

Bias Response Data - Our Ongoing Commitment to Diversity and Inclusivity at UConn

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The following message is being sent from Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Eleanor JB Daugherty and Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Frank Tuitt:

At the end of the Fall semester, Dr. Tuitt and I had an important conversation with university leaders and student leaders in USG about the University's response to bias incidents on campus. As a group we came to the following conclusions:

- Bias occurs at UConn. We hurt and harm the identities of others through words and actions that disparage and demean the myriad of identities we hold. Whether that identity is reflective of race, gender, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation or religion, they should be cherished, not ridiculed.
- We must tell our story, no matter how imperfect. In doing we so, we accept that diversity, equity, and inclusion matter. Because they matter, we must own our mistakes and seek to gain awareness and understanding.

With these conclusions in mind, we write to update you on our continued work as we enter the Spring semester.

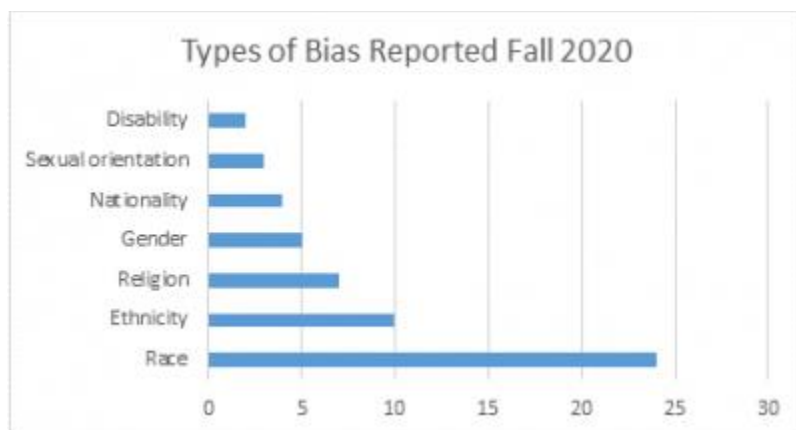
- Last semester, the University launched the [Inform site](#). As part of a collaborative process with students and colleagues across our campuses, our goal was to create a resource that is easy to access and encourages disclosures of behavior that violates the values and policies of the University of Connecticut.
- We must be forthcoming and share when incidents occur. To that end, the Dean of Students site will now routinely [share bias incidents](#) that have been reported through the bias incident protocol.
- Beginning later this month, the University will begin training members of the staff, including the President's Cabinet, on restorative practice as a technique for addressing the hurt and harm caused by bias and discrimination. We are thankful to the partnership we have developed with Dr. Stacey Miller, of The Consortium for Inclusion & Equity.

Today we share with you our assessment of incidents reported through the bias response protocol over the course of the Fall semester of 2020. This is a reflection of our ongoing commitment to you to share which issues of bias occur at UConn.

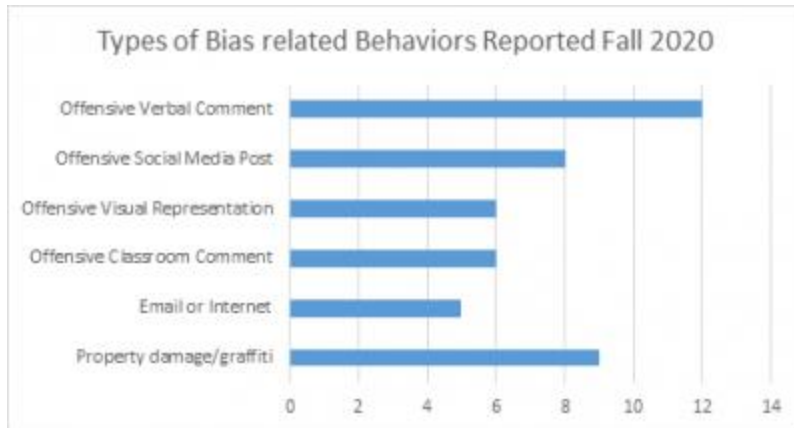
A note on understanding incidents shared through the bias response protocol:

- All referrals are taken seriously and are considered by Community Standards and, when appropriate, UCPD.
- Not all bias referrals result in violations of The Student Code. Regardless of whether there are conduct violations, the University will utilize its resources to support impacted students.
- Some incident referrals apply to multiple identities. As a result, a bias type may be 'counted' more than once.

Over the course of the Fall 2020 semester, the University received 44 bias referrals. For a population of over 20,000 students, this shows us two things. First, one referral is too many. When we assume that our words and actions can be dismissed as a joke or a late night act of poor judgement, we negatively impact a community that holds many identities. Second, we are better than these random actions. The number of cases is relatively small in comparison with the care and concern that students routinely demonstrate for one another.

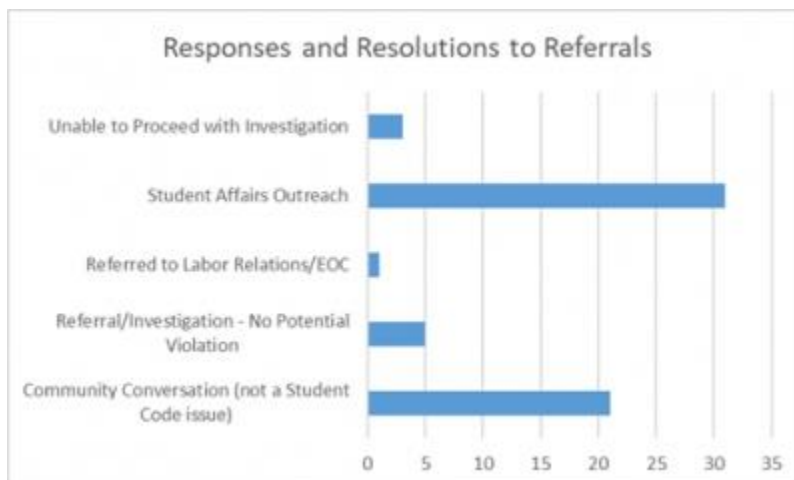


The predominance of bias behavior last semester varies tremendously and includes words and actions that inappropriately target the identities shared above. While we cherish the value of free speech in a university setting, that does not diminish the impact of hateful words. Free speech is a right *and* a privilege that insists that we reflect upon and utilize language that values, not diminishes, the identity of others.



Finally, the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion partner to provide support to impacted students and student groups. A resolution on the chart below reflects our response as it relates to a specific incident. This information is also shared with colleagues throughout the university to further develop programming and training in areas of diversity and inclusive practice.

When reviewing bias referrals, most resulted in support provided to impacted students and intentional conversation with students. It is very rare that a bias referral results in a severe sanction under the Student Code. This is disappointing for those who wish greater accountability for hurtful actions that are, despite the harm they cause, protected speech. Regardless of whether an investigation or referral results in a sanction under the student code, students who commit those actions have their behavior addressed by the University through direct engagement.



As our state's flagship university, we embrace our core values of innovation, leadership, global engagement and diversity. Yet, as reflected in our bias data, we must continue to

strive to full actualize these values as a University. Dr Tuitt, President Katsouleas, Provost Lejuez and all our students, faculty, and staff join us in that journey.

More to come.

Eleanor JB Daugherty

Associate Vice President and Dean of Students

Frank Tuitt

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