

Presidential Task Force on Campus Climate
Final Report: Campus Response Subcommittee
June 8, 2018

BACKGROUND

The Campus Response subcommittee was charged with reviewing and making recommendations to address: (1) how the university should respond to any future incidents, whether local or broader in scope, that infringe upon our core principles, (2) our mechanisms of support, communication and response related to bias incidents, (3) the role of individuals and campus groups in efforts to counter unacceptable actions and act as positive forces that counter harmful incidents, and (4) metrics to evaluate long-term success.

Subcommittee members deemed it appropriate to acknowledge, review and document the bias incidents that led to the creation of the Presidential Task Force as well as those that occurred during our appointed term. These incidents include the following:

- In September 2017, an African-American student was allegedly harassed and beaten in Collegetown by a white member of a Cornell fraternity. Earlier in the evening, the same individual was recorded using racial epithets in reference to another student and the recording was posted on social media (<http://cornellsun.com/2017/09/19/was-the-collegetown-assault-of-a-black-student-a-hate-crime/>).
- Earlier that month, a Cornell undergraduate student allegedly chanted “build a wall” near the Latino Living Center less than 24 hours after President Trump ordered the end of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (<http://cornellsun.com/2017/09/07/fraternity-member-allegedly-chants-build-a-wall-near-latino-living-center/>).
- In October 2017, anti-Semitic posters with swastikas were posted on several university buildings and on a statue of Ezra Cornell (<http://cornellsun.com/2017/10/23/anti-semitic-posters-appear-on-campus-advertising-apparently-fake-hate-group/>).
- Black Lives Matter posters were vandalized at the Veterinary College.
- In March 2018, two white males allegedly assaulted and used racial slurs to harass an African-American undergraduate student near a taco truck in Collegetown. The alleged assailants, who were not students at either Cornell or Ithaca College, reportedly injured others including the good Samaritan who attempted to assist the initial victim (<http://cornellsun.com/2018/04/12/police-arrest-2-in-assault-of-black-cornell-student-who-said-he-was-called-a-slur/>).
- Also in March, a female Cornell undergraduate student was sexually assaulted while trying to enter her apartment at night (https://www.cupolice.cornell.edu/alerts.cfm?ALERT_ID=2141).

We recognize that these published events are not an exhaustive or representative list of bias incidents that have affected the campus community. However, these publicized incidents, their impacts and the ensuing responses served as bases for many discussions of campus climate and institutional responses to bias incidents. They also shaped our findings and informed our recommendations regarding responses to incidents of bias or harassment.

ORGANIZATION AND WORK PROCESSES

We began our work by organizing into four working groups, each focusing on different aspects of campus response. Specifically, guided by our initial charge, the campus response subcommittee organized into working groups that focused on: (1) instructional support, (2) community health, (3) co-curricular support, and (4) bias communication and reporting.

To reach out to as many individuals, offices or groups as possible in the limited time available, the working groups conducted independent or collaborative outreach efforts to meet their information needs (See Appendix 1 for a summary of outreach efforts). As a result of the degree of independence across working groups and the possibility of overlap in their separate charges, this report includes some common themes and overlapping recommendations across groups, as well as some unique findings identified within each group. The major themes that surfaced from our collective outreach efforts are summarized below.

MAJOR THEMES FROM OUTREACH EFFORTS

Perceived Inconsistencies

Our outreach efforts revealed concerns about differences in responses over time, across incidents or across units. Because the differences in responses are more easily observable than the factors that contribute to these differences, students perceive inconsistencies and draw unfavorable inferences about the extent to which the institution or institutional actors are committed to creating an inclusive campus climate. Examples include:

- Some students drew unfavorable inferences about the extent to which the campus community cares about sexual assault as a result of their observation that the initial statements about the two incidents that occurred in March came from different university officials.
- Students noted inconsistencies across schools and instructors in terms of if or how they addressed recent bias incidents.
- With the widespread use of social media, many students hear of bias incidents, even those that do not attract media attention. Thus, there is the potential for some to notice and react negatively to differences in how the university responds to publicized vs. unpublicized incidents. At least one person attributed this perceived difference to a greater concern for the image of the institution than for the safety of its students.
- Members of one working group were informed of differences in how the two groups that handle bias incidents on campus operate. Specifically, they were told that the Bias Assessment and Response Team (BART) addresses all bias incidents that ONLY involve students. Any incidents that involve faculty and staff (even if another party is a student) are channeled to the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity. BART currently reaches out to both the victim and the alleged perpetrator of a bias incident (if names are given), whereas the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity only reaches out to offer support to the victim. They do not contact the alleged perpetrator at all.

The Life Cycle of Responses

Our outreach efforts suggest that students attend to more than just the initial statements released immediately after incidents of bias or sexual assault. Their comments suggest that responses have a life

cycle that begins with the occurrence of an incident and ends with perceptions of how the incident is resolved. In addition to the initial verbal response, if any, students also observe and infer meaning from:

- Observable actions that follow any initial statements, such as efforts to comfort or support the alleged victims or other affected parties.
- Information about any measures taken to reduce the likelihood or impact of future occurrences.
- The presence or absence of information about how bias incidents are resolved.
- The severity of consequences for perpetrators, if any.

Perceived Overreliance on Unpaid or Untrained Labor

Our findings suggest that Cornell is challenged by a heavy reliance, either by the institution or by the students it serves, on a variety of early responders (e.g., student leaders, residence hall staff, graduate TAs, instructors, etc.) who lack the training, incentives or bandwidth to provide sufficient support for affected populations. The following observations or sentiments shared in various community conversations support this theme:

- Student leaders, especially those from marginalized populations, feel that they are too frequently called upon to assist university efforts to address bias incidents when they, themselves, are affected and have other responsibilities to perform (e.g., coursework).
- The university appears to rely heavily upon Greek letter organizations to provide safe, secure, developmentally appropriate social gatherings and housing for students.
- Empathetic staff members, who have other responsibilities, are perceived to be overburdened with the responsibility to provide care and support in response to crises.
- Graduate TAs and faculty are sometimes seen as “first responders” by students who expect them to address bias incidents that occur on campus. However, some faculty feel unequipped to discuss these issues.

Challenges of Social Media

The widespread use of social media, especially by the student population, has created a number of challenges that create the need to re-evaluate our processes for communicating initial responses to bias incidents. These challenges include:

- The speed with which students send and receive information through social media results in the potential for information about bias incidents to be circulated before key facts can be verified by outlets with higher accuracy thresholds.
- The use of social media to disseminate information about bias incidents can result in students being informed about incidents even if they are not publicized in the media.
- For victims of sexual assault or bias incidents, social media has become a space to take ownership and shame alleged perpetrators when they believe official reporting mechanisms are likely to fail them (<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/sep/13/social-media-rape-survivors-justice-legal-system>).

Lack of Trust

Some students expressed a lack of trust in the administration to act in a manner that serves the interests of marginalized students. They attributed their mistrust to multiple factors, including their beliefs that: (1) experiences of bias are recurring problems on campus, (2) their solutions to these

problems (i.e., demands) are rarely considered, and (3) perpetrators of bias incidents continue to face little or no consequences for their actions. Manifestations of this lack of trust include:

- Calls for transparency and tendencies to expect undesired outcomes when information is lacking.
- Desires for student representation on various bodies, despite their perceptions that student leaders already expend excessive amounts of time and emotional labor on campus climate issues.

In addition to these themes that surfaced in various campus conversations, we report findings from a campus-wide survey that included specific questions about how the university should respond to incidents of bias or harassment, whether local or broader in scope. Findings based on answers to those questions complement the major themes that surfaced from various community conversations.

FINDINGS FROM CAMPUS RESPONSE SURVEY QUESTIONS

The Message Source

Overall, survey respondents identified the university president as the appropriate party to issue statements in response to incidents of bias or harassment, both on (Figure 1) and off campus (Figure 2). For on-campus incidents, 63 percent of respondents indicated that it was either important or very important to receive a message from the president. Moreover, more respondents from each constituent group (i.e., undergraduates, graduate or professional students, nonacademic staff, and faculty members or other academic positions) deemed it important or very important to receive a message from the president than from either the vice president for student and campus life (or dean of students) or their school or college dean. However, more than half of all respondents indicated that it also was important to receive a message from the vice president for student and campus life (or dean of students) (53 percent) or their school or college dean (51 percent). Undergraduate students and nonacademic staff tended to favor the vice president for student and campus life (or dean of students) over their school or college dean, whereas graduate and professional students and faculty and other academics favored their deans over the vice president for student and campus life.

The finding that more than half of all respondents indicated that is important for them to hear from the president, vice president for student and campus life, and their school or college dean is consistent with some comments (to open-ended questions) suggesting the need for coordinated messaging from university and school or college administrators. On the other hand, some respondents cautioned against adopting practices that would result in a “flood” of emails.

The Location of the Incident

Overall, respondents indicated that it was more important for university officials to issue statements in response to incidents of bias or harassment that occur on campus than for those that occur off campus. Less than half of all respondents indicated that it was either important or very important to receive a message from the president (43 percent), vice president for student and campus life (31 percent), or school or college dean (28 percent) (Figure 2).

Responses to open-ended questions suggest a number of concerns about the university issuing statements in response to off-campus incidents. These concerns include the impracticality of responding to a growing number of bias incidents, the prospect of receiving a deluge of undesired emails, the

potential for multiple messages about minor incidents to reduce the impact of those pertaining to more significant on-campus incidents, and the appearance that the institution is choosing sides in a political debate. Arguments in favor of responding to off-campus incidents highlight the perceived benefits of reiterating the institution's core values.

The Timing of an Initial Statement

Overall, the two most popular responses to the timing question were "Within 24 hours (even if just to acknowledge an incident has been reported)" (48 percent) and "As soon as facts have been verified (even if it takes longer than 24 hours)" (42 percent) (Figure 3). The relative preference for speed over accuracy was slightly more pronounced among undergraduates (+7 percent) and nonacademic staff (+9 percent) than among graduate and professional students (+1 percent) and faculty members and other academics (+4 percent) (Table 1).

Open-ended responses that emphasize timeliness highlight the importance of Cornell controlling the narrative, pre-empting misinformation on social media, and avoiding delays that give the impression of calculated and insincere responses. On the other hand, responses that favored patience and accuracy raised concerns about premature judgments of alleged perpetrators.

Improving Existing Reporting and Response Systems

An analysis of responses to an open-ended question about improving existing systems for reporting and responding to incidents of bias or harassment yielded eight major themes. These themes are summarized in Table 2 and presented and illustrated below using selected quotes.

1. Take Action

- "Punishments for students harassing other students NEEDS to be enforced more harshly to deter students from harassing each other."
- "Have more communication between the students and the process/results. I know many people who have experienced racist remarks, sexually harassed, etc and HAVE reported it, but nothing was done (at least in the eyes of the students). It's so frequent that if something happens, most likely, we won't report it because we know that nothing will be done. Now I don't know if things were done and the main student decide not to share information. However, other students are aware of what happened and not being told that actions were taken makes us trust Cornell less."
- "You can show that there is action versus nothing happening. If people complain about harassment and yet nothing happens to that faculty member, one gets incredibly discouraged. A visible response is needed."

2. Increase Accessibility of Reporting

- "I don't know. Maybe text to a number when the incident happens?"
- "Utilize all the existing forms of modern communication, if you aren't already. Phone, email, text, website disclosures."
- "The bias reporting office should make both an android and iphone app to quick and easy bias reporting. My idea this app is that you would enter the netID or take a picture of the offender and Cornell can use facial image correlation to find the culprit and serve justice."

3. Increase Awareness

- “Make people more aware of them. I have no idea how to report bias incidents”
- “Make the existing system more known. Things buried in emails are not the answer. Physical signs on campus or in main hubs will do much better.”
- “There's little stickers all over campus bathrooms about mental health services and domestic violence hotlines... why not a hotline for bias? If it already exists, why not advertise it?”

4. Increase Empathy

- “The system of reporting bias incidents is depersonalized and emotionally exhausting to those who have to navigate it. One possible solution to this issue is to guarantee that the reporter (whether they are the victim or someone who heard about the incident secondhand) be treated as a person rather than data. Further, not every victim of bias and harassment wants their fellow students or professors to be involved in the process of recovering or even reporting the incident. Mandating that a faculty member reports a student's confidential information immediately and without the victim's consent betrays the confidence and trust of the victim.”
- “I feel that HR functions have changed here at Cornell, it used to be that employees could go to them and felt that they could speak confidentially and find help. What I have observed is that this is not the case anymore so maybe that needs to be reviewed. Maybe HR needs to do better in promoting themselves as a partner and built trust.”

5. Consider Alternative Resolution Mechanisms

- “I would put more effort into trying to resolve harassment incidents via mediation whenever possible. I don't have insight into how that process works, so I can't say much more than that.”
- “I think we could really benefit from using restorative justice.”
- “I think there needs to be more of an emphasis on personal responsibility on campus. Reporting a bias report and thinking that is the way to resolve conflict is not the way things work after graduation. If bias reporting is to exist on campus, it should involve a conversation between the two individuals.”

6. Increase Transparency

- “Transparency, transparency, and more transparency, the whole while, protecting the victims...”
- “More transparency about reported incidents (while maintaining confidentiality) and follow ups about what the university is doing to combat the issues. No more one and done emails.”
- “More transparency would be helpful, but tricky to balance with privacy.”

7. Emphasize Education

- “I am still learning exactly how this is handled, but I believe there should be some sort of educational/information feedback component of the existing reporting and responding system. This would allow the offender to learn that what they said/did was a problem. I know some incidents are blatant and obviously intentional, but I also suspect others are careless or misinformed, and perpetrators on that side of the spectrum can benefit from constructive feedback.”

- “There is a need for education about why there is bias in society.”
- “Reporting bias is not the problem - it's the fallout from that action that makes people pause. Unless the complainant has faith that the biased person isn't untouchable and can face actual consequences, there is no point in reporting bias. Like anything, prevention is better than treatment so slowly teaching people in authority positions about implicit bias and requiring everyone to attend workshops on these topics might help. They are not mandatory now, but they should be especially for faculty. Given how cantankerous some faculty are, I understand why this is a challenge. But given the power structure of a university (near-absolute power of a PI over subordinates), and the prioritizing of hotshot PIs that bring grants and prestige, I don't see bias declining in the future, only being whitewashed.”

8. Simplify the Process

- “Eliminate the multiple channels and bureaucracy wherever possible.”
- “It is a long arduous process to report anything, and it is even harder to report something against a professor (in regards to not working with disabled students etc.). Make it accessible.”
- “First, the online bias reporting website is overwhelming. It requires a victim to wade through multiple options for reporting, to make several decisions regarding the level of severity of the incident and to know the definitions of several terms. There needs to be a SIMPLE process for reporting! Our students are busy, and anyone making a report will probably already be in an emotionally vulnerable state. The reporting process should not be a BURDEN.”

Overall, many responses address the needs of victims (e.g., increasing awareness of reporting mechanisms through signage or training sessions, leveraging technology to improve ease of reporting, making the reporting experience less complex and dehumanizing, and imposing harsher punishments on perpetrators). However, some responses address the needs of the broader community (e.g., by increasing transparency and educating the community about bias and harassment).

Additional Thoughts About Responses to Bias Incidents

An analysis of responses to an open-ended question about responding to incidents of bias or harassment yielded eight major themes. These themes are summarized in Table 3 and presented and illustrated below using selected quotes.

1. Take Action

- “I think we need structural changes, not more taskforces, to help minorities feel safe.”
- “It becomes tiresome seeing the same message put out about these incidents and it feels like nothing worthwhile is being done. Prove you believe what you preach by taking appropriate action.”
- “When I get the same emails over and over again from authority figures who claim that acts of racism and violence against people of color are against university policy and they won't stand for it, they begin to lose their meaning and become acts of performative allyship when NOTHING ACTUALLY CHANGES. Instead of sending the same letters over and over again proclaiming how against racism you are every time something like this happens, try and actually make positive change and make the perpetrators face actual consequences.”

2. Increase Transparency

- “It certainly depends on the incident. Too many variations to comment, but I appreciate the question. I will say that I would appreciate more transparency.”
- “Transparency is a must to establishing trust. It's difficult to walk the line of vulnerability and engagement, but it is important to do so.”
- “Even in a media environment that because of the internet can be difficult to negotiate and can be rife with both error and intentional disinformation, it's important that the University prioritize transparency and err on the side of frank communication.”

3. Emphasize Timeliness

- “The speed that misinformation can go viral on social media is incredible. I think the university should acknowledge incidents and pending investigations quickly to squash rumors.”
- “I think it's nice to hear about things quickly as part of the Cornell community, especially if the media is going to report it anyway. I totally understand that when things are fresh there isn't much known, but I would rather hear about it than not. Once the facts are verified I have other sources that I'd use to find out more information about the incident (like the Sun, asking around campus, etc). I think it's important for Cornell to say something before those other voices - including the rumor mill - put their spin on it.”
- “Prompt response from university leadership makes me feel that the university cares and is paying attention. Delayed response makes it feel that any statement is a political band-aid.”

4. Prioritize Accuracy

- “Transparency is paramount. But speed is less important than getting it right.”
- “Any bias incident whether it's true or false should be handled with extreme care. I don't think there should be a response just for the sake of responding. Get your facts and details straight, then respond. In this modern tech age where we pass judgment by simply swiping right or clicking a like button, we need to do more than just put "something out there", we need the truth.”
- “I wish that these incidents would refrain from taking a stance on incidents until all facts have been gathered. A lot of headlines and articles of these events almost always seem to blow them out of proportion. Later on as more facts come in; the truth starts to take hold which usually isn't as horrible as the original reporting suggested.”

5. Be Selective

- “I am **very** concerned with current University practice of notifying the entire community any time a relatively minor incident occurs. We see these all the time. There is a HUGE difference between an incident of violent assault, rape, etc., versus more minor transgressions (a "peeping tom" or whatever). Even the language IN THIS SURVEY about "incidents of bias" confuses, and thereby implicitly equates, minor and truly bad stuff. Current University notification practices -- although well intentioned in the interests of full information and transparency -- unfortunately have the result of equating and trivializing these incidents and inuring the community to the truly bad, reprehensible events that unfortunately do sometimes occur. There needs to be more discrimination in what events the community is notified about, and how they are notified, so that truly bad stuff gets more attention.”

- “The response below is for incidents that occur within the Cornell community. I don't think it's necessary, or appropriate, for the administration to formally respond to incidents that do not have immediate or direct impact on the university.”
- “Put aside the administration's political agenda and only report what's relevant to student safety.”

6. Provide Support Mechanisms and Resources

- “Generally I would like to learn the known facts about the incidents and how members of the community who are marginalized/victimized, or who are associated with those marginalized/victimized, can be supported.”
- “Develop a protocol with timelines and expectations. Perhaps offer incident "debriefing" opportunities to further discuss plan of action/response, follow-up plans. Also offer support resources. Informational sessions related to the response of an incident may be separate from support/group settings where students/staff/faculty may need social/emotional support.”
- “Acknowledge the incident and how it may affect those in the community. Remind us of initiatives the University is working on. Remind of us resources available. Remind us that our mental health and well-being is first priority above all else. Provide on-going spaces to seek support from each other.”

7. Reiterate Cornell's Values

- “I think it never hurts to reaffirm our values in solidarity with others.”
- “We should reinforce our good values and assure a safe environment for all.”
- “I'm not sure how effective such messages are, but I still think it's important to be reminded of our values and to know that people in positions of authority care about how we treat one another.”

8. Strive for Objectivity/Balance

- “Most Conservative incidents of discrimination never get reported because we know you will not do anything.”
- “Either respond to all of them or none of them. Discriminatory acts against conservatives are never responded to or condemned. So either be fair or just stop the virtue signaling.”
- “I don't think the university should use a lot of politically loaded language that clearly endorses a liberal political stance. When someone does something stupid, it's obviously wrong. But I don't think it's necessary to use politically loaded vocabulary such as "injustice" and "bigotry;" while those words might be applicable, they're very much so associated with Republicans, and when followed by "we must respond with compassion and understanding," I feel like anyone not on the left is made out to be part of "them," which is alienating. I'd say just to condemn the irresponsibility and say that's unacceptable; but please don't use loaded language that makes me feel like I'd be shamed for disagreeing with administration on an issue. Disagreement with authority is important for a sustainable society (although sustainable has also become loaded as well at this point.)”

Although many of the comments addressed characteristics of verbal statements (e.g., timeliness, accuracy, objectivity), some focused on behavioral responses and psychological support (e.g., taking

action and providing resources and mechanisms of support). Finally, several respondents expressed appreciation for the content, tone and timeliness of the administration's responses to bias incidents, specifically the initial statements issued by the President. The following responses are representative:

- "I think the administration has done a good job, especially in terms of the speed with which President Pollack gets messages out after campus incidents."
- "I think President Pollack has responded appropriately to any incidents. And I especially appreciate her use of a more common vernacular when issuing statements, which itself tends to feel more inclusive to all members of our community."
- "I think as an institute of higher learning, it is essential that we speak swiftly and loudly. I admire President Pollack who is doing a great job on this."
- "It means a great deal to me when I hear President Pollack's and our Dean's views after an incident occurs. I think that it sets the message across the University and our College where leadership stands and the message usually is that everyone should follow suit."

Summary

Each working group sought to develop recommendations that address a combination of the common themes identified across working groups, key findings from the task force survey and any unique findings that surfaced during the course of their independent outreach efforts.

The recommendations presented below primarily involve policies or practices that intended to eliminate or manage perceived inconsistencies in responses to bias incidents; equip members of each constituent group with the skills and comfort to address and respond to bias incidents and talk, teach and/or mentor across difference; build capacity to better support students affected by future bias incidents; and recognize, accommodate, reward and even incentivize student contributions to a more inclusive climate.

The specific recommendations of each working group along with some of their additional findings are summarized and presented in the sections that follow.

A. INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

Findings – Teaching Assistants

- Graduate TAs teach, mentor and advise undergraduate students. They interact with graduate students in small settings and get to know some of them very well. Their role as educators is crucial, and they should be equipped with skills for teaching marginalized students and be well versed in adequate responses to the potential bias incidents that these students face.
- Currently, Cornell University has no central mandatory training for graduate TAs. Some departments require TAs to attend training related to their field, but only a few departments/colleges focus on diversity and inclusion (D&I) issues in these trainings. We have found that graduate TAs from STEM fields are fairly reticent to the idea of D&I training and that graduate TAs from the humanities who teach on race are more amenable to the idea.
- Center for Teaching Innovation (CTI) and the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) lead the [Inclusive Teaching Institute](#) training for graduate students once a year. This year 16 students participated in the spring institute. This 1.5-day training allows participants to explore their own social identities to increase awareness of how those identities inform their teaching; consider how to use the framework to guide their planning for increasing inclusive teaching practices; examine complexity of student experience and identity

development; categorize things that impact classroom climate; identify inclusive teaching strategies; and explore the LARA method for communication with guest facilitators from the Intergroup Dialogue Project.

- The Intergroup Dialogue Project offers an 18-hour course for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars during the winter and summer intersessions. The course relies on a four-stage process: (1) developing a shared meaning of dialogue; (2) understanding social identity, social relations and conflict; (3) practicing dialogue: understanding intergroup inequality; and (4) building alliances and other next steps. Last winter, 18 students participated in the course.

Recommendations – TAs

Recommendation A1: We recommend that the Graduate School work with CTI, CIRTL, IDP, the Cornell Interactive Theatre Ensemble (CITE), and the colleges to develop mandatory training for graduate TAs focusing on teaching and mentoring across difference, with the goal of relating the issues of inequality to the course material.

Findings – Faculty/Academic Staff

- Students see faculty members as first responders and expect them to address bias incidents that occur on campus or in the classroom. Students appreciate faculty who talk about these issues and/or facilitate meaningful conversations about bias incidents on campus.
- Only a few faculty feel comfortable addressing such issues in the classroom. They don't think that they have the necessary knowledge or skills, and some are worried about addressing "political" issues in the classroom.
- Currently Cornell University has no mandatory diversity and inclusion training for faculty.
- CTI offers the Faculty Institute for Diversity twice a year. FID brings tenured and tenure-track faculty together to engage in complex discussions about aspects of diversity; creates a network of teachers and scholars who can serve as a resource for one another on matters of diversity and education; and supports faculty in incorporating diversity elements into new or revised courses.
- Cornell Interactive Theater Ensemble offers interactive theater sessions for colleges and departments as a resource for education and training on a wide variety of issues. The CITE team is very small, and it's difficult for them to address the needs of many departments on campus.
- Currently Cornell offers different forms of training that are not integrated and do not allow participants to examine deeply their own privilege and oppression, their biases, and the way they communicate with others on an ongoing basis; to practice dialogue and communication skills; and to create a network of faculty interested in these issues.

Recommendations – Faculty/Academic Staff

Recommendation A2: Encourage faculty to address incidents of bias in their classrooms as well as relevant instances of bias on Cornell's campus and in the larger community.

Recommendation A3: Equip faculty with basic tools to increase their comfort with addressing and responding to bias incidents. We further recommend that CTI and IDP work together to develop training and materials focusing on these tools.

Recommendation A4: Support the CITE team financially to allow CITE staff to focus on trainings and workshops for Cornell faculty in the departments.

Recommendation A5: We recommend that CTI, CITE and IDP collaborate on an ongoing basis to enhance existing workshops/institutes and to develop new sustained, interpersonal and experiential opportunities for faculty to develop skills for communication and teaching across difference. Each of these units is operating in different spheres, with limited collaboration. Working together more strategically, identifying shared goals and scaffolding the learning opportunities for faculty would lead to more meaningful and ultimately systematic change.

Recommendation A6: Modify course evaluations to include an assessment of the instructor's efforts to create an inclusive climate.

Additional Findings

- Students affected by bias incidents cited experiences with unsympathetic professors refusing to make allowances that account for the time commitment and emotional labor that detract from their coursework.

Recommendations

Recommendation A7: Consult with faculty and staff to design and implement a uniform policy for giving extensions on coursework when students have been adversely affected by campus-wide bias incidents.

B. COMMUNITY HEALTH

Recommendations

Recommendation B1: Develop written Cornell University policy that clearly states the core principles, especially related to bias and discrimination, also addressing community expectations and potential consequences to behaviors/actions that counter core principles. (Consider Cornell Health's Hazing Framework: <https://health.cornell.edu/initiatives/skorton-center/hazing-prevention-initiatives>).

Recommendation B2: Frame bias, racism and discrimination not only as infringing on Cornell University values, but also as a public health issue. "To date, racism has primarily been conceptualized as a psychosocial stressor in the health science literature, and the strongest and most consistent evidence of its adverse health effects concerns mental health, as detailed in several comprehensive, systematic reviews. Self-reported racism was positively associated with increased levels of negative mental health, including all individual mental health outcomes except for positive affect (e.g., depression, anxiety, distress, psychological stress, negative affect, and post-traumatic stress), and negatively associated with positive mental health (e.g., self-esteem, life satisfaction, control and mastery, and wellbeing)." The Lancet, Vol. 389, April 8, 2017.

Recommendation B3: Develop a standard, centralized procedure to address any type of bias incident (local/national/global). The steps in the process should be consistent across the university. The procedure should be easily accessible and transparent, and include a mechanism for tracking timeline expectations. (See Skidmore College example: <https://www.skidmore.edu/bias/documents/bias-reponse-flow-chart.pdf>).

Recommendation B4: Provide additional Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) resources to facilitate community outreach (most of time dedicated to patient/client care-unable to offer additional support during the day due to clinical responsibilities, compensation to therapists/CAPS staff who offer

support/groups after hours). This recommendation includes increasing the number of diverse therapists/providers.

Recommendation B5: Increase diversity of therapists/clinicians through recruiting, hiring and retention practices.

Recommendation B6: Provide proactive programming and ongoing training for all campus students/staff/faculty (for example, “Intervene” bias training videos facilitated by Cornell Health’s Skorton Center for Health Initiatives, Intergroup Dialogue Project course for all students).

Recommendation B7: Promote and reinforce staff/faculty/student awareness of available resources for support (Caring Community, CUinfo)

Recommendation B8: Raise awareness regarding additional services at Cornell Health – all Cornell University students are assigned a primary care provider who can also be a resource, along with Cornell Health’s behavioral health consultants – members of the primary care team with expertise in the social, behavioral, emotional and psychological aspects of health.

Recommendation B9: Ensure staffing to provide support mechanisms currently in place, including Let’s Talk, CCI, community support meetings, Activist Burnout workshop led by Dr. Ginger Armas (CAPS), and “Friend to Friend” (this may include increase in CAPS staff to allow for outreach efforts without negatively impacting access to care/available appointments at Cornell Health).

C. BIAS COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTING

Findings

- Currently, Cornell University has no response protocol for incidents related to bias, which leads to bias incidents being handled inconsistently. While some degree of flexibility is desired, this lack of bias response protocol has led to the quality of university response varying even with bias incidents happening in the same month. This variance could lead to conclusions about the university’s priorities, perceived preferences for certain identity groups and, most importantly, lapses in support to the community.
- Currently, there is no one in charge of communications with relation to diversity, equity and inclusion. This gap has created confusion as to who and when specialists in diversity and inclusion need to be consulted in response to bias incidents. It has also resulted in certain university communications being substantially better than others in response to concerns about diversity and inclusion. Additionally, the lack of a centralized communications office for diversity and inclusion has hindered publicity: There are many resources at the university that many members of the community do not know exist.
- Currently, the response to bias incidents on campus is transitioning to be split between two groups. The Bias Assessment and Response Team (BART) addresses all bias incidents that ONLY involve students. Any incidents that involve faculty and staff (even if another party is a student) are channeled to the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity. BART currently reaches out both to the victim and the alleged perpetrator of a bias incident (if names are given). The Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity only reaches out to offer support to the victim. They do not contact the alleged perpetrator at all.

Recommendations

Recommendation C1: We recommend that the University Diversity Council develop a general strategy for university response within the next six months to reflect the need for consistent and thorough response. We recommend this university response strategy reflect the following guidelines:

- Immediate response should first go out to the communities most affected by any bias incident (perhaps by contacting community leaders and organizations responsible for supporting those affected communities). Resources for care and healing should first be directed here.
- Any campus-wide responses (e.g., shows of support or discussions/town halls about campus climate) should only happen AFTER administrators have had some time to reflect on what the best course of action would be and to make sure that key administrators and facilitators qualified to lead a campus-wide discussion or activity can be present.
- Because bias incidents are all not the same, some administrator should be tasked with making real-time calls on when/how to deviate from the protocol mentioned previously. This responsibility could rotate among the university diversity officers (similarly to on-call duty for crisis managers or residential life staff), fall under the purview of an already existing administrator, or fall under a centralized D&I administrator (such as a chief diversity officer) if that position is created.
- The bias response protocol should consider how to address social media. Oftentimes, information about bias incidents spreads through informal student networks on social media very quickly, and the university should think about how to address disparities in content of information between social media and university communications as well as how information from university communications often lags behind the information posted on social media.
- There is current discussion about making residence halls the place for first response for bias incidents with residential advisers and GRFs/SAs holding meetings for residents in response to bias incidents. If this is the route the university wants to go, we highly recommend working closely with RNSP and West Campus administrators AND student staff to develop this procedure for the following reasons:
 - Currently, RAs and GRFs/SAs are not adequately trained to plan and hold support meetings of this nature, and there needs to be better support for residential life student staff, who may also need support in response to bias incidents.
 - To provide residential life student staff with this necessary training, we recommend that the university continues with its plan to provide and require all residential staff to take some form of IDP training, whether as a substantial portion of their August training or as a course in the spring semester before their start of employment as residential life staff.
 - We recommend that residential life staff also work with the IDP student engagement coordinator, a new position in the IDP office, throughout their employment in residential life.
 - We also recommend thinking through how to reach the substantial population of students who live in Greek life, co-ops and off campus.
 - We should keep in mind that residential life student staff are students first, staff members second. It is not unimaginable that the need to respond quickly to bias incidents in the dormitory space may get in the way of student staff's academic responsibilities, as planning and holding a support meeting take much time and energy.
 - If student staff responsibilities include the important task of being the first responders in their communities to bias incidents, they should be compensated in accordance with

the importance of this work. Otherwise, the university risks sending the message that this work is not valued or significant, both to student staff members and residents.

- If we rely on faculty in residence, house professors, residence hall directors and assistant deans, we need to also think about how to compensate/offset responsibilities. Often, the most capable individuals in these positions are managing many other responsibilities, so we can't merely give additional duties to these individuals.
- Staff members (house professors, residence hall directors, assistant deans, faculty in residence) who live with students should be trained in bias crisis management. New guidelines for hiring/appointing for these positions might require training in handling bias incidents if the individuals hired do not already bring this competency to the position.

Recommendation C2: We recommend the creation of a diversity and inclusion communications director whose responsibilities would include the following:

- The creation, execution and periodic revision of a communications protocol for incidents related to bias. This protocol, which would be part of the general university response strategy indicated above, would indicate which university administrator is reaching out to which university community (e.g., the student body, the faculty, the entire university, etc.) at which stage of response.
- The UDOs have indicated they are only consulted occasionally about university communications in response to bias incidents. The director would be consulted for all university communications regarding bias, diversity and inclusion. The creation of this position would allow other UDOs to focus more on their other duties and responsibilities.
- The D&I communications director would be consulted about how diversity and inclusion issues are presented in the Cornell Chronicle and be in charge of maintaining the diversity and inclusion website.
- The D&I communications director would regularly consult with UDOs and other members of the community doing diversity work (TBD) to keep tabs on the campus climate.
- The D&I communications director would work on better publicizing both established and new resources for diversity and inclusion at Cornell.
- The D&I communications director would attend all meetings with regards to university communications.

Recommendation C3: As the transition to two distinct bias reporting mechanisms continues in the coming months, we recommend the following:

- Because both teams are undergoing periods of transition, the teams are at an unusually opportune moment to reimagine their roles and responsibilities for the university. We recommend that both BART and the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity develop protocols for response that are publicly available. The specificity of these protocols should mirror those of Title IX, and these teams should be given adequate support and compensation as they develop these protocols.
- As part of these protocols, we recommend that the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity develop a procedure to talk to and provide (at the very least) educational resources, like the BART team, to the alleged perpetrator of a bias incident.

- Because the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity is currently understaffed and underresourced to handle its current work, we also recommend that this office be expanded with at least two more staff members and given a more substantial budget.
- One of these staff members should solely be responsible for analyzing data on bias incidents and publishing those findings. Because the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity is understaffed, there has been a lag in publication of campus-wide bias reports. Having another staff member solely dedicated to this task would ensure that reports are published on a timely basis. This staff member would also be in charge of making sure all constituencies of the university are notified when these reports are available.
- The administrators in the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity should also have individual offices to provide a space for private conversation regarding sensitive issues around identity. The team currently works in cubicles.
- The BART team anticipates working with mechanisms for alternative dispute resolution in development by the Office of the Dean of Students. We recommend that both the BART team and the newly created office of alternative dispute resolution be given the time and space to develop a protocol for alternative dispute resolution conversations for bias incidents. We also recommend that the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity also think about incorporating alternative dispute resolution into its response to bias incidents. One suggestion would be to work with the ombudsman, but if this is the case, then the Office of the Ombudsman would need to hire staff who are trained in both diversity and inclusion issues and alternative dispute resolution with respect to bias. Another suggestion might be to create positions in the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity who specialize in alternative dispute resolution.

Recommendation C4: We recommend a centralized or coordinated communication effort to update all members of the Cornell community, including professors, residence hall directors and staff, about all bias incidents that occur on campus or in the surrounding community.

Recommendation C5: We recommend that Cornell produces and regularly updates a list of reported incidents (bias incidents as well as sexual assaults) on and around campus to increase transparency between students and the administration.

Recommendation C6: We recommend that data on the occurrence and location of sexual assaults that have been reported on or around campus be made available on an easily accessible map.

Recommendation C7: Strengthen efforts to educate and train campus leaders (including student leaders, advisor, RA/RHD, etc.) about the procedure and process for responding to bias incidents.

D. CO-CURRICULAR SUPPORT

Findings

- The Care and Crisis Services Office is housed under the Office of the Dean of Students and charged with supporting individual students in distress and equipping students with the skills to manage crises in their lives, following educational disruptions such as university-sanctioned leaves of absences or behavioral health visits to Cayuga Medical Center (<http://dos.cornell.edu/care-crisis-services>). Insights from this office may be useful in our efforts to more effectively manage responses to bias incidents that affect the Cornell community.

- Student leaders do not appear to be connected in a way that enables them to form a united front against issues of bias and discrimination.
- Students appear to rely on the Cornell Chronicle, The Cornell Daily Sun, Twitter, GroupMe, Facebook, etc., to stay informed. Some of these sources are not vetted for accuracy. It is therefore hard to effectively inform populations with a high risk of exposure to rumors.
- Many Cornell student organizations do not have designated staff/faculty advisors who have been sufficiently trained to respond to bias incidents. Thus, student leaders are often tasked with responding to crises without advice from a trained professional, putting an undue burden on these student leaders.
- Our working group perceives opportunities for Cornell alumni to play a greater role in institutional responses to bias-related crises.

Recommendation D1: The university should enhance its existing bias response and crisis services capabilities by hiring additional personnel to work within a bias response and crisis services center. Clemson University seems to have a useful model that can inform our approach to preparing for bias incidents (<https://www.clemson.edu/studentaffairs/advocacy-success/crisismanagement.html>). Likewise, the U.S. Department of Education and FEMA have issued guidelines guidance on emergency preparedness, which may be useful for Cornell staff members (https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1922-25045-3638/rem_s_ihe_guide.pdf). At the very least, its general principles of information sharing should be adopted to manage expectations for members of the Cornell community.

Recommendation D2: The university should create engaged-learning grants for students to serve as bias response assistants or campus climate research assistants who can continue to assess the university's progress toward its new destination diversity and inclusion goals.

Recommendation D3: The university should host forums to provide timelines and regular updates about progress toward key performance indicators related to Presidential Task Force recommendations.

Recommendation D4: We recommend that the university establishes a presidential or other high-profile leadership award that recognizes, rewards or incentivizes student efforts to make significant contributions to an inclusive campus climate.

Recommendation D5: In the spirit of incentivizing and rewarding student efforts to embody our core values, we recommend that the university creates a student leadership development program or leadership practicum that features diversity and inclusion training and includes an opportunity for certification.

Recommendation D6: Hire or train professional advisors to help leaders of student organizations successfully navigate bias response and ensure that their organizations do not spiral out of effectiveness after a crisis.

E. OUT OF SCOPE RECOMMENDATION

Observations

- Our charge and composition (eight of 15 members are students) contributed to a focus on the campus climate for students. As a result, our recommendations involving faculty or staff are limited to a view of them as potential resources to create a more inclusive climate for students.
- Our outreach efforts revealed a need to undertake efforts to create a more inclusive climate for faculty and staff.
- In fall 2017, Provost Kotlikoff established the Provost's Task Force to Enhance Faculty Diversity (<http://news.cornell.edu/stories/2017/10/provosts-task-force-continues-push-diverse-cornell-faculty>).

Recommendation E1: In the spirit of inclusion, we recommend the formation of a Presidential Task Force with a specific focus on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion as they relate to staff employees.

APPENDIX 1. SUMMARY OF OUTREACH/DATA COLLECTION EFFORTS

- Notes from town hall meetings conducted by the Scheinman Institute
- CALS Advisory Board
- Student Disability Services
- CAPS director and leadership staff
- Skorton Center for Health Initiatives
- Cornell Health Communications
- Cornell Minds Matter
- Ombudsman
- Vijay Pendakur, dean of students
- Advising deans
- EARS-Empathy, Assistance and Referral Service
- College associates
- Ryan Lombardi, vice president for student and campus life
- Justin Goldsman, Cornell Interfraternity Council (IFC) advisor
- Caitlin Gleason, last year's Panhellenic president
- Drew Lord, last year's IFC president
- Brianna Barrett, last year's Multicultural Greek Letter Council president
- Varun Devatha, executive vice president, Student Assembly
- Office of Residential and New Student Programs
- Lavanya Aprameya, president of Haven
- Joe Anderson, representative to the University Assembly
- Arky Asmal, co-chair of La Asociacion Latina
- Manisha Munasinghe, executive vice president, Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
- Sophie Sidhu, director of the Asian and Asian American Center
- Paul Russell, president of IFC
- Sasha Chanko, president of Cornell Hillel
- Catherine Ramirez, residence hall director of the Latino Living Center
- Black Students United E-Board
- Community Conversation co-sponsored by BSU, South Asian Council, ISU, Haven, FGSU and IFC.
- Yael Levitte, associate vice provost for faculty development and diversity and University Diversity Council's communications liaison
- Angela Winfield, director of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity
- Sara Hernandez, associate dean for inclusion and student engagement, Graduate School
- The BART Team, Marla Love and Denise Zajac
- Cornell Woodson of the Department of Inclusion and Workplace Diversity
- John McKain and Melissa Shaffmaster of University Relations
- The University Diversity Council and university diversity officers
- Sphinx Head Society
- The Center for Teaching Innovation
- The Intergroup Dialogue Project
- The Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning
- Men of Color Colleague Network Group
- Women of Color Colleague Network Group
- LGBTQ Colleague Network Group
- Veterans Colleague Network Group
- Presidential Task Force on Campus Climate Survey

Figure 1. For an on-campus incident, how important is it for you to receive a message from ...

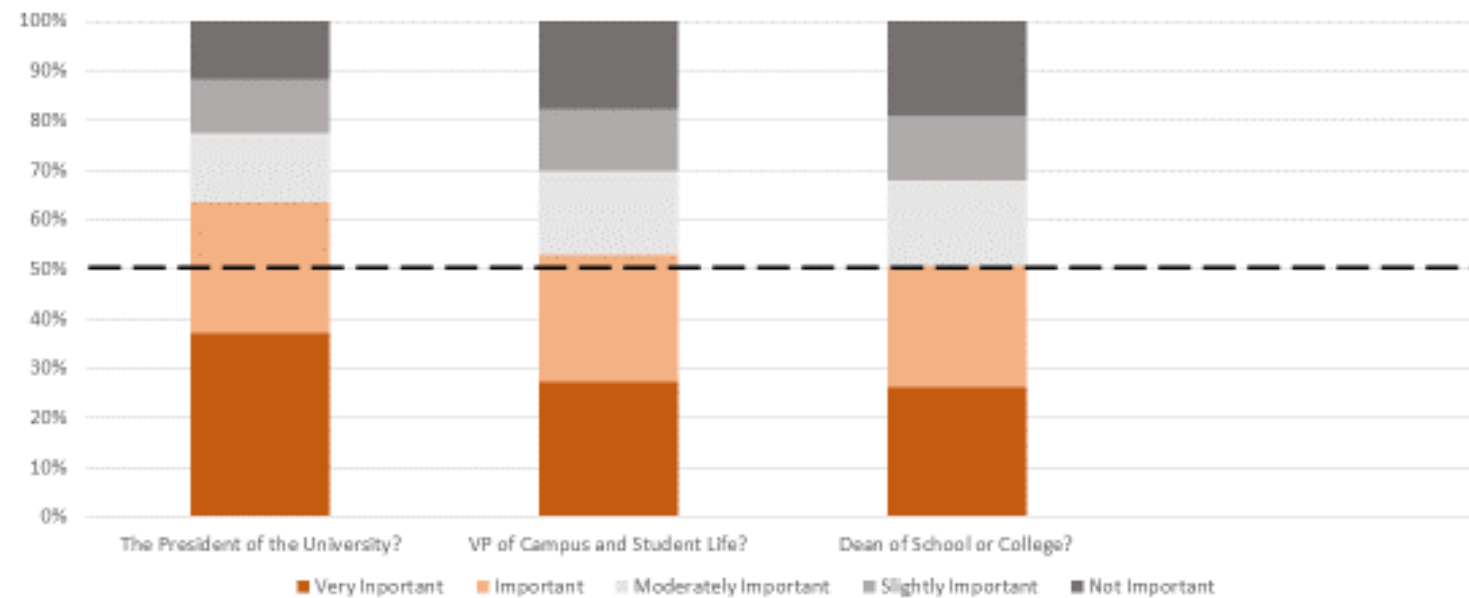


Figure 2. For an off-campus incident, how important is it for you to receive a message from ...

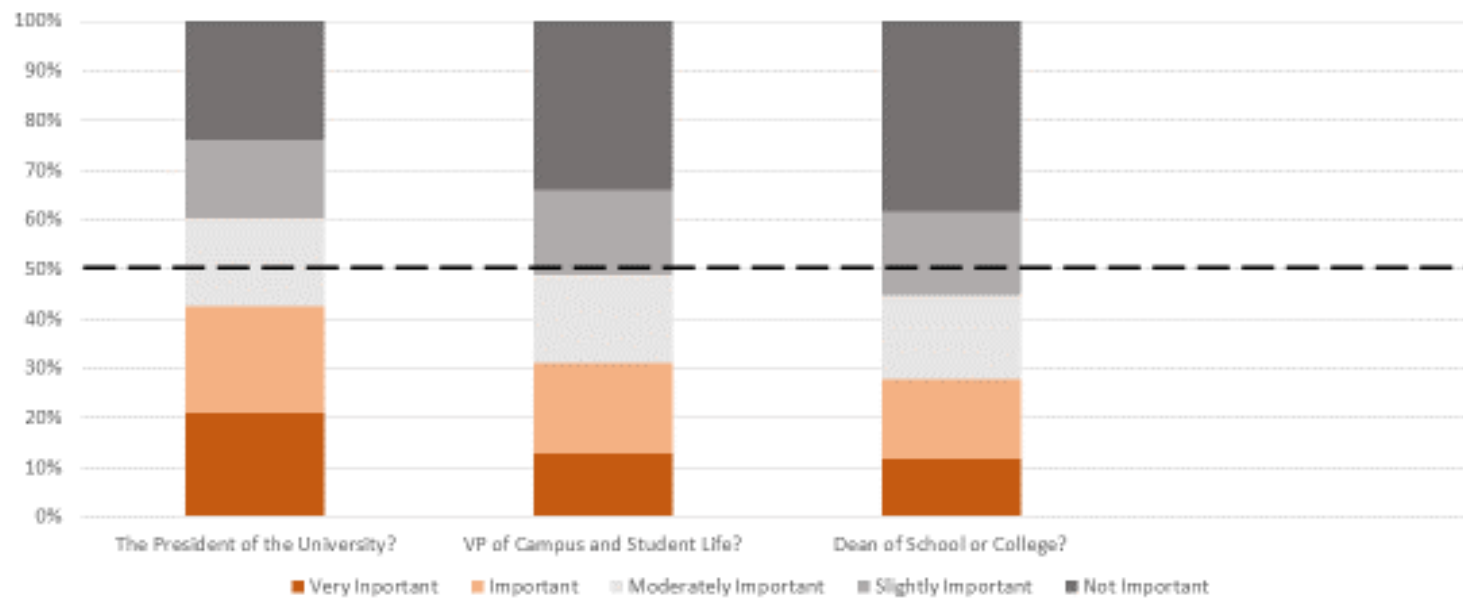


Figure 3. Recognizing that it can take time for the facts surrounding an incident of bias to be investigated and verified, what is the timeframe within which you would ideally like the university to respond to incidents of bias that occur on campus?

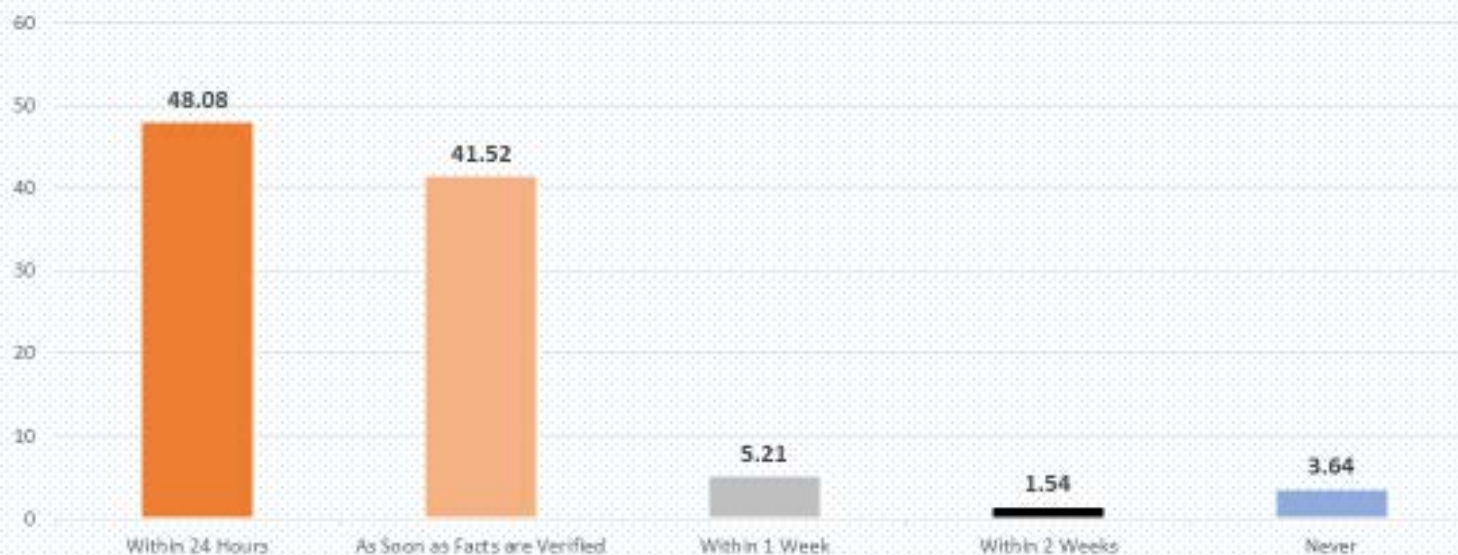


Table 1. Expected Response Time by Constituent Group

	Undergraduates (n = 710)	Graduate or Professional Students (n = 483)	Non-Academic Staff (n = 1,337)	Faculty Members/Other Academics (n = 654)
Within 24 hours (even if just to acknowledge an incident has been reported)	47%	41%	51%	48%
As soon as facts have been verified (even if it takes longer than 24 hours)	40%	40%	42%	44%
Within the first week	6%	10%	4%	3%
Within the first two weeks	2%	2%	1%	2%
Never, response not necessary	5%	7%	2%	3%

Table 2. Please share any ideas that you may have for how existing systems for reporting and responding to bias and harassment incidents can be improved.

Theme	Description	Illustrative Quotes
Take Action	This theme reflects perceptions that perpetrators of bias or harassment face little or no consequences.	"I don't think reporting is the issue ... You can report whatever you want, that doesn't mean something will happen."
Increase Accessibility of Reporting	This theme includes suggestions for more convenient or easily accessible reporting mechanisms.	"Maybe with an app." "Is there a way to text rather than call?"
Improve Awareness	This theme highlights the need to increase awareness of existing reporting mechanisms.	"Why not a hotline for bias? If it already exists, why not advertise it?"
Increase Empathy	This theme reflects concerns about victims' reporting experiences, including issues of confidentiality.	"Guarantee that the reporter be treated as a person rather than data."
Consider Alternative Resolution Mechanisms	This theme includes suggestions for alternative means of resolving disputes.	"I think we could really benefit from using restorative justice."
Increase Transparency	This theme addresses the need for the community to be better informed about processes and outcomes.	"Transparency, transparency, and more transparency, the whole while, protecting the victims"
Emphasize Education	This theme emphasizes the importance of education as a preventive measure and as an outcome of reporting and adjudication processes.	"I do have a sense that most of the policies in place have more to do with giving the university legal cover than with actually educating students."
Simplify the Process	This theme reflects concerns about the complexity and efficiency of the reporting process.	"Eliminate the multiple channels and bureaucracy wherever possible."

Table 3. Please share any additional thoughts about how or when the University should respond to incidents of bias or discrimination that attract media attention.

Theme	Description	Illustrative Quotes
Take Action	This theme includes calls for more severe consequences and more substantial changes.	"We should actually change structures. Not just make statements."
Increase Transparency	This theme highlights the need to communicate as much as possible to as many as possible.	"Transparency is a must to establishing trust ..."
Emphasize Timeliness	This theme highlights the need for timely information even for incidents that do not attract media coverage.	"I expect the university to inform us before we hear it in the media."
Prioritize Accuracy	This theme stresses the need factual information, even if verification comes at the expense of expediency.	"Incident response from outside or inside should be vetted first before any comment or response."
Be Selective	This theme reflects desires for fewer messages about bias incidents (e.g., one voice, fewer follow-up emails, and only incidents that threaten safety)	"I am *very* concerned with current University practice of notifying the entire community any time a relatively minor incident occurs."
Provide Support Mechanisms and Resources	This theme reflects desires for mechanisms of support for affected parties and resources to equip potential allies to be provided and communicated.	"Holding office hours and increasing student support resources would really help."
Reiterate Cornell's Values	This theme reflects the sentiment that each incident presents an opportunity to reinforce Cornell's values.	"We should reinforce our good values and assure a safe environment for all."
Strive for Objectivity/Balance	This theme reflects concerns about perceived biases in responding to bias incidents.	"Either respond to all of them or none of them. Discriminatory acts against conservatives are never responded to or condemned."

Sub-Committee

Table 1. Expected Response Time by Constituent Group

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Table 2. Please share any ideas that you may have for how existing systems for reporting and responding to bias and harassment incidents can be improved.

Theme	Description	Illustrative Quotes
Take Action	This theme reflects perceptions that perpetrators of bias or harassment face little or no consequences.	"I don't think reporting is the issue ... You can report whatever you want, that doesn't mean something will happen."
Reporting Ease	This theme includes suggestions for more convenient or easily accessible reporting mechanisms.	"Maybe with an app." "Is there a way to text rather than call?"
Improve Awareness	This theme highlights the need to increase awareness of existing reporting mechanisms.	"Why not a hotline for bias? If it already exists, why not advertise it?"
Greater Empathy	This theme reflects concerns about victims' reporting experiences, including issues of confidentiality.	"Guarantee that the reporter be treated as a person rather than data."
Alternative Resolution Mechanisms	This theme includes suggestions for alternative means of resolving disputes.	"I think we could really benefit from using restorative justice."
Greater Transparency	This theme addresses the need for the community to be better informed about processes and outcomes.	"Transparency, transparency, and more transparency, the whole while, protecting the victims"
Greater Focus on Education	This theme emphasizes the importance of education as a preventive measure and as an outcome of reporting and adjudication processes.	"I do have a sense that most of the policies in place have more to do with giving the university legal cover than with actually educating students."
Simplify the Process	This theme reflects concerns about the complexity and efficiency of the reporting process.	"Eliminate the multiple channels and bureaucracy wherever possible."

Table 3. Please share any additional thoughts about how or when the University should respond to incidents of bias or discrimination that attract media attention.

Theme	Description	Illustrative Quotes
Take Action	This theme includes calls for more severe consequences and more substantial changes.	"We should actually change structures. Not just make statements."
Transparency	This theme highlights the need to communicate as much as possible to as many as possible.	"Transparency is a must to establishing trust ..."
Timeliness	This theme highlights the need for timely information even for incidents that do not attract media coverage.	"I expect the university to inform us before we hear it in the media."
Accuracy	This theme stresses the need factual information, even if verification comes at the expense of expediency.	"Incident response from outside or inside should be vetted first before any comment or response."
More Selective Messaging	This theme reflects desires for fewer messages about bias incidents (e.g., one voice, fewer follow-up emails, and only incidents that threaten safety)	"I am *very* concerned with current University practice of notifying the entire community any time a relatively minor incident occurs."
Support Mechanisms and Resources	This theme reflects desires for mechanisms of support for affected parties and resources to equip potential allies to be provided and communicated.	"Holding office hours and increasing student support resources would really help."
Reinforce Cornell's Values	This theme reflects the sentiment that each incident presents an opportunity to reinforce Cornell's values.	"We should reinforce our good values and assure a safe environment for all."
Objectivity/Balance	This theme reflects concerns about perceived biases in responding to bias incidents.	"Either respond to all of them or none of them. Discriminatory acts against conservatives are never responded to or condemned."

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