

2022-23

BIAS RESPONSE TEAM REPORT



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WHAT IS THE BIAS RESPONSE TEAM?

Western is committed to fostering a caring and supportive environment that is equitable and just for all people in our community. The Bias Response Team (BRT) works toward this commitment by (1) supporting students, staff, and faculty who are targeted or impacted by bias incidents and (2) educating the Western community about bias.



www.edu/sebrt

If you are dealing with a safety, medical, or mental health emergency, please call 911 or University Public Safety at (360) 650-3911. Mental health crisis services are also available for students 24/7 through the Counseling Center, (360) 650-3164.

WHAT IS A BIAS INCIDENT?

A bias incident is language or an action that demonstrates bias against an individual or group of people based on actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, disability, sexual orientation, age, or veteran status.

HOW CAN I REPORT A BIAS INCIDENT?

Students, staff, and faculty can notify the BRT by submitting an online notification form or directly contacting a member of the BRT. The form can be submitted anonymously.

When the BRT is notified of an incident, a member of the team contacts the person submitting the notification to offer support, discuss next steps, and share resources.

WHY SHOULD I NOTIFY THE BRT OF AN INCIDENT?

The BRT exists to provide our community with care and support. When the BRT is notified of a bias incident, it can coordinate support for people most impacted, work to limit the hurtful impacts of the incident, and advance learning aimed at preventing future similar acts.

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Bias Response Team Overview

Dear Western Community,

The Bias Response Team (BRT) was founded in August 2020, following a recommendation of the 2019-20 Council on Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice. In mid-2023, the BRT moved to the Office of Equity for administrative oversight from Dr. Jacqueline Hughes, Western's Chief Diversity Officer and Executive Director of the Office of Equity. The BRT continues to further Western's commitments to access, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Its work particularly advances Western's third and fourth strategic goals provost.wvu.edu/strategic-plan-2018-2025 to foster a caring and supportive environment and to pursue justice and equity in our policies, practices, and impacts. Members of the BRT work as educators and with an ethos of care for our students and colleagues. The BRT recognizes both the right to freedom of speech and the imperative of creating welcoming places to learn for all students.

When it was established in summer 2020, the BRT created a website www.wvu.edu/sebrt to share information about its role and how to report bias incidents. The website also includes the Team's protocol for responding to incidents of bias. Students, staff, and faculty can notify the BRT of an incident via the online notification form www.wvu.edu/sebrt/report-bias-incident or by communicating directly with a member of BRT. Bias reports can be submitted anonymously.

As a reminder, the BRT does not conduct investigations or impose discipline. Investigations of possible civil rights violations are conducted by the Office of Civil Rights & Title IX Compliance (for potential violations of university policy and civil law) and University Police (for potential criminal violations). Discipline is imposed only after a finding of a violation of law or policy and is imposed by the appropriate disciplinary entity (Student Conduct for students, supervisors/vice presidents for employees). Our role is to identify and collaboratively coordinate responses to bias incidents to (1) support

Western students, staff, and faculty who are targeted or impacted by these incidents and (2) educate the Western community through data sharing about the bias that occurs in the Western community.

The BRT responds caringly and promptly to (1) bias incidents that occur at any Western location, including the Bellingham campus and Western's locations in Anacortes, Bremerton, Everett, Port Angeles, and Poulsbo, or at a Western-sponsored activity and (2) at our discretion to significant incidents of bias beyond the University that impact people in our Western community. This requires anticipating likely impacts of bias incidents even before full impacts are shared by members of our community. The following report is a summary of our activities during the BRT's academic year. Given the impactful and often deeply personal nature of incidents reported, identifying information has been removed to respect privacy of the reporting parties. While privacy is paramount, so too is transparency. As a group we are committed to honestly representing the hurt experienced by members of our community this year, and the steps we have taken to provide support and resources to those affected.

It is important that we say "thank you" specifically to the students, faculty, and staff who reached out and spoke up when they were concerned that we as a community are not living up to our core principles. It has been an impactful journey for all of us too, working together in building a more accessible, equitable, and just community—and the work continues. Thank you, too, for reading this report. If you have questions or feedback, please contact us at brt@wvu.edu.

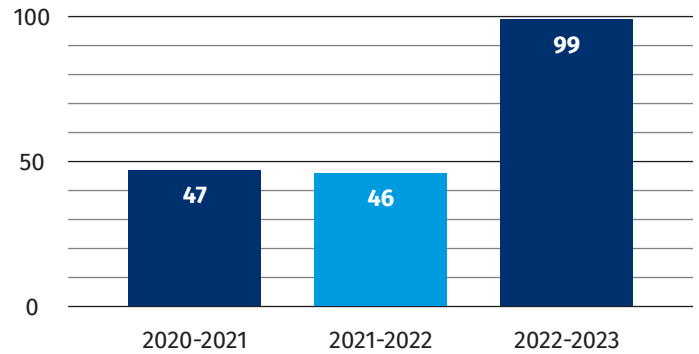
In community,
2022-23 Bias Response Team
(members listed at end of report)

BRT Reports by the Numbers 2022-2023

Incidents of Bias Reported 2022-2023



Incidents of Bias Reported by Year



Reports Received: Timeframe

	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL
2020-2021			13	5	2	7	3	4	7	4	2	
2021-2022		6	5	3	5	3	4	6	1	5	5	
2022-2023	2	6	19	10	5	16	11	3	9	14	2	2

Types of Bias Self-Reported Totals (non-unique)

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Veteran Status	1		0
Sexual Orientation	3	8	13
Religion	4	8	22
Race/Ethnicity	26	19	53
Age	4	1	0
Citizenship/Immigration Status	1		1
Disability	12	4	13
Gender Identity or Expression	9	13	32
National Origin		3	1
Hate Group	2		
Sex		2	
Gender		5	
Unsure/Other	5	1	7

Some notifications referenced more than one type of bias.
All types of bias reported in a notification are reflected above.

Roles of Reporting Parties and Reportees

REPORTING PARTY

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Students	34	35	54
Staff	7	9	28
Faculty	8	4	9
Institution			0
Community			0
Anonymous/ Unknown			8

SUBJECT OF REPORT

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Students	4	3	15
Staff	8	5	6
Faculty	23	16	29
Institution	5	1	0
Community	9	4	0
Anonymous/ Unknown		20	49

Institutional - refers to instances of reported bias that were part of an institutional action, such as a school-wide training or broadly published institutional message.

Community - refers to an incident of reported bias that occurred on or near the Bellingham campus not targeting a particular individual, such as bias in graffiti.

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Space/where alleged bias occurred

Class, in person or online	34	On-campus building	20
Exterior	8	Off-campus	0
Res halls	15	Unknown/NA	9
Virtual	7		

Summary of Bias Incident Themes and Responses

The Bias Response Team (BRT) received 99 reports during the 2022-2023 academic year, more than either of the two previous years. While the increase in reports might be viewed as concerning, this may actually be due to the university community's greater awareness and understanding of BRT; thus, the Team will continue to engage in outreach efforts to develop trust and build awareness across the institution.

The Team meets every week to review submitted reports and identify outreach and support for those affected by reported incidents. Trends in reporting remained consistent from previous years, including graffiti or posted flyers, as well as students submitting reports about bias in the classroom and residence hall communities. The Team will emphasize its role in providing support and resources and clarify that it does not engage in investigation or discipline. Requested remedies that include discipline will be referred to the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance.

Besides reflecting on the reports made this year, the Team also reviewed previous annual reports in order to identify patterns between years as well as to continue advocating for structural changes throughout the institution. A great deal of work has been accomplished since the Team's inception, including the establishment of a Chief Diversity Officer and an Office of Equity. Additionally, significant new resources were created in Enrollment and Student Services with the new Access, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (AEDI) unit and their recent staff positions focused on historically marginalized populations.

Based upon lessons learned from past years and reports, the Team has outlined steps to improve our processes, including: reporting its own work, and the work of partner offices, in response to bias incidents; creating additional written protocols for the Teams' work; enhancing early fall outreach to areas known to be targeted by bias in the past; and providing suggestions to relevant University officials regarding future placement of cameras based on past graffiti bias incidents. Additionally, efforts are underway for Safe Zone training and institutional engagement in state required anti-racism training.

The Bias Response Team continues to encourage additional resources to support the success of dedicated full-time professionals to engage in (a) productive educational conversations, (b) offer consultations, and (c) provide relevant proactive and reactive trainings for faculty, staff, and students to create more anti-racist, accessible, equitable, and inclusive environments. Having at least one position, such as an ombud, to provide conflict resolution services including but not limited to mediation, would address ongoing institutional needs.

Bias Response Team Roster 2022-2023

Josef Mogharreban

Director, Disability Access Center

Keith Williams

Assistant Director of Public Safety

Daniel Records-Galbraith

Director, Office of Civil Rights & Title IX Compliance

Michael Sledge

Associate Dean of Students/Executive Director – Student Life

Amy Westmoreland

Director, Multicultural Student Services

Keenya Horton

Assistant Director, Residence Life

Sarah Godoy

Director, Counseling Center

Shevell Thibou

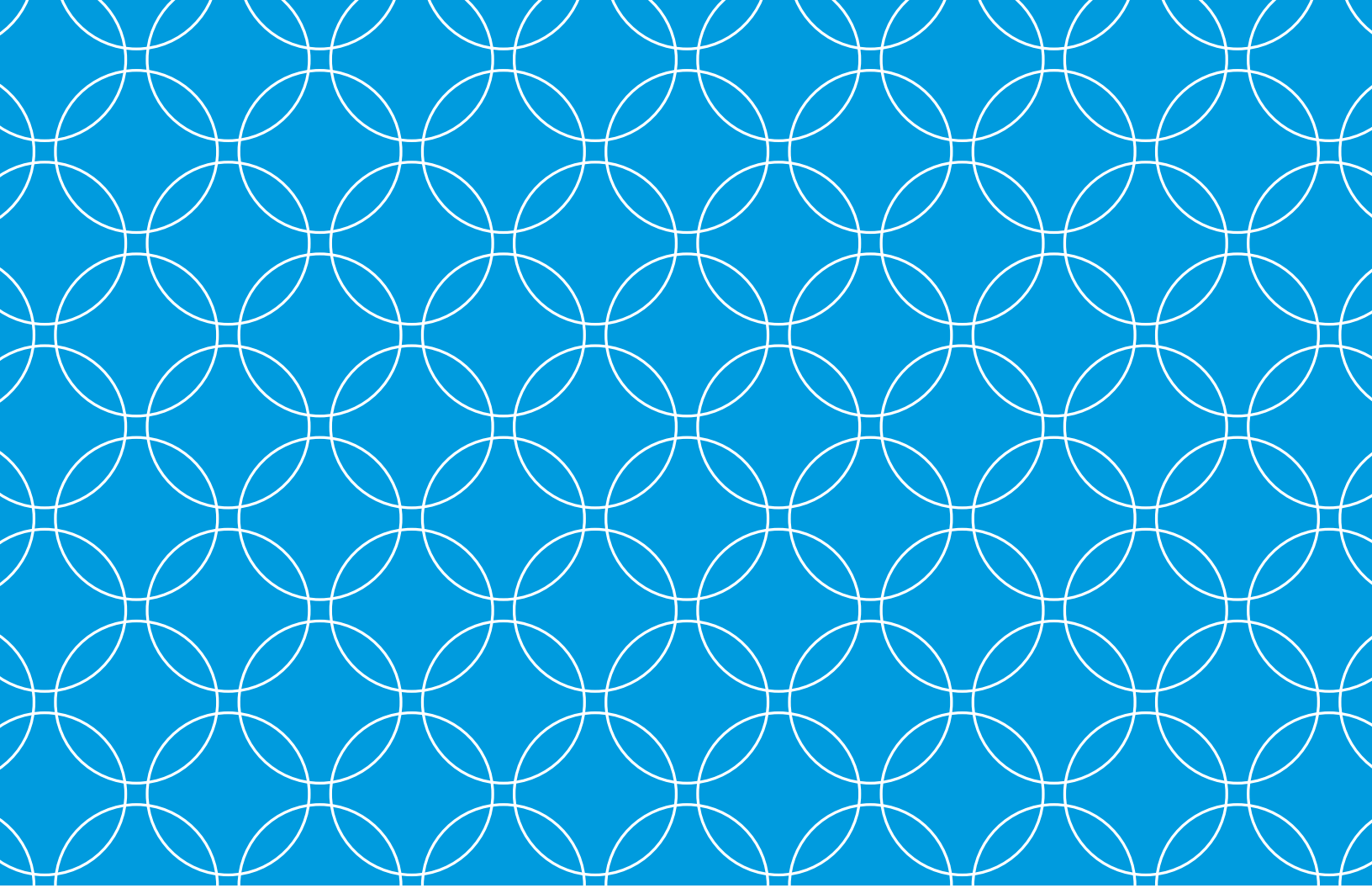
Director, Teaching & Learning, Western Libraries

Leonard Jones

Director, University Residences

JoeHahn

Director, LGBTQ+ Western



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Western is an equal opportunity institution.

To request this document in an alternate format, please contact brt@wvu.edu.



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