

2022 NACUA Annual Conference

Implicit Bias and Communications with Key Stakeholders: *Avoiding Pitfalls and Building an Inclusive Dialogue to Achieve Better Outcomes for the University Community*

- KEY TAKEAWAYS -

When developing or reviewing your institution's Bias Incident Response Protocols, consider the following:

Multiyear Diversity Plan. Develop a multiyear diversity plan that provides a framework for systemwide aspirational, actionable goals for access, inclusion and equity.

Affinity Groups. Understand the importance of developing and sustaining affinity groups. Elevate affinity group members from merely having "a seat at the table" to "a voice in the conversation." When utilized effectively, affinity groups can provide critical perspectives to an institution's response in addressing reports of bias on campus.

Ongoing, systemwide implicit bias training for faculty, students and staff. Studies show that one-time trainings are not effective and often counterproductive. Ensure implicit bias training is conducted on an annual basis, being mindful to also include incoming students, new hires and senior-level administration.

Employee and faculty engagement. Utilize the oft-overlooked talents and contributions of faculty and staff, especially those who are already operating in diversity, equity and inclusion spaces from a civic engagement or academic research standpoint.

Bystander training. Foster a university culture in which individuals feel empowered to advocate for one another. Equip community members with tools and resources to meaningfully engage in conversations with individuals with whom they have shared as well as divergent viewpoints.

"Weaponization" of Bias Incident Response Policy. Some individuals may file "bad faith" complaints of bias. Develop thoughtful considerations for how to respond to the "weaponization" of the school's bias incident policy, evaluating each incident report on a case-by-case basis.

Balancing interests of internal and external stakeholders. Be mindful of the intersection of interests from external stakeholders such as community activists, parents, the media, alumni, potential students and donors.

Transparent, ongoing communications. Implement a system to provide transparent, ongoing communications to keep the campus community informed of the status of bias incidents, from the onset of the incident through its conclusion.

Restorative practices and community engagement. Develop productive activities and dialogue aimed at restoring the community in the aftermath of a highly publicized bias event.



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