Bias Report and Support System Summary Report

Below is a summary of the reports submitted to the Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) during the 2017-2018 academic year. Information from the BRSS underscores the need for members of the university community to recognize the impact of their actions and words on fellow community members.

Washington University in St. Louis is committed to fostering an environment that values diversity, inclusion and human dignity. Each member of our university community plays a role in shaping the campus environment. The information in this report gives the university community more insight on students’ day-to-day experiences with the intention of promoting discussion and taking steps to ensure that our community is inclusive and respects everyone.

Overview

The Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) at Washington University was created to promote an inclusive community by providing a clear and streamlined process for reporting incidents of hate, bias, and/or discrimination. This process focuses on offering support and referral resources for students and witnesses who have been affected by hate, bias, or discrimination. The BRSS is composed of a team of trained Washington University staff, and administrators who are tasked with three primary responsibilities:

- **Support**: Support students who have reported that they witnessed or were the target of a bias-related incident
- **Refer**: Refer students to campus partners, groups, or individuals who can provide ongoing support;
- **Inform**: Inform the larger Washington University community of the frequency and general nature of bias incidents reported through the BRSS.

The BRSS does not have investigative or dispute resolution capacity. Instead the BRSS will connect students to the relevant campus authorities to pursue any investigative function. Additionally the BRSS is not a replacement for crisis or emergency services.

Reporting Structure

Reports can be submitted in one of two ways: “For Information Only” or “For Support and Referral”. If the first option is selected, the reporter will remain anonymous and as such, there is no opportunity for the BRSS team to follow up with the reporter. Depending on the circumstances, the information disclosed may be forwarded to appropriate university administrators. If the latter option is selected, a BRSS team member will schedule an in-person meeting with the reporter to discuss the incident in greater depth to identify and explain available campus resources and other referrals. After the meeting, the assigned BRSS team member will
send a follow-up email to the reporter to ask if additional support is needed. Brief de-identified descriptions of all of the submissions will be published in this summary report.

**Reading This Report**

The BRSS is not an investigative body and serves primarily as a referral and support function for students. In this report, graphs summarizing the identities perceived to be targeted and the location or setting of the bias incident are presented. Given the confidential nature of the submissions, the BRSS Coordinator will not answer questions about specific reports.

**Context**

Across the country, as noted by the Southern Poverty Law Center, hate crimes and identity related violence has increased in the last four years. We view our own bias reporting information with that context in mind, and note that we have seen a rise in our own reporting. We have taken note that there has been an increase in community members reporting nationality as the perceived motivator for a bias incident. This was specifically tied to a number of white supremacist recruitment posters found on campus. Additionally we have noticed a smaller increase in reports around mental health, disability, and socioeconomic status. Finally there continues to be a centrality in the reports that list race/ethnicity, and gender/sex as the top motivations for perceived bias.

**Follow Through**

Prior to the release of this report, the BRSS Coordinator met with the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, the Vice Provost to discuss trends and potential further action.

The staff in the Center for Diversity and Inclusion analyze the current trends in order to utilize the information from the BRSS to identify priority student support services, and campus wide education.

**Summary**

65 reports/incidents were submitted to the BRSS during the 2017-2018 year:

- For Information Only- 48
- For Support and Referral- 17

**Breakdown of reports by setting**

- Classroom-27
- Online, Email, Social Media-6
- Student Activity/Student Group event-2
- Public/Common Space-9
- Undergraduate Residential Space-3
• Administrative office-4
• Off campus-6

Breakdown of reports by targeted identity (note: reporters can select more than one targeted identity)

• Disability-10
• Gender Identity/Expression-6
• Nationality-19
• Race/Ethnicity-37
• Sex-10
• Socioeconomic Status-4
• Age-2
• Mental Health-6
• Political affiliation-1
• Religion-2

On the following page are two graphs that summarize the 65 reports filed this semester: the first presents the identities targeted and the second presents the setting in which the bias incident reportedly occurred. The y-axis represents the number of reports that were submitted.