

Bemidji State University

Bias Incident Advisory Team

Background

Bemidji State University aspires to create an environment that is inclusive and safe for all community members. Our campus will always be a place of hope and opportunity where all students – no matter who they are or where they are from – can feel welcome, feel safe to learn and participate, and feel free to express their hopes, their dreams, and their ideas. Bias incidents undermine our campus' efforts toward equity and inclusion, limit our personal and collective ability to excel in teaching, learning, and participating, and negatively impact our service to the broader region and state. They also impede free and open discourse and our ability to know and learn from one another. Biased and hateful expression causes harm and fractures in our communities that must be addressed.

What is a bias incident?

A bias incident is an act of bigotry, harassment, or intimidation that is motivated in whole or in part by prejudice based on an individual's or group's actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Bias often stems from fear, misunderstanding, hatred, and stereotypes and may be intentional or unintentional.

University Resources

Bemidji State University has policies, procedures and protocols in place to respond to different kinds of incidents, enabling it to attend to the health and safety of campus community members, manage individual complaints or grievances, and adjudicate possible violations of college policies or local, state or federal laws. Examples of such policies, procedures, and protocols include but are not limited to:

- Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination in Employment and Education Policy <https://www.bemidjistate.edu/offices/president/policies/wp-content/uploads/sites/79/2015/06/Equal-Opportunity-and-Non-Discrimination-in-employment-and-education-policy.pdf>
- Report/Complaint of Discrimination/Harassment Investigation and Resolution Procedure <https://www.bemidjistate.edu/offices/president/policies/wp-content/uploads/sites/79/2018/05/BSU-Response-to-Disrimination-and-Harassment-Procedure.pdf>
- Preferred Name Policy Procedure <https://www.bemidjistate.edu/offices/president/policies/wp-content/uploads/sites/79/2015/06/Preferred-Name-Policy-Procedure.pdf>
- Gender Identity and Expression Acceptance Policy <https://www.bemidjistate.edu/offices/president/policies/wp-content/uploads/sites/79/2018/06/Gender-Identity-and-Expression-Acceptance.pdf>
- Respectful Workplace Policy <http://minnstate.edu/board/procedure/1c0p2.html>
- Sexual Violence Policy <http://minnstate.edu/board/policy/1b03.html>
- HIV AIDS Policy <https://www.bemidjistate.edu/offices/president/policies/wp-content/uploads/sites/79/2015/06/HIV-AIDS-Policy.pdf>
- BSU Student Code of Conduct <https://www.bemidjistate.edu/offices/student-life-success/handbook/conduct/>
- Employment agreements and faculty contracts <https://www.bemidjistate.edu/offices/human-resources/current-employees/employee-resources/labor-relations/>
- Local, state, or federal civil rights laws and regulations

Individuals may use the established procedures discussed in the policies and procedures to understand university policy or to obtain information on how to file a complaint for an alleged violation of policy.

Bias Incident Advisory Team

In addition to the formal complaint processes, Bemidji State University has a Bias Incident Advisory Team. In general, the purpose of this group is to receive and respond to reported bias incidents. Students, employees, visitors, community members, vendors, contractors, and/or any other member of the campus community who experience or become aware of a possible bias incident may report the incident to any member of the Bias Incident Advisory Team. Once the team receives a bias incident, responses may include:

- Identifying the needs of the affected individuals, as well as those of the larger learning community.
- Referring individuals to the Affirmative Action Office for allegations of violations of the Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination in Employment and Education Policy or the Sexual Violence Policy or to Human Resources for allegations of violations of the Respectful Workplace Policy.
- Referring affected individuals to the Student Conduct Officer, Public Safety, or the Student Center for Health and Counseling.
- Ensuring that support, resources, and consultation are provided to those harmed by the incident.
- Considering whether the incident has potential free speech or academic freedom implications.
- Referring the matter to law enforcement if circumstances warrant.
- Updating the campus community as appropriate.
- Organizing and holding open forums for affected individuals as well as the larger community to gather suggestions, to reaffirm campus values and standards and to educate.
- Recommending incident-related topic program areas for additional trainings for students and employees.

All efforts should be made to identify and provide opportunities for the community that will enhance and encourage inter-group dialogue that focuses on relevant issues of bias and discrimination, and effective strategies for enhancing individual and community safety and well-being and reinforcing community values.

Bemidji State University is committed to protecting the free expression and academic freedom rights of all university community members. The Bias Incident Advisory Team does not have a role in determining whether campus policy has been violated and/or imposing disciplinary action. Members of the team will meet at least once per semester and more often as needed to address concerns and receive training.

Bias Incident Advisory Team Composition

Position/Title	Participant	Terms of Service
Campus Diversity Officer	Steven D. Parker	Ex-officio Voting Member
Vice President of Student Life and Success	Travis Greene	Ex-officio Voting Member
Chief Human Resources officer	Megan Zothman	Ex-officio Voting Member
Affirmative Action Officer	Nicholas Taylor	Ex-officio Voting Member
Director of Housing and Residential Life	Randy Ludeman	Ex-officio Voting Member
Director of Hobson Memorial Union	Nina Johnson	Ex-officio Voting Member
Director Communications and Marketing	Andy Bartlett	Ex-officio Voting Member
Public Safety Officer	Casey McCarthy	Ex-officio Voting Member

Accessibility Coordinator	Christian Brezczinski	Ex-officio Voting Member
Director of American Indian Resource Center	Chrissy Downwind	Ex-officio Voting Member
Director of Athletics	Tracy Dill	Ex-officio Voting Member
Director of International Programs	Cherish Hagen-Swanson	Ex-officio Voting Member
Coordinator for Center for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	Ye 'Solar' Hong	Ex-officio Voting Member
Faculty (1 of 2)	Matt Greife	2-year term, ends 2023
Faculty (2 of 2)	William Graves	2-year term, ends 2024
Student (1 of 2)	Caleb Travis	Annually in the spring
Student (2 of 2)	Crystal Kastl	Annually in the spring
Title IX Coordinator	N/A	N/A

The Campus Diversity Officer may invite additional individuals to serve as consultants to the team if they possess expertise that could add to the analyses in a special case.