

MEMORANDUM

To: The CEDI Leadership Board
Fr: The “How to report to the campus about bias incidents” CEDI subcommittee
RE: Procedures on reporting to campus about bias incidents
Date: April 16, 2018 (revised after 4-9-18 presentation to CEDI Leadership Board)

Introduction

This fall, Tuesday Group charged CEDI with making recommendations on how, why, and by whom bias incidents should be reported to the campus. The CEDI Leadership Board formed a subcommittee made up of Carolyn Fure-Slocum, Zhi You Koh, Erin Updike, Debby Walsler-Kuntz, and David Wiles. In late fall term, the subcommittee formulated a set of questions to learn how other campuses handle bias incidents. Dean of Students Carolyn Livingston sent these to her counterparts across the country. Ten schools responded, and the subcommittee followed up with phone calls to three of them. It quickly became clear that no one has this issue fully figured out and many schools are currently reconsidering and revising their practices, but that we could learn from each of them.

Practices range from reporting all bias incidents and direct threats, to case-by-case consideration by the team of what to report to the campus, to reporting only direct threats. In seven out of ten schools, there is some way of reporting bias incidents which are not direct threats to the campus, be it through all-campus emails or a website. Many campuses have a campus website designated to post non-direct threat incidents or a report of incidents for the year written by their communications office or other involved staff.

At most colleges, a designated team addresses bias incidents and assesses the suitable immediate response. This team is either a formal bias incident response team with a larger mandate and scope in addressing bias incidents, or an informal team of relevant middle- and upper-level staff members.

Goals and Outcomes in Reporting Practices

While the subcommittee did not ask other colleges what their goals were in choosing a particular practice, we ascertained that they emphasize different goals and outcomes, among which are:

- sharing information about what has happened and the response (if any)
- offering education for the campus about the related issues
- supporting those directly or indirectly affected

- alerting the campus to danger
- providing an accurate (and often calmer than social media) view of campus climate
- providing a timely statement to campus

Recognizing that each of these goals is important, the subcommittee supports these existing practices¹:

1. Incident reports will continue to come to the attention of the Dean of Students (DOS) staff via the Community Concern Form or the Security Office.
2. If the DOS and/or Security Office determines that an immediate or direct threat exists, it/they will follow existing emergency protocols.
3. Relevant decision makers (Dean of the College or the V.P. and Treasurer) will learn of any incident related to faculty or staff.
4. DOS staff will continue to offer immediate support to those involved.
5. If needed, an investigation will be launched or conversations had with those involved, as is now the case.

The subcommittee recommends these modified and new practices:

- A. Currently, when a student-related bias incident is reported, a small group in the DOS office meets to decide how to handle the incident. We suggest that a small group (likely to consist of many of the same staff involved in determining how to handle a situation) will meet to decide whether and how to report the incident. This group may, for instance, include the Associate or Assistant DOS, the Director of Security, an Associate Dean of the College (DOC), and the Director of College Communications. If appropriate, the Directors of OIIL, TRiO, GSC, Title IX, and/or the Chaplain might also join the group. This approach allows for a rapid gathering of key individuals in a timely manner. The objective is to swiftly gather a group with relevant knowledge to bring context to the consideration of whether to immediately report the incident to the campus.
- B. Bias incidents, whether deemed to be a threat or not, will be posted without identifying information to a “Bias Incident” CEDI website. The division handling the

¹ The subcommittee notes that the practices described here pertain to Community Concern Forms submitted for student incidents. We recognize there is a different process for routing these forms as they relate to faculty and staff. The makeup of the group that comes together to consider whether the campus should be informed of a faculty or staff-related bias incident would adjust to include the appropriate Dean of the College and/or HR and VP & Treasurer staff.

issue (DOS, DOC, or V.P./Treasurer) will write these posts or call on College Communications to write them.

- C. The CEDI co-chairs and advisor will be notified and will bring the incident, without identifying information, to the attention of the full CEDI Leadership Board. The Board may see an opportunity for educational fora or a broader campus discussion regarding the relevant issues, such as through a Town Hall gathering or CEDI panel, a discussion sponsored by an office, *Carletonian* articles, restorative justice circles, etc.
- D. Whenever possible/appropriate, any follow up to the incident should be reported briefly on the website (e.g., “student was sanctioned,” “town hall was held,” “no further information was found”).
- E. Annually, or as needed, CEDI will remind the campus about its existence, the Community Concern Form, and how to access the Bias Incident website.