



EDISA

BIAS/HATE INCIDENT REPORTING

# Bias/Hate Incident Reporting

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## Our Mission

UW-Eau Claire views hate/bias incidents and all manifestations of prejudice and intolerance as antithetical to our mission as a university and a community, as well as a threat to each individual's right to a safe living, learning, and working environment. The Bias Incident Reporting (BIRT) Team provides an outlet to share, document, and appropriately address all such incidents toward the goal of better understanding our campus climate.

## What is a bias incident?

Something a person does, says, or otherwise expresses that is motivated by bias related to age, race, ethnicity, sex, color, creed, religion, disability, veteran status, gender identity or expression, national origin, sexual orientation, political affiliation, marital status, or any combination of these or other related factors.

Submit a **[bias incident reporting form](#)**.

## What can I expect from the bias incident reporting process?

### Step One

If you are the target of bias/hate (or witness a bias/hate incident), fill out a bias incident reporting form. Be as detailed as possible. If you would rather stay anonymous, you will have that option (though, withholding information can potentially limit our ability to share next steps and any resulting action). Once the form is completed to the best of your ability and you have submitted it, the Bias Incident Reporting Team will be notified.

*If a crime is happening now or just occurred and someone is hurt or in danger, call 911.*

*If you do not wish to submit a bias incident reporting form, call the Dean of Students office at 715-836-5626 or visit them in Schofield 240.*

[Bias Incident Reporting Form](#)

### Step Two

Once the Bias Incident Reporting Team receives the bias/hate incident reporting form, an initial letter is sent out within 48-hours to the individual who made the submission. The letter contains personalized content reflecting the incident, along with a robust list of campus resources. First and foremost, the BIRT ensures the immediate safety and support of those affected by incidents of bias/hate. Next, the BIRT assigns the bias/hate case to the appropriate campus department for immediate review and next steps, which can include providing support to individual(s) and/or communities, forwarding the report for investigation, and strategizing the need for additional educational programming.

### Step Three

After the completion of all available actions in Step Two, a final letter will be sent to the individual who initially submitted the bias incident reporting form. The final letter will include any actions taken (pursuant to confidentiality restrictions), and there will be an opportunity to ask any remaining questions about the process, outcome, or efforts to stem future incidents. Once the final letter is sent, the case will be closed. The case may be reopened at any time, should additional information become available. Further, anyone involved in a bias/hate incident can ask questions about the case at any time.



## Our Collective Responsibility

In order to prevent bias/hate incidents from creating a hostile environment for any individual or group on campus and interfering with UW-Eau Claire's educational mission, we believe the university and all people of conscience within the campus community must raise their voices in opposition to messages of hate and intolerance. Please join us in our efforts to reject prejudice, discrimination, and acts of hate in order to maintain and further a culturally diverse and inclusive campus climate where all identities and perspectives are embraced.

Inclusion begins with "I," and each of us plays a critical role in maintaining a safe, respectful campus community. In order to foster a culture of reporting, we must do our part to hold each other accountable to our institutional mission of equity, diversity, and inclusion. If you witness or are made aware of a bias/hate incident, submit a bias incident reporting form. If you were the target of bias/hate, we encourage you to reach out. If you do not feel comfortable submitting a bias incident reporting form, ask a trusted friend to do it for you. At any time, we invite you to reach out to any member of the Bias Incident Reporting Team.

## Our First Amendment Considerations

It is important to note that not every act which may be offensive to an individual or group will be considered to be discriminatory conduct and a violation of system or institutional policy. The university values and embraces the ideals of freedom of inquiry, freedom of thought, and freedom of expression, all of which must be vitally sustained in a community of scholars. Whether a specific incident constitutes harassment as proscribed by university policy or federal law will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Due consideration will be given to the protection of First Amendment rights.

While the First Amendment protects the free expression of ideas that are sometimes offensive, that does not mean the university is powerless to respond. Instead of trying to censor or punish free speech, the Bias Incident Reporting Team documents and tracks these incidents in order to:

- Assist the target of bias/hate in receiving the appropriate support services (if requested)
- Work collaboratively across campus to develop programming and training opportunities to address individual and systemic inequity

- Detect emerging patterns of biased or hateful activity, both on campus and within the greater community
- Publish aggregated data about bias/hate incidents and trends
- Make recommendations to campus leadership for the prevention of future bias/hate incidents

Due to the variability of incidents, the BIRT team also consults with students, faculty, and staff from other UW-Eau Claire departments, programs, and organizations who can help the team make the most informed response possible to a report of a bias/hate incident.

People who commit acts of bias or hate that are not protected under the First Amendment may be subject to disciplinary action or prosecution. Possible examples include physical assault, vandalism, trespassing, harassment, incitement, or genuine threats of violence.

## The Bias Incident Reporting Team team includes:



Top Row (L-R): Mike Knuth, Deb Newman, Demetrius Smith, LaRue Pierce; Bottom Row (L-R): Christopher Jorgenson, Dang Yang, Teresa O'Halloran

Christopher Jorgenson (chair) | Gender & Sexuality Resource Center

Deb Newman | Housing and Residence Life

LaRue Pierce | Dean of Students

Mike Knuth | Integrated Marketing and Communications

Teresa O'Halloran | Affirmative Action

*Not Pictured*

Anjela Wong | Education Studies

Nancy Jo Hanson-Rasmussen | Management & Marketing

Analisa DeGrave | Languages

## Annual Bias Incident Reports

## Navigating Bias on College Campuses (External Resources)

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is BIRT and what does it do?

BIRT stands for Bias Incident Response Team. The team meets periodically during the year to refine response plans to bias incidents with the ultimate goal of improving climate on the campus. On a case-by-case basis, the BIRT team consults with students, faculty and staff from other UW-Eau Claire departments, programs and organizations who can help the team make the most informed response possible to a report of a bias/hate incident.

The Bias Incident Response Team at UWEC is comprised of the following offices:

- Dean of Students
- Housing and Residence Life
- Office of Multicultural Affairs
- Affirmative Action
- Gender & Sexuality Resource Center
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Integrated Marketing and Communication

## What is a bias/hate incident?

A bias/hate incident is an act of conduct, speech, or expression to which a bias motive is evident as a contributing factor (regardless of whether the act is criminal).

## Who can report a bias/hate incident?

Anyone who knows about situation that may be bias related can report it to BIRT.

## How do I report a bias/hate incident?

If the incident involves a threat or injury and is happening or just happened, please call the POLICE at 911 immediately.

All other bias incidents can be reported in one or all of the following ways:

- Report to a Resident Assistant or Hall Director in the residence halls.
- Complete a Bias Incident Report.
- Find the report online at [uwec.ly/BIRT](https://uwec.ly/BIRT) or type "BIRT" in the search field at the top right on the UW-Eau Claire website.
- Report to any of the BIRT members.

## What happens after I make a BIRT report?

Reports are shared with any departments which may be able to assist the BIRT team. Names are removed initially to protect a potential victim's privacy, but may be shared later with the victim's permission. A response is determined for each incident and varies depending on the details of the report.

## What happens to students, faculty, or staff who are identified as perpetrators of bias/hate incidents?

The incident and potential perpetrators are investigated by the appropriate agency (i.e. Dean of Students and/or Housing staff for students and Human Resources staff for faculty and staff). Once a determination has been made by the investigating officer or agency, actions will be taken to address any behavior that doesn't meet our policies. Education will be provided to try to prevent future incidents.

## Does BIRT publish results from its reports?

BIRT posts its annual report at <https://www.uwec.edu/files/4538/Bias-Incident-Annual-Report-2018-2019.pdf>

## What can I do to make this campus more welcoming for all of our students, faculty, and staff?

- Report any incidents of which you are aware.
- Attend bystander training opportunities on campus (i.e. Safe Space training).
- Confront peers who engage in bullying or biased behavior.

## We want to hear from you

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