

Bias & Hate

What is Bias?

Bias generally refers to any belief, attitude, behavior or practice that reflects an assumed superiority of one group over another. Bias is expressed through prejudice or discrimination and can be overt or covert. Bias can be directed against individuals or groups, but it can also be institutionalized into policies, practices and structures. While freedom of expression and the open exchange of ideas are a vital part of the educational discourse, bias activity dehumanizes people, erodes individual rights, debilitates morale, and interferes with the effectiveness of work and learning environments.

Bias activity can take the form of a hate crime, discrimination, or a bias incident.

- **Bias/Hate Crimes:** Any crime (or attempted crime) fully or partially motivated by bias against a person's ancestry or ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, immigration or citizenship status, race, religion, religious practice, disability, gender, marital status, actual or perceived age or sexual orientation.
- **Discrimination:** A violation of the University's Harassment and Discrimination Policy, other University policies, and/or anti-discrimination laws.
- **Harassment:** The act of continuous unwanted and annoying actions of a person or group that includes demands and threats. Harassment is a violation of the University's policies on Harassment.
- **Bias Incident:** Acts against people or property that do not appear to constitute a crime or actionable discrimination, but which may intimidate, mock, degrade, or threaten a member or group because of actual or perceived age, ancestry or ethnicity, color, creed, disability, gender, gender identity or expression, height, immigration or citizenship status, marital status, ex-offender status, national origin, veteran status, race, religion, religious practice, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, weight or any combination of these factors.

Bias-related incidents, while abhorrent and offensive, may not meet the definition of a hate crime or Code of Student Conduct violation. However, these acts negatively impact our community and require an active response to ensure a safe and inclusive campus environment for all. Even when offenders are unaware that they have shown bias and do not mean to offend, an expression of bias deserves a response and can be an opportunity for education.