

MANHATTANVILLE COLLEGE

Bias Education Response Team (BERT)

Bias Incident Report Data

2019-2021

INTRODUCTION

Manhattanville College is committed to maintaining and nurturing a community of inclusivity where every member is valued. Dating back to 1938 when former College President, Mother Grace Dammann, affirmed the right of the first African-American student to be admitted to this institution, Manhattanville College has stood for a commitment to the inclusion and celebration of the diverse backgrounds, cultures, experiences, and perspectives of our community members.

Our community is committed to maintaining an inclusive campus climate, yet we recognize that incidents of bias and discrimination have occurred to, and are committed by, our community members. When this happens, we want our students, staff, and faculty to fully understand their options for support and to be aware of established procedures for reporting and responding to such behaviors.



Understanding Bias

The free expression of ideas, even those that may be unpopular or controversial, is an essential part of a vibrant, diverse community. Problems arise, however, when members of a community act on biases that are based on fear, misunderstanding, or dislike of a certain group of people. The College's policy on Non-discrimination and Harassment provides guidance and reporting information for those who believe they have experienced discrimination and/or harassment as employees, applicants for employment, volunteers, students, or applicants for admission on the basis of their perceived age, race, creed, color, religion, national origin, immigration or citizenship status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, military status, sex, gender, disability, predisposing genetic characteristics, criminal conviction, marital status, familial status, domestic violence victim status, gender identity, or transgender identity.

Behavior reflecting negative bias that is directed against or that targets an individual or group based on the perceived or actual characteristics listed above, but which does not meet the Federal and State statutes covered by the College's Policy on Non-Discrimination and Harassment, can still cause harm to individuals and the community. Such harmful behaviors run counter to the mission and values of Manhattanville College. These bias behaviors can include oral, written or visual use of degrading language or stereotypes, insults which, intentionally or not, communicate hostile or derogatory messages to persons based solely upon their perceived identity.

Overview

In 2019, a reporting system and Responding to Bias website was designed and launched to provide the campus community a way to report bias and discrimination incidents within our campus community. The reporting system and subsequent reports of bias and/or discrimination have been managed/responded to by The Bias Education Response Team (BERT).

Below is a summarization of the work of BERT during the 2019-2021 academic years and includes: number of reports, outcome of the findings, outreach efforts from BERT, and recommendations for the campus community to consider.

Manhattanville Bias Education Response Team

Bias Education Response Team Responsibilities

The Manhattanville Bias Education Response Team (BERT) helps in promoting a campus climate in which all members thrive personally, professionally, and academically. Team members serve as supportive resources for community members who have reported incidents of bias not addressed by the Manhattanville Student Handbook or the Faculty/Staff Handbook. Team members are trained on issues related to bias response.

The team also serves as a clearinghouse for reported incidents of bias. Data is collected in aggregate and shared with the community annually. Where appropriate, the Bias Education Response Team will advise the President and members of their cabinet on appropriate actions and communication to the community.

BERT **does not** have the authority to conduct disciplinary proceedings or impose discipline on students, staff or faculty. The chair shall review all reports and make referrals as appropriate. Reports involving violations of the Student Handbook, Title IX policies, Faculty or Staff Handbooks will be referred and addressed in accordance with Manhattanville' s policies as follows:

- Reports of policy violations related to the Student Handbooks will be directed to the Dean of Students;
- Reports of policy violations related to the behavior of staff members will be directed to Human Resources;
- Reports of policy violations related to the behavior of faculty members will be directed to the Dean of the faculty member's school;
- Reports of sexual misconduct or harassment will be directed to the Title IX Coordinator or appropriate deputy coordinator.

Bias Education Response Team Membership

- Chair (Dean of Students)
- Three faculty members selected through established procedures
- Three members of the professional staff in addition to, the Director of the Center of Inclusion

**The team may include other members of the community in its response when appropriate.*

BERT Members

 <p>Sharlise Smith-Rodriguez <i>Chair - BERT</i> 05/2019 - Present</p>	 <p>Alex Barkley <i>BERT Member - Staff</i> 05/2019 - Present</p>	 <p>Anthony Wilder <i>BERT Member</i> <i>Center for Inclusion Director</i> 07/2021 - Present</p>
 <p>Sharon Callender <i>BERT Member - Staff</i> 06/2021 - Present</p>	 <p>Kathy Palmer <i>BERT Member - Staff</i> 06/2021 - Present</p>	 <p>George Schreer <i>BERT Member - Faculty</i> 05/2019 - Present</p>



Randy Williams

BERT Member – Faculty

05/2019 - Present



Stephanie Peguillan

BERT Member - Staff

06/2021 - Present



Patricia Stout-Traina

BERT Member – Staff

06/2021 - Present



Alissa Wilson

BERT Member - Staff

05/2019 – 12/2020



Mary Coakly-Fields

BERT Member - Faculty

05/2019 – 05/2021



Adebimpe Dare

BERT Member

Center for Inclusion Director

05/2019 – 12/2020

Reports & Outcomes

The data contained below refers to reports submitted via the Bias-Related [On Line Incident Reporting System](#) and emails to a BERT member. The reporting system has only been in use for two years. The following data is broken down by academic year; which is data collected from August to July.

Academic Year 2019 – 2020	Reporter	Respondent	Type of Bias	Setting/Location	Outcome
10/2019	Undergraduate Student	Faculty	Other	Office	No further contact directive and Educational Programming
11/2019	Undergraduate Student	Faculty	Race	Classroom	Informational Conversation
Total Number of Reports	2				

Academic Year 2020 – 2021	Reporter	Respondent	Type of Bias	Setting/Location	Outcome
9/2020	Undergraduate Student	Faculty	Race	Classroom	Mediated conversation with student, faculty and BERT member
9/2020	Undergraduate Student	Staff	Other	Dammann Field	Referred to Student Conduct
9/2020	Undergraduate	Faculty	Other	Course Material	Ended due to lack of student involvement in process
10/2020	Undergraduate Student	Faculty & Staff	Disability	Classroom	Trainings on Supporting Students w/ Disabilities Recommend grade appeal

					File an accommodations grievance
2/2021	Faculty	Faculty	Race	Selection Committee	Conversation amongst both faculty
4/2021	Undergraduate Student	Undergraduate Students	Disability	Campus	Not Determined Meeting w/ Student Health & Counseling Mediated conversation with students involved
4/2021	Undergraduate Students	Faculty	Race	Classroom	Reading and discussion of publication with Chief Diversity Officer Discussion on creating an inclusive classroom Apology letter to the reporters
Total Number of Reports	7				

Types of Bias

Race/Ethnicity	4
Age	
Disability	2
National Origin	
Religion/Creed	
LGBTQ Identity	
Retaliation	
Other*	3

*Other- refers to incidents where there is no clear motive of bias

Outreach Efforts

Over the past two years, the *Bias-Related Incident Reporting System* and emails to BERT members have allowed members of our community a formal venue for submitting reports. Through this system, we have been able to respond, support, and provide resources to students and members of our community in a timely fashion.

Regular updates and recommendation regarding bias-related incident reports were given to the Chief Diversity Officer/Vice President of Student Affairs and the Provost.

We will continue to raise awareness about Bias-related reporting mechanism for students, faculty and staff. By continuing to meet with student groups (i.e. RAs, Student Government, SAC, Commuter Council); present to Faculty Council and President's Council; tabling in Brownson Hall and Cafeteria; sending emails to the campus community; update website with information and resources for our community members

Members of the Bias Education Response Team (BERT) will continue to sit on the Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Council

Work with Dean of School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) to create a statement of BERT for faculty to include on their syllabus.

Recommendations

Recommendations that have been made to the Chief Diversity Officer/Vice President of Student Affairs and Provost are the following:

1. The Center for Inclusion, Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Taskforce, and the Center for Student Accommodations to work with campus partners on reducing the stigma around Albinism, the visually impaired and students with disabilities,
2. Training for members of BERT,
3. Training for faculty on how to create an inclusive classroom and providing context of content to students,
4. Creating better communication about processes (i.e. selection committees) and policies to the campus community.

Use of the reporting system continues to increase, but the overall number of reported incidents is low. We encourage all community members to report any bias-related incidents and allow for BERT to further explore.

Reporting Bias Related Incidents

Manhattanville College strongly encourages the reporting of all such incidents occurring on campus or at college sponsored events and activities. By keeping a record, we are able to understand bias behavior occurring and help the College identify trends, and identify those community members in need of institutional support, as well as those who could benefit from training and education in empathy and sensitivity. Reporting holds campus administration and members of BERT accountable and can lead to proactive measures to prevent future bias.

Bias reporting is about:

- cultivating an inclusive and supportive community
- creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and inclusivity
- learning and unlearning
- creating a set of shared values
- learning about and addressing the concerns of campus members

Bias reporting is not about the expression of an idea or point of view some may find offensive or which causes some intellectual discomfort. Manhattanville College values freedom of expression and the open exchange of ideas. The expression and analysis of a wide range of views is a vital part of campus discourse. While this value of openness protects controversial ideas, it does not protect harassment or expressions of bias or hate aimed at individuals or groups that violate College policies.

Any member of the Manhattanville Community (including faculty, staff, student, or administration) who experiences or witnesses bias-related incidents may file a report by:

- Using the [On Line Incident Reporting System](#) or
- Contacting any member of the Bias Education Reporting Team

When a report is submitted, the Dean of Students (BERT Chair) or their designee will review the report and determine the appropriate referral (see Protocol diagram). The Dean will convene the BERT team to review reports that are not violations of college policy. The BERT team determines an appropriate course of action including how to support the affected individual and community. This support could take the form of facilitated dialogue, mediation, or educational outreach.

Bias Education Report Team (BERT) Flowchart

