

# Bias Response - 4-4-22

**Subject:** Re: Bias Response

Dear Community Members of North,

On Monday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, there was a bias-related incident where an unidentified person/s vandalized a whiteboard in the McConaughy game room lounge. The whiteboard depicted a game of hangman, with the phrase "fat people" and an image of an overweight naked person hanging from the hangman noose. Underneath that picture were the words "hate speech" written with green hearts surrounding the word indicating that other students had seen this image.

When situations like this occur, it is important to not only take a stand against the bias action, but also to educate on why the incident can be viewed as offensive and harmful. Fat shaming involves criticizing and harassing overweight people about their weight or eating habits to make them feel ashamed of themselves. The belief is that this may motivate people to eat less, exercise more, and lose weight. In the majority of cases, the people who fat-shame others are slim and never had to struggle with a weight problem. Research shows that much of the discussion on obesity on social media involves fat shaming, which often turns into harassment and cyberbullying — especially against women. In fact, there are entire online communities where people gather to make fun of overweight people. However, stigma and discrimination against overweight people cause major psychological harm and worsen the problem.

**Articles:** “Obesity in social media: a mixed methods analysis”

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4167901/>

“The Harmful Effects of Fat Shaming”

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/fat-shaming-makes-things-worse>

## **Definition of Bias-Related Incident:**

A bias-related incident is an incident that negatively targets, intimidates, or threatens an individual or group due to race, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, physical, mental, and intellectual disabilities, as well as past/present history of mental disorders. This includes, but is not

limited to, graffiti or images that harass or intimidate individuals or groups due to the above characteristics.

We hope that the person(s) responsible for this behavior will choose to make a different decision in the future. If there is anything our staff can do to assist you, please feel free to contact the Hall Directors of North with the information below. We are more than willing to meet with you individually should you want to discuss the incident. Thank you all for your time and I look forward to discussing this further with anyone interested.

**North Hall Director Contact Information:**

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