SSAT Statement of Support for Safe Work Environments

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The leadership of the Society for Surgery of the Alimentary Tract (SSAT) and its members are committed to providing a safe environment for all its employees free from discrimination and any form of harassment at work including sexual harassment. We will adhere to a zero-tolerance policy for any form of sexual harassment in the workplace, and advocate treating all incidents seriously by prompt investigation of all allegations of sexual harassment. All complaints of sexual harassment must be vetted earnestly and treated with respect and confidentiality. Victimization of those reporting harassment, and a culture of denial or complicity cannot be tolerated.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome contact of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated, and/or intimidated. It includes situations where a person is asked to engage in an environment that is hostile, intimidating, or humiliating for the recipient. Sexual harassment can involve one or more incidents and actions constituting harassment which may be physical, verbal, and non-verbal. Anyone can be a victim of sexual harassment, regardless of their age or

sex or that of the harasser; the sexual conduct is unwanted and unwelcome. All harassment should be prohibited whether it takes place at the workplace or at social events, conferences, or training sessions.

The SSAT recognizes that sexual harassment is a manifestation of power relationships. Those people with power abuse their authority in a sexual manner or individuals who have little to no power. These abuses of power cannot occur during surgical training or in a surgical work environment. Our Society wishes to promulgate the need to prevent these occurrences in the workplace. When concerns arise, prompt investigation and, as indicated, appropriate reprimand of perpetrators of sexual harassment will promote a respectable and healthy workplace and training environment.

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