Evolution Meeting Conduct Report 2024

This was drafted by Brian O'Meara using information from Kerrell Dunsmore, our safety officer.

Virtual meeting

There were two talks that, based on the titles (both relating to potential controversies with regards to humans), raised concern that there could be issues either during the talk or in the Q&A afterwards. The safety officer attended both. Three attendees raised concerns about aspects of one of the talks but declined to file formal complaints.

In person meeting

There were five incidents handled or known by the Safety Officer.

- One was regarding an issue with childcare: a parent had not realized they had to register before bringing their child, and there was not room for their child given the needed number of staff. Alternate arrangements were made and there was follow up with the parent.
- It was reported third hand that an attendee had a liquid, likely water, thrown in their face by someone apparently not affiliated with the conference outside the conference center. This was communicated to management for the venue.
- An anonymous attendee raised concerns about comments during a talk that they perceived as disparaging a religious group. The Code of Conduct allows reporting in confidence (with the complainant identity only known to the Safety Officer) but not anonymously; there was thus no formal investigation. It is likely such behavior in a talk would be a violation of our guidelines, however.
- A speaker mentioned mental health challenges at the end of their talk and left the room quickly afterwards; a different attendee asked the Safety Officer to check if the speaker needed any support. The speaker appreciated the followup but was fine.
- An attendee reported that a convention center staff member berated two conference attendees over their perceived political stances ("pointing her finger strongly very close to their faces" and "The staff member acted very angrily, making them uncomfortable and scared"). The Safety Officer coordinated with a member of the Code of Conduct committee and then reached out to convention center staff, who immediately agreed to not have the staff member work during future coffee breaks and to remind all staff not to engage with political discussions with attendees.

Other work by Safety Officer

They asked for microphones for Q&A to be lowered so that they were more accessible; this was done one day, but reset the next, so they asked again for the accommodation.

Meeting management wanted to check that everything was working well with childcare (there was a concern that one of the children was disruptive); the childcare team reported everything was fine.