



BIAS INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of the Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT) is to address reports of bias incidents in ways that support those most impacted, promote education and dialogue, and affirm Cleveland State University's commitment to equity and diversity, free speech and academic freedom. The BIRT coordinates the University's response, but does not have an investigative or disciplinary role.

1.2. Specifically, the BIRT is charged with:

- Developing and implementing a voluntary mechanism for members of the University community to report bias incidents;
- Referring those impacted to established mechanisms for support and to address harassment, discrimination and violence, as appropriate;
- Coordinating information-sharing and communication about reported incidents; and
- Making recommendations to senior University leadership about policies, practices or programs to address bias incidents.

1.3. This Protocol does not address mandatory reporting of incidents of discrimination required under the University's [Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Violence and Retaliation](#).

2. Response Team

2.1. The BIRT will be chaired by the Vice President for Engagement and Chief Diversity Officer (CDO).

2.2. The director of each of the following offices will appoint one or more people to BIRT:

- Student Affairs, including Student Life and Auxiliary Services
- Facilities Services
- Police Department
- Marketing
- Office of General Counsel
- Office for Institutional Equity
- Counseling Center
- Human Resources

- Faculty Senate President
- Student Government Association

2.3. Representatives of other offices may be invited to attend BIRT meetings on an ad hoc basis.

3. Response to a Report of Bias Incident

3.1. For the purposes of BIRT, a “bias incident” is defined as an act of bigotry, harassment, or intimidation directed toward an individual or group based on that individual’s or group’s actual or perceived race, sex, religion, color, age, national origin, veteran and/or military status, genetic information, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, marital status or parental status or any combination of these factors. A bias incident may or may not violate University policy or state or federal law depending on the specific facts and circumstances of the incident.

3.2. The following steps will be taken when any member of the BIRT receives a report of a bias incident.

3.2.1. **As soon as possible** after receipt of the Report, the BIRT member shall report the incident to the CDO or designee. When appropriate, the BIRT member may also make a report to OIE and/or to the Police Department.

3.2.2. The CDO shall inform CSU senior leadership about the incident as appropriate.. The CDO shall also determine whether a BIRT meeting would facilitate the University’s response and, if so, shall call such a meeting **within 24 hours**, or as soon as reasonably possible. This meeting may be held as a conference call if necessary when the University is closed.

3.2.3. In addition to calling a BIRT meeting when appropriate, the CDO shall coordinate with Marketing regarding whether a public response is warranted prior to the BIRT meeting. All public statements related to bias incidents must be approved by the Office of General Counsel before their release.

3.2.4. During its meeting, BIRT members shall, at a minimum:

- Share all available information regarding the incident, unless the information could jeopardize a law enforcement investigation or is otherwise confidential.
- Determine any additional appropriate support to be provided to those involved in the incident.

- Determine whether to refer the incident to an appropriate office for investigation (e.g. OIE, Student Conduct, Human Resources, the Police Department) if such a report has not already been made.
- Develop a communication plan if considered necessary. Such communication plan should consider all internal constituencies, as well as whether off-campus stakeholders should be informed / consulted about the incident.
- Recommend to senior leadership appropriate educational responses to the incident.

3.3. **At least annually**, the CDO will organize a meeting of the BIRT to review known incidents, including any identified patterns, and to look for ways to strengthen CSU's responses to such incidents, as well as to make recommendations to senior with respect to education and resources to address bias and the impact of bias incidents.

4. Release of Information

- 4.1. No member of the BRT, except the Chair, may release information regarding an incident to anyone outside of the BRT (or in the member's chain of command), except as part of a University or law enforcement investigation, in accordance with an incident communication plan, or with the permission of the Office of General Counsel.
- 4.2. All media inquiries shall be forwarded to University Marketing. All public records requests shall be forwarded to the Office of General Counsel.