**Contradictory Statements of IEEE on Ethics Advice and Ethical Support**

Walter L. Elden, P.E. (Ret), w.elden@ieee.org

IEEE and SSIT Life Senior Member

October 9, 2017

**PURPOSE**

This is provided to show where IEEE’s written statements about its Ethics and Member Conduct Committee, EMCC, on the one hand professes to support ethical conduct, but on the other, conflicting language in its Operations Manual **“prohibits the EMCC from providing ethics advice and ethical support”.**

1. **The Following is Taken From one of the EMCC’s WEB Page****s**

# IEEE Position Paper on Ethical Conduct Awareness

The following was approved by the IEEE Board of Directors in November 2004.  It is intended to encourage IEEE members, volunteers, and those in positions of authority in higher education and industry to act ethically.

**Upholding IEEE Code of Ethics**

**All IEEE members are required to uphold the**[**IEEE Code of Ethics**](http://www.ieee.org/about/corporate/governance/p7-8.html) as a condition of renewing their membership each year. One of the most important principles enshrined in the Code concerns the conduct of members in carrying out their professional duties. The Code states that IEEE members should maintain the highest possible standards of conduct in dealing with colleagues and subordinates, specifically:

Article 8: to treat fairly all persons regardless of such factors as race, religion, gender, disability, age or national origin.

Article 9: to avoid injury to others, their property, reputation, or employment, by false or malicious actions.

Article 10 **(ADDED by W.Elden)**: to assist colleagues and co-workers in their professional development **and to support them in following this code of ethics.**

The Ethics and Member Conduct Committee (EMCC) believes that there is a special responsibility placed on IEEE members in leadership roles in their profession.  Supervisors, teachers, professors, or **those elected as officers in IEEE have an even higher duty to uphold the IEEE Code of Ethics** because of the influence they have on students and younger members. This responsibility also extends to:  
  
(1) bringing cases of misconduct by others to the attention of the appropriate authorities, and

(2) **ensuring that correct procedures, as defined in IEEE Bylaws and Policies for example, are always followed**.

**The EMCC emphasizes that IEEE is committed to being supportive of any member who acts to uphold the IEEE Code of Ethics**. **It recognizes that voicing concern about ethical violations could jeopardize a member’s career opportunities**. Nevertheless, the EMCC believes that by raising awareness of IEEE’s strong stance on ethical conduct through this Position Paper, its members in industry, academia and elsewhere will be helped to carry out their professional responsibilities in a manner consistent with the highest traditions of IEEE.

1. **The Following is Published in the EMCC’s Own Operations Manual and Contradicts the Above Pro-Ethical Statements**

**Ethics and Member Conduct Committee Operations Manual**

**1.3 Scope**

**IEEE Bylaw I-305.6**

“The Ethics and Member Conduct Committee shall make recommendations for policies and/or educational programs to promote the ethical behavior of members and staff, and shall consider instituting proceedings, as defined in IEEE Bylaws I-110 and I-111, related to matters of member and officer discipline and requests for support. Neither the Ethics and Member Conduct Committee nor any of its members shall solicit or otherwise invite complaints, **nor shall they provide advice to individuals**.”

**1.4 Limits to Activities**

**IEEE Constitution, Article 1, Section 2**

“The IEEE shall not engage in collective bargaining on such matters as salaries, wages, benefits, and working conditions, customarily dealt with by labor unions.”

**The Ethics & Member Conduct Committee shall not be involved in employee-employer disputes.**

1. **Recommendation**

The 2 statements **highlighted and underlined in RED under B** should be deleted by IEEE Board action, as they prohibit the actions **highlighted and underlined in BLACK under A**.