



News from BERT

Spring Semester Issue

Washington College is committed to fostering a welcoming community for all students, faculty, and staff. An informed awareness of the climate on campus is an essential part of Washington College's efforts to create a supportive academic, residential, and professional environment for our diverse population. Washington College has developed a system for reporting bias incidents that are reviewed by a Bias Education Response Team (BERT). BERT is responsible for serving as an educational support team to continue cultivating the values of Washington College.

News from BERT is disseminated each semester to share educational opportunities and bias incident reporting transparency among the community.



Washington
College

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Bias Communications *on Campus*

Reported bias incidents are commonplace on our college campus and in our communities in our modern landscape. Sometimes these incidents are shocking and cause a stir on campus. Sometimes the incidents proceed through investigation and accountability very quietly and are relatively unknown. BERT has recently spent time in discussions asking – what is our institutional responsibility for communicating bias incidents out to the broader Washington College community? At minimum, BERT collects, records, and publishes bias report data each semester in our News from BERT. This data helps to educate and inform us in a systematic manner, but it does not address the shock and dismay that is felt when a bias incident hits close to home – or the misinformation that can occur when word spreads through informal communications.

Is there a threshold for sending a campus-wide communication when a particular incident of bias is reported? How often and under what circumstances? How do we protect the privacy of someone who may be hurting from the sting of bias – or someone who has been accused of acting in a biased way? Beyond guiding the individuals involved in a reported incident, how do we effectively help the community manage reactions and conflicts that may come up in an incident that has a broad impact?

These questions and more were brought up within our team. In matters of institutional accountability, it is always best practice to question ourselves and seek clarification from a policy perspective. So that is what we did. Inviting Brian Speer, VP of Marketing and Communication, and Sarah Feyerherm, VP of Student Affairs, into our conversation was tremendously helpful. Brian shed light on the college's new Institutional Voice Policy and both shared insights that will help guide our practice.

Some points of agreement that we reached include:

- BERT's purpose in educating and informing about bias is to encourage thoughtful dialogue and curiosity versus judgement.
- We seek to balance our cycles of communication/education beyond emergent flashpoints so that we are offering information responsibly and with intentionality.
- Both data trends and conspicuous bias incidents can help motivate participation in educational programming that promotes inclusion and belonging.

If you hear of a troubling bias incident and wonder “what is the college doing about this?” - know that although there may not be immediate college-wide communication, processes are in place to address the incident. We in BERT hope you will take advantage of the many opportunities to engage in programming and thoughtful conversations as we collectively continue efforts to build a community where We All Belong



ADID: Alex Calder Butler

"Serving as ADID is a valuable role and resource for the Athletic Department. To me, this position is vital to our student-athletes and staff to promote exciting opportunities and resources that exist on our campus, our conference, and nationally through the NCAA. I also feel it is important to place value on inclusion in our department and prioritize ways to create learning opportunities, conversation, and awareness across all DEIB topics. This role is a constant learning process, and ever changing, but it is valuable work!"

NCAA definition of the role:

ADID stands for "Athletics Diversity and Inclusion Designee" and is a staff member designated who serves as the conduit for information related to national-, local- and campus-level issues of diversity and inclusion and supports diverse and inclusive practices related to athletics.

Application of the Role at Washington College:

As the ADID it is my responsibility to share, create, and implement inclusive practices and programming within our Athletic Department. It is important for me to circulate practices and programming that are occurring in our campus community with our staff and student-athletes. I also work to identify needs for our student athletes and work to develop programming for our students and staff that supports inclusion. I am a member of our department's administrative team, and work to ensure our practices uphold the inclusive policies of the college, the Centennial Conference, and NCAA.

Bi-Annually, I attend meetings with ADIDs in the Centennial Conference. We meet to share best practices, challenges faced, and review policies and programs that support DEI in our conference. This past June, the Centennial Conference, with the assistance of member institution ADIDs, planned and implemented the first-ever Inclusion Summit. This day-long event was open to all Head coaches and administrators and offered programming surrounding multiple DEIB topics.

I serve as the primary contact within our department for information, resources, and events from the NCAA to our institution regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. I also attend trainings and programming offered by our institution, our conference, and the NCAA.

Finally I am a member of BERT and work to ensure our student athletes and coaches are up to date with resources and support offered to them across campus related to Bias and bias education.

[Centennial Conference DEI Strategic Plan](#)



Spring Workshops

The Defamation Experience

On Monday, February 24th, 2025, Intercultural Affairs partnered with Human Resources, the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Holstein Program in Ethics, and the William James Forum Fund to offer The Defamation Experience virtually, presented by Canamac Productions. This experience invited participants to assume the role of jurors in an original courtroom drama described as “an in-your-face mashup of race, class, religion, and law that gives [participants] a view of two very different worlds...and then enlists [them] to take a stand.” A total of 31 students, staff, and faculty members participated, engaging in discussions about the complexities of the legal system and the significant impact of bias and intersecting identities on how we view and treat others.

The Round Table Talk

On Thursday, March 20th, 2025, the SGA DEI Secretary, Jireh Ray, partnered with Intercultural Affairs to host a Round Table Talk (RTT). The event was open to students and a select number of invited staff and faculty. The RTT was a facilitated event that provided an opportunity for students of all backgrounds to engage in meaningful dialogue about both global and local affairs and how they have manifested on the Washington College campus. There were 22 people in attendance, with the majority of attendees affiliated with affinity groups or other student groups that support free expression and the sharing of diverse perspectives on campus.



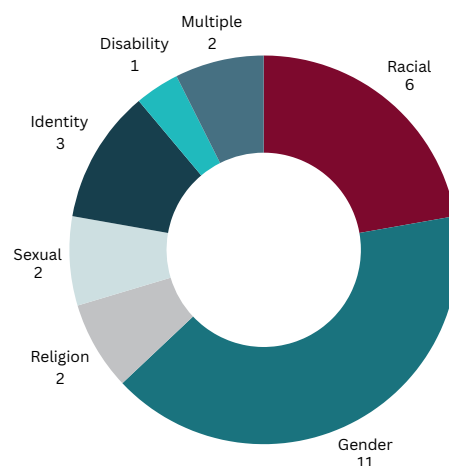
Fall 2024 Reported Bias

Bias report data from each semester is published the following semester.

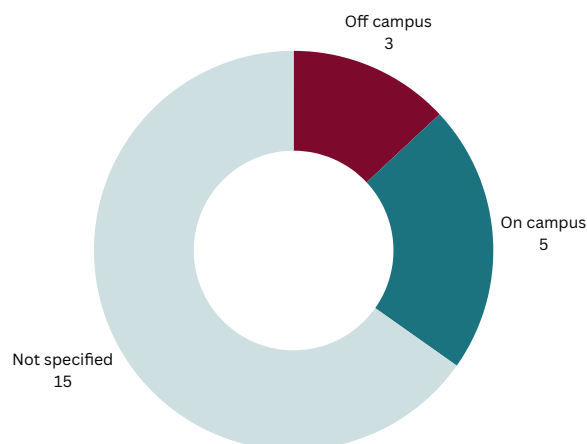
Data is pulled from September 2024-December 2024

Note If multiple types of reported bias fall under one incident, those data points are both captured in the individual type and multiple*

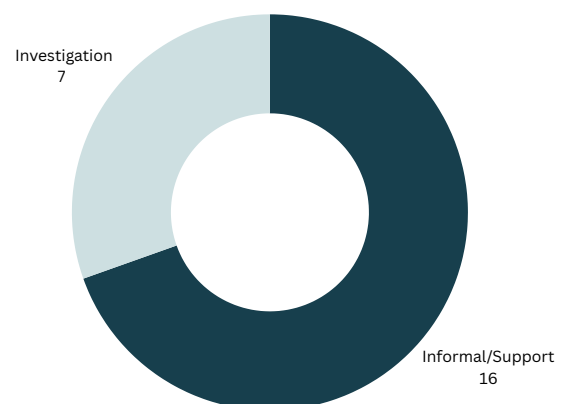
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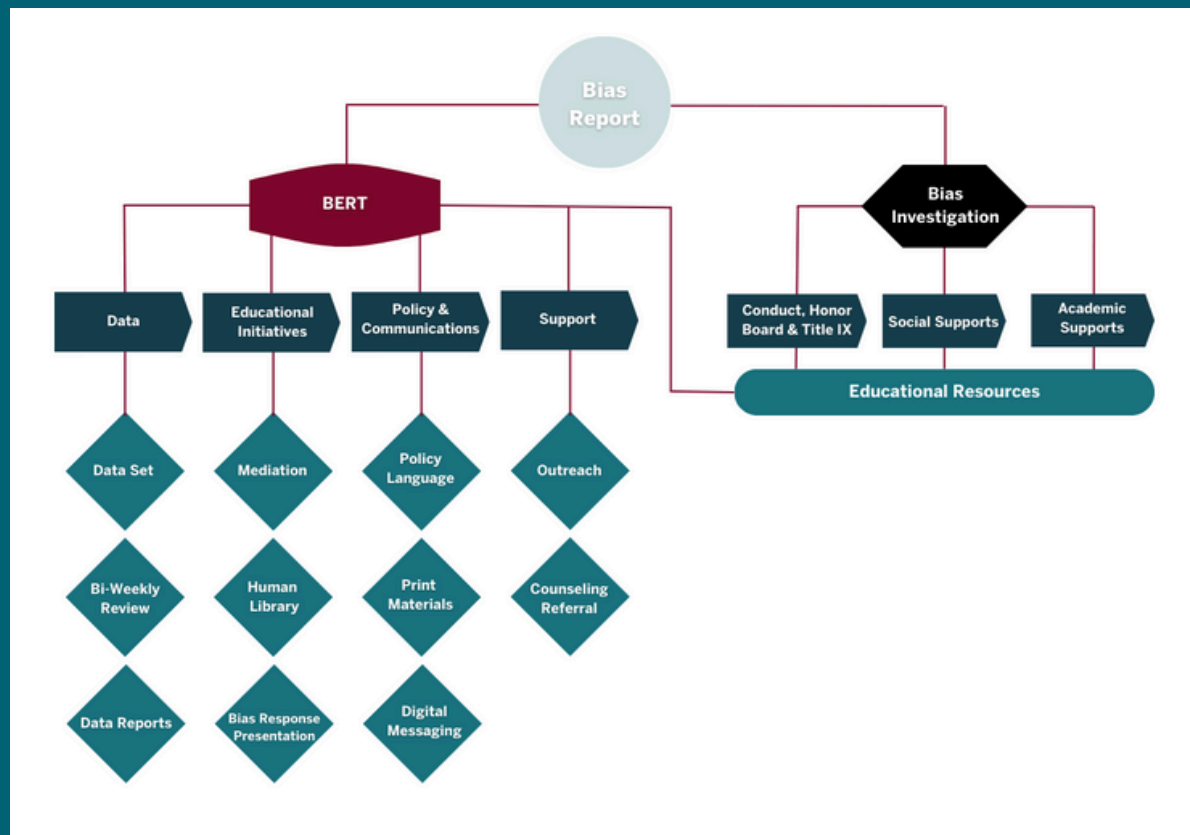


Outcomes



BERT Process

The diagram shows how a bias report gets addressed by both the appropriate department and BERT. Important to note, BERT receives reports with no personally identifying information attached. Our team takes responsibility for data collection and collaborations with other departments to ensure follow through and outcome reporting. BERT also focuses attention on educational initiatives and policy review.



BIAS EDUCATION RESPONSE TEAM (BERT) PURPOSE

collect, review, and report data
support students impacted by bias
review and monitor policy
compile and share educational resources
implement educational initiatives in response to data

Report Bias

Keep on Reporting and Supporting!

A bias report can be submitted in many ways:

- Contact Public Safety (410)778-7810 or report anonymously
- Tell a member of BERT, an RA, or other trusted college leader
- Fill out a CARE report
- Chestertown Anonymous Tips (410) 778-3744



Public Safety Anonymous Reports

**Every individual in our community
has value and is worthy of dignity.**

**When you hear of a troubling incident, remember that you are
a part of a caring community that takes bias seriously and
has a strong, responsive protocol in place.**

Meet BERT

Tricia Connor Biles – Assistant Dean in Student Affairs , Chair

Greg Krikorian – Title IX/Conduct/Residential Life

Nicolle Moaney - Director of Student Intercultural Affairs

Ryan Colman – Public Safety

Alexandra Calder – Athletics

Hillary Bitting – Marketing & Communications

Kate Laking – Human Resources

Nick Garcia – Faculty Representative

Kam Wiggins – Student Representative