

News from BERT

Spring Semester Edition

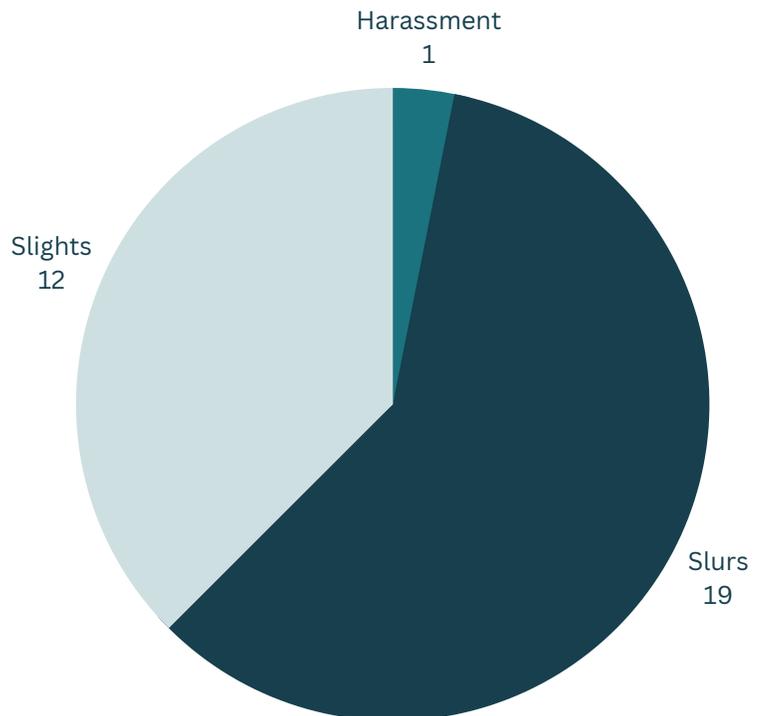
Washington College is committed to fostering a welcoming community for all students, faculty, and staff. An informed awareness of the climate on campus is an essential part of Washington College's efforts to create a supportive academic, residential, and professional environment for our diverse population. Washington College has developed a system for reporting incidents involving bias incidents that include a Bias Education Response Team (BERT). BERT is responsible for serving as an educational role to continue cultivating the values of Washington College.



BERT Data

Bias report data from each semester will now be published at the beginning of the following semester. Based on data and feedback from Fall 2022, this semester BERT has focused efforts on process clarification and educational initiatives.

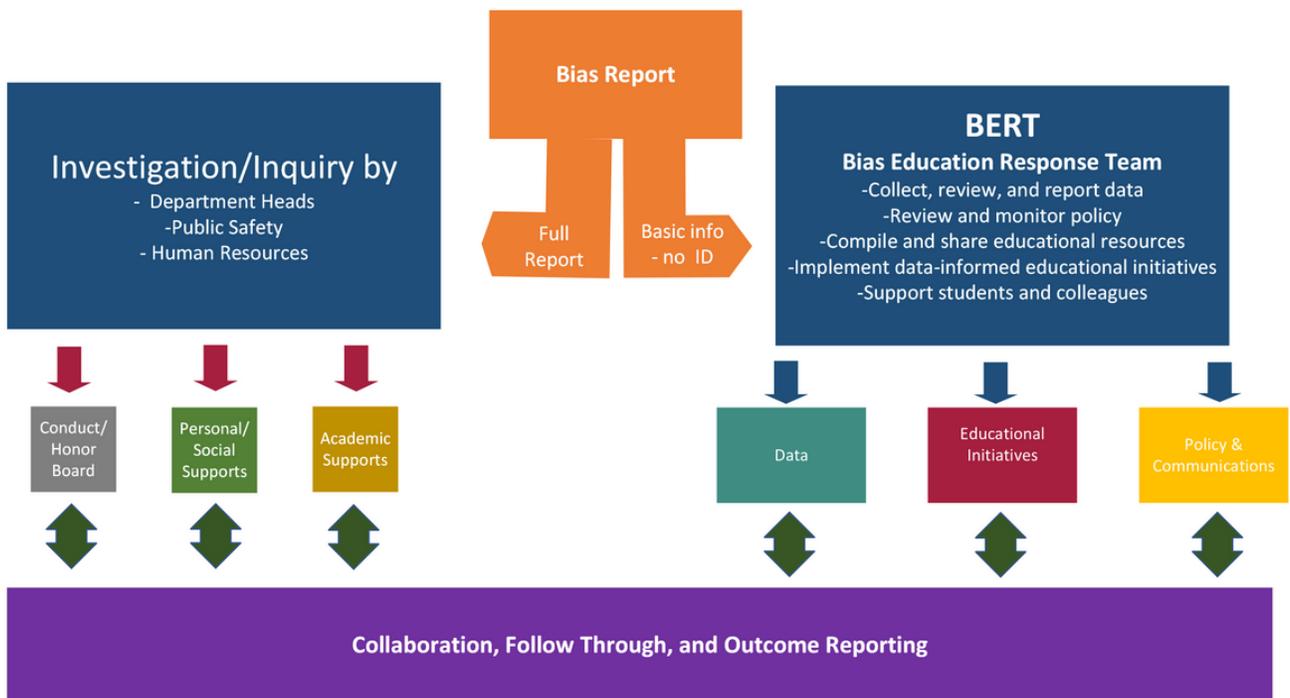
Previously Reported Fall 2022 Bias Reports



BERT Maps Out Its Process

Last semester the Bias Education Response Team (BERT) received many questions from students, faculty, and staff about how BERT works. Our team spent some time refining our structure and created a visual map for greater understanding about our process.

The diagram shows how a bias report gets addressed by both the appropriate department and BERT. Important to note, BERT receives reports with no personally identifying information attached. Our team takes responsibility for data collection and collaborations with other departments to ensure follow through and outcome reporting. BERT also focuses attention on educational initiatives and policy review.



Human Library

On April 5 & 6 Washington College hosted its first ever Human Library Project. The program was jointly sponsored by Library & Academic Technology, Intercultural Affairs, and BERT. It featured students and staff presenting themselves as human books – sharing personal stories about aspects of their identity. Wednesday evening was the kick-off celebration. It began in the newly renovated Newlin Room at the Miller Library with a welcome from Alex Baker, Stephanie Gilmore, and Tricia Biles. Dr. Alisha Knight provided introductory remarks on inclusive excellence. Following the opening remarks, participants engaged in a shared gratitude session, conversation, dinner, and a browsing of the "books". Throughout the rest of the evening and into the next day, students, faculty, and staff met with human books to listen to and ask questions about the human books' personal life experiences. The experience provided a powerful exchange between human books, readers, and volunteers supporting the event. We thank the human books for their courage and generosity in sharing their stories, the participants who challenged themselves to listen to and understand life experiences different from their own, and our caring volunteers who help create a safe space for sharing. We look forward to expanding this initiative next semester.



Policy

We are currently reviewing the bias section in the Student Handbook and will make recommendations for policy updates for the 2023-24 academic year.

BERT applauds the collaborative efforts of Student Affairs and Student Government to draft an "All-Comers Policy". This policy would require student clubs and organizations to attest that they do not discriminate based on a protected class in order to be eligible for SGA funds. It is an approach that makes a clear statement supporting Washington College's commitment to inclusive excellence that respects the rights of all students.

Report Bias

Keep on Reporting and Supporting!

A bias report can be submitted in many ways:

- Contact Public Safety (410)778-7810 or report anonymously
- Tell a member of BERT, an RA, or other trusted college leader
- Fill out a CARE report
- Chestertown Anonymous Tips (410) 778-3744



Public Safety Anonymous Reports

*Every individual in our community has value and is worthy of dignity.
When you hear of a troubling incident, remember that you are a part of
a caring community that takes bias seriously and has a strong,
responsive protocol in place.*

Meet BERT

Tricia Connor Biles – Assistant Dean in Student Affairs , Chair
Stephanie Gilmore – Intercultural Affairs
Greg Krikorian – Title IX/Conduct/Residential Life
Pam Hoffmann – Public Safety
Tyler Faulkner – Athletics
Hillary Bitting – Marketing & Communications
Antoine Jordan – Student Engagement
Kate Laking – Human Resources
Nyss Francis – Student Representative
Partnering with the Diversity Committee for faculty representation