



The Division of Inclusive Excellence presents

The Belonging Education & Support
Acts of Bias & Harm Reduction Bi-Annual Report
Spring 2022

Joint message from our Leaders

The Global Pandemic has taught us many things and has strengthened our value for interaction amongst human beings. Study after study have shown that mental health needs are on the rise due to the interaction restrictions imposed during and post pandemic. The conditions of every individual's living and working environments became central to increasing a sense of belonging and connectedness for all people. Therefore, it is critical to examine and analyze our campus culture and its ability to nurture and affirm every member of the Hornet community.

We all have biases and no one is exempt from exhibiting bias, yet we can reduce the number of incidents of bias by understanding how they manifest, persist, and exist at Sac State, as well as offer resources and assistance to individuals who experience bias in any form. In the fall of 2021, the Division of Inclusive Excellence hired a Belonging Education and Support Director. This inaugural position was designed to act not as the bias police, but to re-frame this work based on understanding acts of bias through the lens of eight categories of bias, how on this campus bias can erode a sense of belonging, and how the campus leadership can put in place a system and practices that will increase positive interactions within the campus community and reduce harm.

We have learned a lot from the data collected through the twenty-eight complaints of bias received during this first semester.

We have provided direct service through one-on-one consultations with complainants and have also used the data to explore the institutional interventions that would best mitigate future acts of bias.

It is our hope that this report will be used as one of the ways we are auditing our campus and moving closer to becoming an antiracist and inclusive campus.

In partnership,

Katherine Betts, Director Belonging Education & Support

Dr. Mia Settles-Tidwell, Vice President for Inclusive Excellence & UDO

Introduction

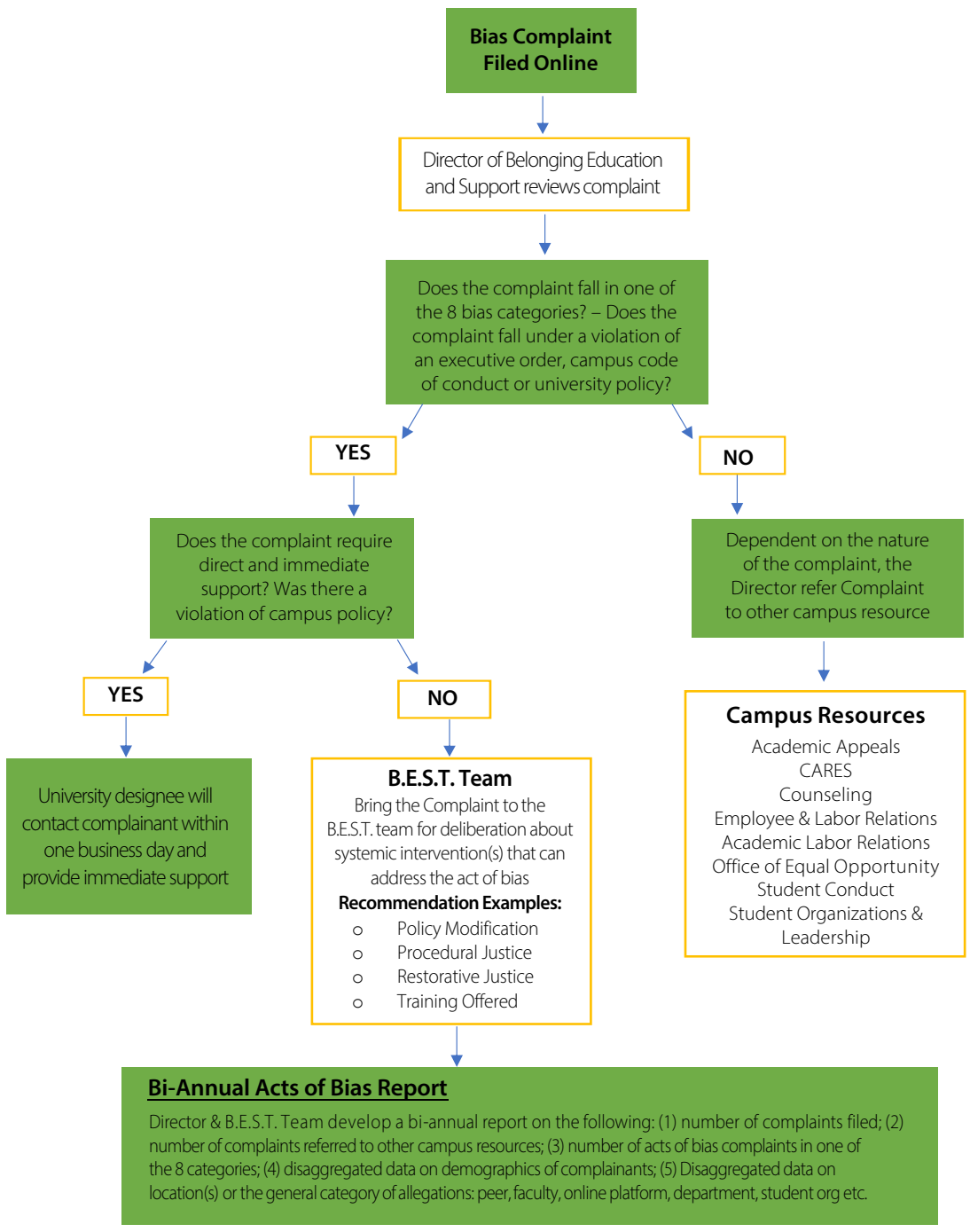
Sacramento State (Sac State) is intentional about becoming an antiracist, anti-oppression, and inclusive campus community. As such Sac State acknowledges and celebrates the diversity of intellectual ideas, beliefs, and people that contribute to the Hornet community. Further Sac State seeks to foster a campus culture of belonging that lives out its values in both implicit and explicit practices.

The Division of Inclusive Excellence manages the Acts of Bias and Harm Reduction reporting tool which is critical in providing data on areas of opportunity that can strengthen the sense of belonging, and the campus experiences and culture. This inaugural report provides trends from data gathered from the Maxient Acts of Bias reporting system as well as a narrative description about direct services and systemic interventions on campus to address acts of bias. Finally, this report provides recommendations for priorities and initiatives that can have a meaningful institutional impact on campus culture.

Background

The Acts of Bias and Harm Reduction reporting system has been in place for approximately six months (August 2021) at Sac State. The first six months have been dedicated to refining reporting systems, solidifying processes for the Director of Belonging Education and Support and the Belonging Education & Support System BESS Team, and educating the campus community about the reporting tool and office resources. As we continue to build the BESS program, we anticipate working in collaboration with campus stakeholders to offer a host of multi-tiered interventions and strategies that will continue to have a positive impact on campus culture. It is the hope of the BESS Team that the trends captured in this first report will be used to set priorities and drive culture transformation in alignment with strategic initiatives. We believe as we close the gaps in equity of experiences and create environments of belonging and healing, we will begin to move the needle in shaping a campus culture that supports the vision and recommendations of our Antiracism and Inclusive Campus Plan [[Antiracism and Inclusive Plan](#)].

Acts of Bias Reporting Process



Acts of bias categories

Acts of bias comes in multiple forms. Unfortunately, we all have biases and may not be aware of how these biases are being expressed or impacting others. Below are some categories that are commonly associated with to how acts of bias are experienced. This is not an exhaustive list.

<p>Categories of Bias Bias comes in multiple forms. Here are some categories of bias that are considered when processing acts of bias incidents. This list is not exhaustive.</p>
<p>Access blocking – the act of an individual or systemic limitation of access to resources, opportunities, products or services.</p>
<p>Exclusion/ Microinvalidations – the act of limiting or removing a voice, perspective, or presence within a group or setting; communications that subtly exclude, negate, or nullify the thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of an individual or group.</p>
<p>Hierarchy of human value – the act of unequal treatment or stratified value based on socio-economic status, job classification, citizenship status, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, or title.</p>
<p>Invisibilized – the act of being passed over; not seen or acknowledged for perspective, voice, experience, or contribution.</p>
<p>Microaggressions – the implicit or explicit act of constant verbal, behavioral or environmental slights, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative attitudes toward protected class or culturally marginalized groups.</p>
<p>Power dynamics – the act of using ones power over another or experiencing (intentionally or unintentionally) the power of an individual’s title, status, or position to exert undue influence over another</p>
<p>Procedural injustice - the act of 1) unfair or unequal due process; 2) a lack of transparency in actions or processes; 3) limitations in the opportunity to submit an appeal to a procedure or decision; and 4) modifications to procedures to limit access due to a protected class category or identity.</p>
<p>Silencing - the act of chilling, censoring, or quieting the voice, worldview, or perspective of an individual or group.</p>
<p>Other/Othering - act of treating a person or a group of people as intrinsically inferior or alien from another person or group.</p>

Demographic Data

The demographic data below was captured from the period of August 2021-January 2022 and informs our understanding about reported acts of bias at Sac State. This demographic data captures reports received through all reporting mechanisms on campus including: the online reporting tool, campus department referral, email communication, and individual reporting.

Bias Education Support System Data			Total Number of Individual Complaints	
Category	Number			
Race Ethnicity	African American / Black	8	28	
	Caucasian / White	11		
	Hispanic/Latino	6		
	Bi-racial	0		
	Other	0		
	Not specified	3		
Gender	Males	8	28	
	Females	17		
	Non-binary	3		
	Not specified	0		
Report type	Disability	1	28	
	Sexual Orientation	4		
	Bullying	2		
	Race	2		
Classification	Employee	MPP	1	28
		Staff	4	
		Faculty	7	
	Student	Freshmen	4	
		Sophomore	1	
		Junior	1	
		Senior	7	
		Alumni	1	
		Third Party	2	

Note: [Classification should include Graduate Students; faculty should be broken out by junior faculty and tenured faculty]

Trends from bias categories

ACCESS BLOCKING

There were nine cases reported within the category of Access Blocking. All nine reported incidents of access blocking were related to reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities or barriers that limited access to campus activities or resources due to a disability. While access blocking was the primary act of bias, in all instances microaggressions were also experienced by impacted parties. On further investigation process, all nine Individuals described a lack of awareness from the implementers of the process or procedure in delivering accommodations in various settings and experiencing microaggression when they attempted to raise awareness about the accessibility issue.

Interventions

Each of the reporting parties received one-on-one direct support in exploring pathways to resolve the accessibility issue through advocacy, restorative processes, and follow up. In addition to the direct interventions, there have also been efforts to address the institutional culture that impacts persons with disabilities on campus. These emerging data over the past few months have resulted in the institution moving forward with the hiring of a Director of Universal Access and Inclusion who will lead a comprehensive program that embeds disability justice as a foundational component of the Antiracism and Inclusive campus efforts at Sac State. The Division of Inclusive Excellence will co-construct solutions with one of constituent groups within the Hornet disability community to engage in strategic planning to address micro-culture issues as well. This effort will include a SWOT analysis and assessment, data collection, and co-construction of specific recommendations and resolution pathways. Additionally, the University Disability Advocacy Committee (UDAC) is an advising body that supports the campus in bringing Sac State into compliance with Executive Order 1111 and applicable federal law.

In addition, the Division of Inclusive Excellence is in the process of reviewing the application for an official employee affinity group that will focus on education, empowerment, and networking with employees with a variety of disabilities. Finally, there are current efforts to coordinate services and develop protocols and checklists to ensure a proactive approach to disability services, examine barriers to access and to address these barriers strategically through professional development, toolkits, and guides to enhance efforts of inclusion and reduce access-blocking towards any group.

MICROAGGRESSIONS

There were seven acts of bias that fell under the category of microaggressions. Secondary to the primary act of microaggressions, reporting parties also reported experiencing power dynamics simultaneously. The resulting experiences were feelings of invisibility and voices being silenced. These reports of microaggressions took place in a variety of spaces on campus including classrooms and academic spaces, community spaces, and workspaces. A common theme when identifying perpetrators of microaggressions was that the perpetrators were from outside of another person's identity group or rank/classification.

Interventions

Each individual complainant received one-on-one consultations and interventions designed to connect the individuals with resources and holistic care. Institutionally, there is a need for increased professional and personal learning on how to recognize and reduce the occurrences of microaggressions. Through the Focused Time Circles (FTC), the concept of microaggressions was explored and explicitly discussed. Gaining insights from the outcomes of the FTC groups will help the institution put mechanisms in place to support conversations and will create greater understanding about how to address microaggressions in a higher education campus setting. Some of this work may include, but is not limited to, self-awareness videos and exercises; Green & Gold speaker series focused on microaggressions; institution-wide cultural competence and cultural humility workshops centered on identity, power, stereotypes, healing circles, trauma informed approaches, and transformation-harm reduction-strategies.

HIERARCHY OF HUMAN VALUE

There were five incidents of hierarchy of human value and two incidents of power dynamics reported. [These two incidents were not included in the data table above; chilling speech and silencing are reported in the data but not power dynamics.] In two of the five incidents of hierarchy of human value, a secondary act of bias category was present in the form of power dynamics. Reporting parties also reported experiencing microaggressions as a part of their experiences.

Interventions

Each of the five individuals received one-on-one support which included but was not limited to: consultation with the Director of Belonging Education and Support, campus partner referral, mediated conversation, restorative practices, and follow up. The institutional responses for two of the five cases within this category have been to make specific departments or academic colleges aware of the experiences and provide information about how to address departmental structures that reproduce a hierarchy or unequal execution of power.

PROCEDURAL INJUSTICE

There were two reported cases of individuals experiencing procedural injustice. This category of bias was coupled with microaggressions or social-political capital bias (new form of bias) in navigating institution processes. Additionally, through the investigative processes related to procedural injustice bias, the BESS Team found that subjectivity played a role in how policies were applied procedurally.

Interventions

Individual support included one-on-one support, connection to resources, and developing possible pathways for addressing the identified issues at the institutional level. Some recommendations for addressing procedural injustice institutionally were to offer to the community toolkits on due process steps, put in place procedural accountability measures, and make accessible and transparent the process or procedural steps that can remove the subjectivity in the implementation of a procedure. This type of bias could also inform antiracism and inclusion policy development through the shared structure that oversees policy on policies.

SILENCING/CHILLING SPEECH

There were two incidents of chilling speech or silencing that were reported in fall 2021. In these incidents, there were events that took place that prompted a review of the university Academic Freedom or Time, Place, and Manner policy to understand further if the incidents were a violation of the policy. While policy violations were not found, and the upholding of the 1st Amendment rights were reinforced, there was an impact on the individual complainant.

Interventions

Through the Belonging Education and Support Director, one-on-one consultation and policy review with the complainant were offered and executed. While there was not an institutional response for the two reported incidents, it is recommended that the campus offer more open forums, programs, and spaces that affirm, empower, and set the stage for healthy and productive dialogue, discourse, and debate.

OTHER/OTHERING

There were three complaints filed that did not fall within the eight categories of acts of bias and were labeled as "other." To protect the anonymity of the individuals who filed the reports information on the specific issues and interventions are not available. In both instances, these cases are still in process and offering an institutional response is ongoing. Finally, a number of cases were referred to other existing programs or offices such as Office of Equal Opportunity, Employee Labor Relations, Student Conduct, Academic Labor Relations, etc. to address potential policy violations, discrimination, or harassment.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this work has been to better understand campus experiences as they relate to acts of bias and how they contribute to the feeling of lack of belonging and injustice. There are several major findings from this inaugural impact report. First, there is a need to provide a resource that is focused and targeted to reeducate, restore, and rebuild environments and the capacity of individuals to reduce the occurrence of bias on campus. Additionally, there is a need to analyze or audit our systems, policies, and procedures for subjectivity, implicit and explicit signals that reward hierarchical and top-down approaches, and establish dehumanization or stereotyping individuals based on position or identity. Additionally, the campus would greatly benefit from establishing either a Restorative Justice and Racial & Identity Harm Reduction Center.

There have been several outcomes of the institutional interventions that occurred as a result of the Acts of Bias and Harm Reduction reporting system. The incidents of bias reporting illuminated our understanding of the current strengths as well as gaps within the university systems. Exploring and understanding the root causes of acts of bias have strengthened the University's capacity for implications and recommendations that can reduce bias and harm. Some of the outcomes and recommendations of the work of the Belonging Education Support Services include, but are not limited to, engaging senior leadership in consultation about ways to address issues occurring within units, departments, and divisions; inclusion of the Director of Belonging Education and Support on the Removing Administrative Barriers Task Force; review of policies for forms of bias or putting in place procedure implementation accountability systems and clarity on exactly where the campus can benefit from recommended interventions to address systemic issues that create barriers to belonging and success for multiple stakeholder groups.

Acknowledgments

The Belonging, Education, and Support unit within the Division of Inclusive Excellence would like to extend a warm thank you to all members of the Sac State community who have contributed to the work of developing the Acts of Bias and Harm Reduction reporting tool and this inaugural impact report. We recognize the commitment, intentional work, and head and heart work that has been dedicated to the Belonging, Education, and Support unit and the campus implementation of the Acts of Bias reporting tool over the past academic year. We could not do this work without every one of you! Thank you for ensuring that this process has happened in a way that honors university governance practices, considers the collective voices of the Hornet community, and promotes a true sense of belonging at Sac State. Stingers Up!

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Sincerely
,Katherine H. Betts
Director, Belonging, Education, and Support, Division of Inclusive Excellence