

BIAS EDUCATION RESPONSE TEAM (BERT)



News from BERT

Bias Education Response Team

Dear Washington College Community,

BERT is here for you. Since our last News from BERT on October 18, we have received sixteen new reported incidents of bias. In several of the cases, a report of bias led to a counter report of bias. In every case, our process of Report and Support has led to greater care for individuals who have felt injustice. The Washington College process for responding to reported bias concerns has proven to be sound. Educational outreach, thorough investigations, and inter-departmental collaborations have been timely and consistent. Further, we stand united in valuing diversity and rejecting hate and discrimination.

A recent bias report is an example of our institutional response. A student reported hearing a racial epithet in a residence hall. The impact of hearing this was jarring and caused distress to the extent that the student reached out to their parents and their RA. Public Safety and the Chestertown Police Department immediately became involved in an investigation. Residential Life supported the student with a room relocation. Student Affairs professionals met with the student right away and communicated with the concerned parents. The investigation proceeded through the week. All parties were interviewed, and a thorough review of the specific residence hall's electronic access occurred. Meanwhile, ongoing outreach and support to the student was provided by Counseling, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs.

A bias experience is always upsetting and often has a ripple effect, especially in a small community like ours. Secondary impacts occur when we hear that someone we know and care about has experienced bias. Feelings of fear and anger surface and can spread. Casual conversations can lead to speculation and condemnation. Social media posts and acts that judge and blame our neighbors inflame and continue the cycle of hate.

BERT has some advice. 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. We encourage you to seek understanding and condemn unjust acts—but not your fellow community members. Every individual in our community has value and is worthy of dignity—even those with whom you disagree, who hold different values, or who you believe have behaved badly. Everyone deserves both civility and due process before judgement. Keep on Reporting and Supporting!

Report incidents and know that they are being handled professionally.

- We are all accountable to the Honor Code and policies guiding conduct, Title IX, and cyber civility.

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- BERT conducts training on Washington College's Bias Response. We believe that knowledge and collaboration can lead to greater peace of mind.
- To report:
 - Contact Public Safety (410)778-7810
 - [Public Safety Anonymous Reports](#)
 - Tell a member of BERT, an RA, or other trusted leader
 - Fill out a CARE report
 - Chestertown Anonymous Tips (410) 778-3744

Support yourself, your friends, your colleagues, and your community by summoning courage and compassion.

- Talk to trusted friends and mentors.
- Be a trustworthy listener and guide.
- Help each other pause before posting.
- Realize that you have the power to promote peace and justice.
- Take advantage of supportive college resources – RAs, Wellness Advocates, Public Safety, Counseling Services, BERT members, Director of Intercultural Affairs.

BERT Members are here for you:

- [Tricia Connor Biles](#) – Chair
- [Stephanie Gilmore](#) – Intercultural Affairs
- [Greg Krikorian](#) – Title IX/Conduct/Residential Life
- [Pam Hoffmann](#) – Public Safety
- [Annie Kietzman](#) – Athletics
- [Hillary Bitting](#) – Communications
- [Antoine Jordan](#) – Student Engagement
- [Sufiya Abdur-Rahman](#) – Faculty
- [Chee Lee](#) – Human Resources
- [Olivia Daniels](#) – Student Representative

Please reach out. We care.

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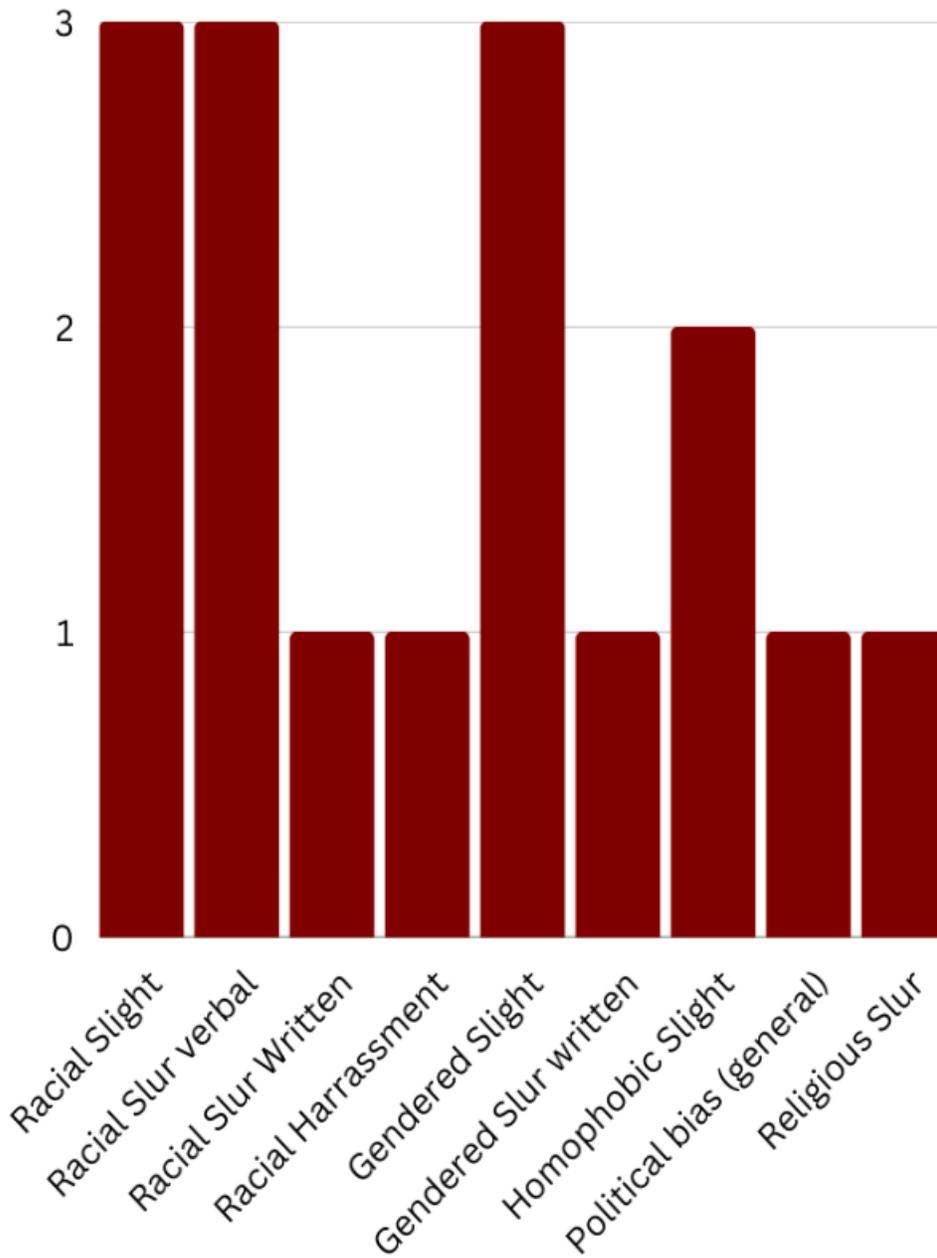


BERT records all formally reported bias incidents at Washington College. Below you will find the incidents reported since October 13, 2022

Reported Bias Incidents – Fall 2022 – 10/13 – 11/17	
Type of Bias Incident Reported	# of occurrences
Racial Slight*	3
Racial Slur – Verbal	3
Racial Slur – Written	1
Racial Harassment	1
Gendered Slight* – Verbal	3
Gendered Slur – Written	1
Homophobic Slight* – Verbal	2
Political Bias (general)	1
Religious Slur – Written	1
Total Reported Incidents	16

*Slightings occur when someone is sidelined, ignored, or intentionally targeted for uncomfortable encounters based on identity.

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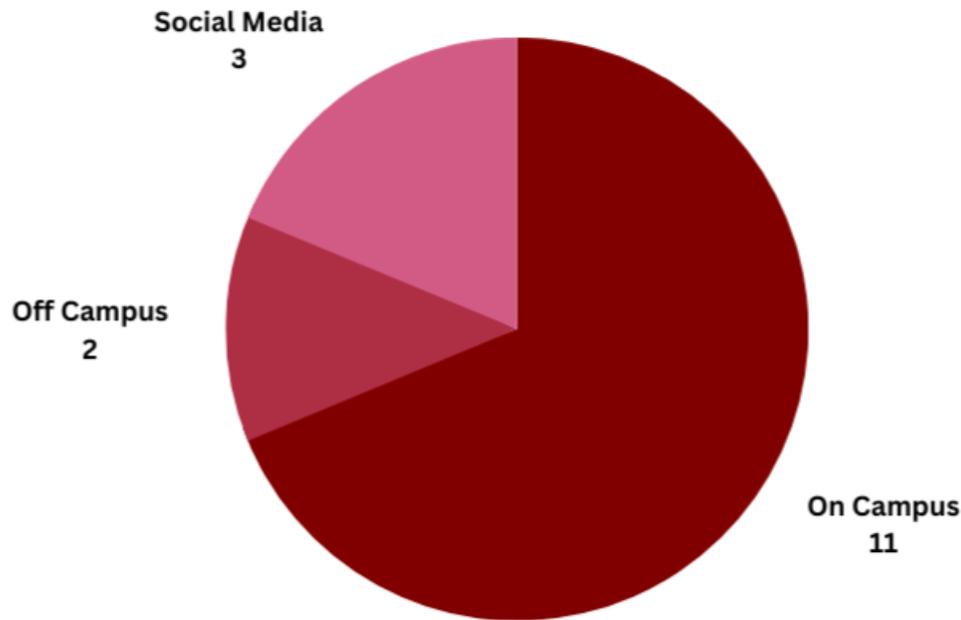


Reported Bias Incidents – Fall 2022 – 10/13– 11/17	
Location of Incidents	# of occurrences
On Campus	11
Off Campus	2

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Social Media	3
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Reported Bias Incidents – Fall 2022 – 10/13 – 11/17		
Responsive Actions Taken	# of occurrences*	Outcomes
Conduct/ Honor Board Referral	4	Due to confidentiality, we cannot provide specific outcome information for each report. However, we can share that the following actions have been taken in this last cycle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate personal outreach to the person(s) impacted
Public Safety Investigation	4	
Student Affairs Referral	8	
Academic Affairs Referral	1	
Human Resources Referral	2	
Title IX Referral	2	

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CPD/Local Community Assist	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections to counseling • Academic advocacy • Formal Title IX processes • Collaboration with Chestertown Police • Facilitated mediation • Engagement of student and employee conduct systems • Administrative briefings
Supportive measures for individuals impacted by bias	all	
BERT Educational Initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support and Report campaign (with Residential Life) ○ SGA Senate presentation on BERT and the process ○ Student Affairs staff presentation on BERT and the process ○ Human Library Initiative (with Intercultural Affairs and LAT) 		
* Incidents often warrant more than one type of response		