (Chair), Tatiana Kostova (South Carolina), and Bodo Schlegelmilch (Vienna University of Economics and Business); with the AIB Managing Director serving as an *ex officio* member.

You might wonder, “What does the Code mean for me, as a member of AIB?” The code provides clarity regarding the professional and ethical norms that we should all follow, helps protect members against the wrongful actions of other members, and provides committees with whom we can seek clarification of potential infringements to the ethical codes. It also entails a responsibility to contribute to ethical professional practices, caring professional behaviors, and an organizational culture of high integrity. All AIB members should familiarize themselves with the Code of Ethics and utilize it as a professional resource. In addition, doctoral students should be encouraged to read and internalize the Code and should also be encouraged to attend professional development workshops and other sessions on the ethics code at future AIB meetings. Members with questions should feel free to contact members of either ethics committee.

To stay up-to-date on all of AIB’s ethics policies visit aib.to/ethics