

## BIAS SUPPORT & EDUCATION TEAM PROTOCOL FOR RESPONDING TO ONLINE REPORTED BIAS INCIDENTS INVOLVING FACULTY/CLASSROOMS

### IDENTIFYING INFO

Incident occurs and reporter (impacted parties/witness/third party) submits online Bias Incident Report. Report is immediately forwarded to Bias Support & Education Team (BSET). The team reviews the report to determine if it includes any identifying information.

**YES**

**NO**

#### RESPONSE DESIRED

Does the reporter wish to be contacted?

**YES**

**NO**

Data will be observed for emerging patterns in bias incidents.

BSET reserves the right to intervene regardless of reporter's wishes if incident warrants such action.

#### WHO IS INVOLVED

BSET determines who is involved in the incident.

#### STUDENT/FACULTY

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When a student reports faculty conduct, BSET will reach out to the student to gauge need for support. A member of the BSET or CTJ will reach out to the faculty member if reporter desires. Outreach may be delayed until the end of semester at reporter's request.

When a faculty member reports student conduct, BSET will reach out to the faculty to discuss potential responses and support. BSET, CTJ, and other stakeholders will be able to provide additional support if necessary.

When a faculty member reports faculty conduct, Affirmative Action will take the lead strategizing a plan to resolve the situation. Affirmative Action will facilitate a meeting of all parties, consult with HR and EAP, or provide other action as deemed necessary.

Chair and/or Dean will be contacted upon student request.

Chair and/or Dean will be contacted upon faculty member request.

In most cases, Chair will be informed, unless they are considered the offender. In that case, the Dean of the college will be notified of the situation.

BSET will compile and report data regarding bias incidents through an online, annual, living document of UWL reported bias incidents. BSET will use reports to assist the Center for Transformative Justice in shaping educational trainings and programming that addresses bias. BSET's End of Year Report of yearly activity will be made public.

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### **KEY POINTS**

- Every situation is unique
- Ability to resolve these incidents through collaborative dialogue reduces the need for a formal grievance being filed
- Respect for academic freedom
  - with expectation that provocative content/teaching methods will be used in a fashion that does not create a discriminatory environment
- Respect for due process rights of faculty
  - This is a collaborative, dialogue-oriented process about building awareness, assuming good intentions, and shared desire to create better and more inclusive learning environments, not about punishing, penalizing, or stigmatizing anyone.
  - If information that identifies a particular faculty/IAS member is being provided to a chair or dean, the faculty/IAS member will be notified in advance except in rare cases where there is a safety, legal or confidentiality concern.
- Impacted parties have immediate needs at the forefront: the need to feel safe, the need to be heard and the need to know what happens next.

### **Individual situations in which we will inform (and may request involvement from) Deans or Chairs:**

- Student(s) requests action, sufficient details are known, faculty member unwilling to engage in dialogue.
- Report meets elevated standard of harassment, hostile environment, etc. under applicable laws triggering legal obligation to respond.
- Repeated incidents involving the same faculty/IAS member

## TALKING TO YOUR INSTRUCTOR: The Importance of Self-Advocacy

Higher education involves a wide variety of ideas, attitudes, personalities, and experiences. Occasionally, as a student, you may experience a classroom interaction with a faculty member or with classmates that you perceive to be biased. Speaking directly to the instructor is the best way to approach a situation where you feel personally compromised in terms of your learning. Below are three options – none are mutually exclusive, all could occur.

### #1 SELF-ADVOCACY

#### BENEFITS:

- Instructor will be the most receptive to the feedback if one-on-one
- Allows for a two-way dialog
- Can more immediately clear up misunderstandings
- Helps the student develop the language and behavior associated with advocating for ones self

### #2 INCLUDE AN ADVOCATE

An advocate from the Bias Support & Education Team.

#### BENEFITS:

- Same benefits as above
- The role of the advocate is to provide support by attending the meeting and to listen in order to help with perceptions of the content and mood of the meeting
- Advocate can be called upon if there is follow-up needed.

### #3 INFORMAL UNIVERSITY PROCESSES

Informal processes range from meetings such as Options 2, meetings with department chairs, deans, Affirmative Action, Student Life and/or Center for Transformative Justice.

#### BENEFITS:

- More immediate access to formal processes if warranted.

### #4 FORMAL UNIVERSITY PROCESSES

Any of the individuals listed in #3 can help guide you to the procedures associated with a formal process. Informal processes traditionally serve both the student and the instructor better; however, if a student has participated in informal processes and wishes to pursue formal procedures, university staff will aid the process.

### A GUIDE TO PREPARING TO MEET WITH AN INSTRUCTOR

- Remember that the vast majority of instructors are committed to student learning and will want to know about experiences that may interfere with a students' learning or comfort in the class. Assume that your instructors are likely "uninformed" or "unaware" of how their behavior may have been interpreted rather than "malevolent."
- Be clear with yourself about what you want to convey and what outcome you would like to see.
- Think about timing – the closer to the actual experience, the better. However, some students prefer to wait until after grades or in. However, it would be important to thinking about your own feelings and responses.
- Trust your confidant. We recommend connecting with the Bias Support & Education Team to serve as trusted individuals to share your experience. All of us have times when we are "over" sensitive and all of us have times when we need to self advocate.
- We recognize that it can be very difficult to talk to an instructor who you feel has not treated you fairly. You may feel angry, afraid, and/or vulnerable. However, a professional, honest interaction between a student and an instructor is most likely to lead to self-reflection and change on the behalf of the student and the instructor.