



Campus Updates

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Protocols for Bias Incidents and Hate Crimes

The goal of these protocols is to help support a culture of open exchange in the spirit of mutual respect. These protocols operate within the context of the College's values of community responsibility and the commitment to free inquiry.

Please note that these protocols apply when students and/or their campus guests are the targets of a bias incident, insensitive incident or hate crime. Faculty and staff who have been the target of a bias incident, insensitive incident or hate crime should consult with the [Associate Dean of Faculty](https://www.mtholyoke.edu/people/elizabeth-k-markovits) (<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/people/elizabeth-k-markovits>) and/or the dean of faculty. Staff who have been the target of a bias incident, insensitive incident or hate crime should consult with the [Director of Staff Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives](https://www.mtholyoke.edu/people/carol-stewart) (<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/people/carol-stewart>) and/or the director of human resources accordingly.

If a student reports a bias incident, insensitive incident or hate crime, they can expect that their concerns will be treated with respect and sensitivity and that each case will be taken seriously. However, it is important to remember that incidents of bias, insensitivity and hate crimes are very complex and may not be immediately recognizable as belonging to one of these three categories. The protocols laid out should be considered a work in progress.

Reporting Incidents of Bias, Insensitivity and Discrimination

Bias incidents are any act, conduct, or communication that reasonably is understood to demean, degrade, threaten, or harass an individual or group based on an actual or perceived identity characteristic such as race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, genetics, physical or mental disability, and veteran/military service status or other protected status. Bias can occur whether intentional or unintentional and may not violate college policy or state or federal law to be defined as a bias incident. In a bias incident the actor/perpetrator may be known or unknown. Whether an incident meets this definition or not The College is committed to responding to bias/insensitivity incidents by addressing accountability, providing support to those impacted and by creating educational moments for community engagement. Whenever appropriate the College will investigate reported incidents and hold community members accountable for actions that violate college policies or the law.

Note that there are broader categories utilized here than what appears in the College's Statement of Nondiscrimination. The Statement of Nondiscrimination only focuses on categories that are protected by law, while the College's bias incident definition covers categories that are not covered by law, but that are covered under College policies.

Hostile or hateful speech or other discriminatory behavior may be considered a bias incident, but under certain conditions may also be a hate crime.

The Bias Education & Support Team (BEST) is the coordinated system for addressing the impacts of bias and insensitivity by tracking and communicating to the College Community, as appropriate, and by creating moments for community accountability and learning. It is important to note that the work of BEST does not replace or supersede any process dictated by administrative rule or criminal law. BEST will ensure that processes to address bias and insensitive incidences are done timely and consistently while offering support to the parties that have been directly or indirectly impacted. Through tracking and documentation of incidents BEST will also increase awareness on critical issues and create opportunities for engagement and learning within a restorative justice framework.

Mount Holyoke will act on reports of incidents of bias, insensitivity and discrimination received through the [on-line reporting form \(https://www.mtholyoke.edu/diversity-and-inclusion/bias_incidents\)](https://www.mtholyoke.edu/diversity-and-inclusion/bias_incidents) or reports received through intake with the [Director of Staff Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives \(BEST Coordinator\) \(https://www.mtholyoke.edu/people/carol-stewart\)](https://www.mtholyoke.edu/people/carol-stewart), or [Associate Dean of Students for Community and Inclusion \(https://www.mtholyoke.edu/deanofstudents/latrina-denson\)](https://www.mtholyoke.edu/deanofstudents/latrina-denson) or their designees. When receiving reports, every effort is made to preserve the privacy of reports and to respect an individual's desire for confidentiality; however, the College may be legally required to take action depending on the nature of the complaint. The reporter party will be informed if, in the course of satisfying this obligation, the College may be unable to comply with a request for confidentiality. Reports can be made anonymously with the on-line form and while anonymous reporting can help the College monitor campus climate and inform potential program planning it can be difficult for the BEST members to follow up on a specific incident without knowing the parties involved.

Additional Reporting Protocols for Students

Students may go to the following offices/departments to seek help with bias incidents/hate crimes and fill out a Community Insensitivity form:

- Public Safety & Service
- Office of Residential Life
- Division of Student Life
- Counseling Service
- Health Services
- Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Most of these offices have 24-hour on-call capacity.

The Division of Student Life and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work closely to address student-to-student bias/insensitivities and hate crimes reported on campus.

The Division of Student Life also collaborates with the Title IX and 504 Coordinator and the Chief Diversity Officer to facilitate the student-to-student process, based on the reported behavior.

Below are a list of off-campus resources that are available to provide support and information around bias incidents and hate crimes:

- Northwestern District Attorney's Office
- Office for Civil Rights
- American Civil Liberties Union
- Anti-Defamation League

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