

BIAS RESPONSE GROUP SEMESTER REPORT

Fall 2020

INTRODUCTION

During the 2006-2007 academic year, after a series of incidents on campus, administrators convened several campus-wide conversations where community members voiced calls for formalized policies and protocols related to bias incidents on campus. Created in 2007, the Bias Response Group (BRG) grew out of Skidmore's determination to foster an inclusive climate. The BRG is a subcommittee of the Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU) and includes student, staff, and faculty representatives. We are responsible for considering, recommending responses to, and tracking reports of bias incidents, supporting those impacted by bias, and providing and promoting opportunities for education and dialogue. The Bias Response Group partners with colleagues across campus as appropriate to respond to reported incidents.

This semester report details the work of the Bias Response Group, including the reporting and referral process and engagement efforts with the broader campus community. This report also compiles statistics about incidents reported from August 2020 to December 2020. There were a total of 22 reports filed with the Bias Response Group during this time frame (note this number reflects multiple reports for the same incident).

Our Fall 2020 Work

During this semester, the BRG worked to review our policies and practices, responded directly to submitted reports, provided support to those impacted, and promoted and cosponsored related events and programs. Specifically, the BRG partnered with the Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding to present HEDS Diversity and Equity campus climate survey data to campus constituents, we sponsored a Bias Case Study workshop as part of the In It 5 program, and we also collaborated with Skidmore Speaks to offer two workshops, including an anti-hacking and anti-doxing workshop and an active bystander workshop about how to be an ally when you witness abuse online. Additionally, the BRG partnered with Student Affairs to share information about costume choice in advance of Halloween Weekend.

Reporting Process

All Skidmore College community members are encouraged to report instances of bias to the Bias Response Group. Bias incidents can be reported to the BRG by completing a Bias Incident Reporting Form, available here: <https://www.skidmore.edu/bias/secure/index.php> (attached as Appendix 1). This form is intended as a campus resource for reporting, documenting, and educating around issues of bias that occur on campus and involve members of our campus community. The purpose of sharing statistics of reported incidents is to increase awareness, promote transparency, and identify any patterns of behavior that might compel intervention by leaders of the appropriate academic or administrative units.

Fall 2020 BIAS INCIDENT REPORTS

Reported Incidents

The Bias Response Group received a total of 22 reports during the Fall 2020 semester. Some of these reports were not included in the incident report log as they did not fall under the purview of the BRG and were forwarded to the appropriate office or department for follow up, including Student Conduct, Residential Life, and Title IX. Additionally, given that incidents of bias on college campuses are underreported nationally¹, this report only reflects incident reports submitted to the BRG and therefore likely represent only a portion of all bias incidents that impact the Skidmore community. The Bias Response Group acknowledges that other on and off campus and online incidents have been referenced on social media and in other communications. Unfortunately, we cannot act on information we don't have and it is difficult to take direct action without outreach or a formal report.

Examples of the Types of Incidents Reported to the BRG:

- Emails or posts on social media and online platforms targeting race, religion, gender identity, sex, sexuality, ability, and/or mental health.
- Commentary in the classroom perceived as derogatory or biased.
- Postings on campus containing racist, white supremacist, anti-Semitic, sexist, propaganda.
- Vandalism or graphic images or language on residence hall whiteboards.

Of the 22 incidents reported to the BRG, 7 took place online, 6 in the residence halls or on-campus apartments, 2 in the dining hall, 1 in a classroom, 2 inside of Case Center, and 4 in other campus locations.

During the Fall 2020 semester, there was an increase in reports of online incidents. These online incidents ranged from emails, social media posts, and other online platforms that included content that targeted individuals based on their racial identity, sexuality, gender identity, religion, ability, and mental health. Most of the incidents were anonymous.

One of the reported online incidents included an instance of an unknown individual using another student's Skidmore contact information to sign them up to an unwanted email list without their consent. Under our Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy, members of the Skidmore community are "only allowed to use computing and information technology resources for which they have authorization." Using someone's Skidmore contact information without their consent is a misappropriation of a college technology resource and impersonation may be actionable and may constitute harassment.

Nearly half of reporting individuals did not respond to outreach from the BRG chair. This makes more substantive follow up and response challenging and can limit further action.

In an effort to foster a climate in which creating and sustaining an inclusive and welcoming campus is our collective work, reports of bias are documented and available for review by all members of the Skidmore community. Reported bias incidents are available on the [Bias Response Group webpage](#) by

¹ Wessler, S.L. (2004). Hate crimes and bias-motivated harassment on college campuses. In D. R. Karp & T. Allena. *Restorative Justice on the College Campus: Promoting Student Growth and Responsibility, and Reawakening the Spirit of Campus Community*. Springfield, Ill.: C.C. Thomas.

selecting and logging in to view “Reported Incidents.” This information is also included as Appendix 2 in this report.

Response to Reports of Bias

The purpose of the bias reporting system is to collect data, identify patterns, and ensure community members have access to resources. Each report is reviewed by the Bias Response Group and logged into the database to track patterns and develop initiatives and education to improve campus climate. Due to privacy concerns, some reports may have identifying information redacted to protect the those involved. In each case of a reported bias incident, the Bias Response Group did the following:

- Replied to the individual reporting the incident, typically within two business days.
- Invited the target of the bias incident to share additional information and/or meet with a member of the BRG.
- Reviewed the incident and determined next steps (including reporting to Campus Safety, Student Conduct, Human Resources, and/or Academic Affairs to investigate).
- Implemented any necessary steps toward an appropriate response.
 - Including working with Facilities Services to remove vandalism and/or repair damage, partnering with Residential Life staff to send letters to residence hall communities, etc.
- Followed up with the reporting party and other involved community members, as appropriate and as requested.

It is important to note that the Bias Response Group is not an investigatory body. When appropriate, reported information is shared with administrative partners, including Campus Safety, Student Conduct, the Dean of Faculty’s Office, Human Resources, and/or Title IX, who may deem it necessary to investigate the situation. In addition, the Bias Response Group does not impose any disciplinary sanctions or other punishment to individuals involved or suspected of being involved with bias incidents.

AGENDA FOR SPRING 2021

- Continue active response to all reports of bias incidents
- Review the bias response group policies and protocols and propose recommendations to CIGU
- Continue to analyze trend data to effectively target education and awareness
- Clarify opportunities for collaboration with campus partners, including Campus Safety and the Office of Residential Life and Student Conduct
- Proactive programming to increase awareness of the BRG and bias incidents on campus.

FALL 2020 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

- Mariel L. Martin, Associate Dean of Student Affairs (Chair)
- Janet Casey, Associate Dean of the Faculty for Diversity and Faculty Affairs
- Malchijah Hoskins ‘22, SGA Vice President for Inclusion and Outreach
- Sanjna Selva ‘21, Student Member
- Sarah Vero, Interim Assistant Director for Employment, Compliance and Workforce Diversity, Human Resources
- Joshua C. Woodfork, Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity

Respectfully submitted,

Mariel L. Martin
Chair, Bias Response Group

Appendix

1. BRG Online Reporting Form
2. Spreadsheet of Fall 2020 Reports
3. 9/28/20 letter to community about Patriot Front stickers on campus
4. 10/28/20 Halloween letter and Costume booklet

Appendix 1
BRG Online Reporting Form



Bias Report

Any individual member of the Skidmore College community – or any group of persons within the community – who observes or is the target of a bias incident or hate crime is strongly encouraged to report the incident as soon as possible.

The purpose of this form is to provide an avenue for community members to report an incident at any time. All reports made here are forwarded to the Bias Response Group. If this is an emergency and you need immediate assistance, please contact Campus Safety at 518-580-5566.

Any community member may also make a report to any individuals identified on the Bias Response Website (<https://www.skidmore.edu/bias/biasprotocol.php>).

Contact Information

The following information helps the Bias Response Group reach out to individuals making a report to gather more information and/or discuss the next steps.

Enable additional features by logging in. (https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?SkidmoreCollege&layout_id=15&promptforauth=true)

Your full name:

Your phone number:

Your email address:

Date of incident or Date Found (Required):

Format is YYYY-MM-DD.

Format is YYYY-MM-DD.

Time of incident or Time Found:

Location of incident (Required):

Please select a location ... ▼

Specific location:

Involved Parties

If you know the names of anyone involved in committing a hate crime or act of violence, you can provide their name here. You can leave this section blank if you do not know who was involved. This is also the space for you to provide information about any potential witnesses and the names of any additional reporters.

Name or Organization

Select Role

Phone number or email address

Add another party

Questions

This incident involved (check all that apply):

- Verbal Assault
- Threat of physical violence
- Physical Assault
- Property Damage
- Email or internet messages
- Threat of outing

- Written slur or graffiti
- Phone harassment
- Other

If other was selected above, please specify:

I think the incident occurred because of/involved:

- Age
- Gender Identity or expression
- Race
- Sex
- Economic background
- Marital Status
- Physical or mental health or ability
- Sexual Orientation
- Ethnicity
- Nationality
- Religious practice
- Veteran status
- Other

If other was selected above, please specify:

Please describe the incident in as much detail as possible: (Required)

Was this incident reported to Campus Safety?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If not, what were the reasons for not reporting:

Making this report does not automatically result in a Campus Safety Incident Report. Would you like to speak to someone from Campus Safety to discuss filing an incident report?

- Yes
- No

Were there any witnesses? Please make sure their information is included in the section above.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you were unable to provide a name of an offender above, please provide a description, if known, here:

Relationship of offender(s) to victim (if known):

- Stranger
- Friend
- Instructor
- Relative
- Classmate

- Acquaintance
- Supervisor
- Roommate/Suite-mate/Apartment housemate: Coworker
- Other

If other, please specify:

Would you like someone from the Bias Response Group to contact you?

- Yes
- No

Suggested response:

Supporting Documentation

If you have any supporting documentation, such as photos or other written documents, please upload them here. 5GB maximum total size.

Attachments require time to upload, so please be patient after submitting this

Appendix 2
Fall 2020 BRG Reports

Date	Term	Location	Summary	Response	Anonymous	Follow Up
12/16/20	Fall	Online	Unknown individual used a student's Skidmore contact information to sign them up for an off-campus organization's national newsletter and email list without the student's consent.	Referred to Student Conduct for follow-up and Information Technology for further investigation.	Yes	
11/11/20	Fall	Online	Student reported differential treatment by their faculty based on the student's mental health status.	Shared with Associate Dean of the Faculty for Follow Up.	No	No Response to outreach from the BRG
11/8/20	Fall	Online	On November 8, 2020, a member of the faculty received an email with anti-Semitic and targeting language. The sender used a forged sender address.	Information Technology blocked the sender's address from sending any further messages to campus email addresses.	Yes	
11/5/20	Fall	Classroom	Student reported a negative interaction with a faculty member involving cultural sensitivity.	Shared with Associate Dean of the Faculty for Follow Up	No	No Response to outreach from the BRG
10/31/20	Fall	Case Center	Several students (11) reported information they heard about an altercation and physical assault that took place in the Spa over the weekend.	Outreach to all reporting parties. Outreach to harmed party to provide support. Encourage reporting to Campus Safety to assist investigation.	No	No Response to outreach from the BRG
10/28/20	Fall	Dining Hall	Student employee in the Dining Hall reported being misgendered and not having their pronouns respected by staff in the Dining Hall.	Outreach to reporting party. Follow up with Assistant Vice President to create training opportunities for dining services staff. Dining Services staff, including supervisors, participated in Trans 101 workshop in January 2021.	No	
10/27/20	Fall	Residence Hall or on-campus Apartment	Student reported Patriot Front Sticker posted outside on an on-campus residence hall.	Reached out to reporting party to provide support resources and invite them to meet with BRG to discuss follow up. Shared letter BRG sent on 9/28/20 RE: these stickers	Yes	No Response to outreach from the BRG
10/25/20	Fall	Dining Hall	Anonymous report of a Trump sticker posted on campus.	Contacted Facilities to remove sticker.	Yes	Anonymous Report
10/14/20	Fall	Online	During a faculty workshop hosted on Zoom, one of the hosts saw "Grim Reaper" pop up on their screen. Sexually explicit images and sounds then appeared on the screen to all meeting participants followed by the use of the "N" word. The "Zoom bomber" also called out faculty of color and women by name before the meeting was ended and all participants logged off.	Incident reported to Zoom. Information Technology informed and created subsequent employee workshops related to Zoom and online safety.	Yes	
10/14/20	Fall	Residence Hall or on-campus Apartment	Resident Assistant reported a drawing of a penis on resident's whiteboard in Residence Hall.	Residential Life staff reached out to reporting party for additional support.	Yes	

10/8/20	Fall	Campus	Student reported Trump lawn sign posted at campus main entrance	Reached out to reporting party to provide support resources and invite them to meet with BRG to discuss follow up.	Yes	No Response to outreach from the BRG
10/3/20	Fall	Online	Student posted photos on their social media account featuring the "fox eye" trend. Reporting student claimed that this action displayed anti-Asian bias.	Reached out and met with harmed party to provide support resources. Referred incident to Student Conduct. Requested that harmful post be removed. Planned a Bystander Intervention Training related to online harassment and abuse, which took place on Friday, October 30, 2020.	No	
9/29/2020 (incident: 11/21/2019)	Fall	Online	Student reported an incident from Fall 2019. In October 2019, the student had created their own independent survey to glean information about sexual misconduct in Skidmore's Dining Hall. They revisited the form this November to close it out and they noticed new submissions. In the responses, someone had written, "faggot mongofoid fuck yourself your Taiwanese piece of shit" and, "rope yourself ugly fat ass looking ass bitch."	Reached out to reporting party to provide support resources and invite them to meet with BRG to discuss follow up. Reached out to Campus Safety to share report and to request follow up.	Yes	No Response to outreach from the BRG
9/28/20	Fall	On Campus (near the Tang)	"Not Stolen Conquered" Patriot Front Sticker posted on campus.	Reached out to reporting party to provide support resources and invite them to meet with BRG to discuss follow up. Contacted Facilities to remove sticker. BRG sends letter to community on 9/28/20.	Yes	No Response to outreach from the BRG
9/27/20	Fall	On Campus (near Case Center)	"Not Stolen Conquered" Patriot Front Sticker posted on campus.	Reached out to reporting party to provide support resources and invite them to meet with BRG to discuss follow up. Contacted Facilities to remove sticker. Propose sending community letter from BRG.	Yes	No Response to outreach from the BRG
9/23/20	Fall	On Campus (in front of Library)	"Not Stolen Conquered" Patriot Front Sticker posted on campus.	Reached out to reporting party to provide support resources and invite them to meet with BRG to discuss follow up. Contacted Facilities to remove sticker.	Yes	
9/15/20	Fall	Residence Hall or on-campus Apartment	Resident Assistant (RA) was sent a photo of something someone had written on the floor whiteboard next to the RA's door. The message read "Trump 2020 MAGA" and was written next to the RA's messages to "wear a mask," "respect everyone's identities" and "be kind."	Reached out to reporting party to provide support resources and invite them to meet with BRG to discuss follow up and shared incident with Residential Life.	Yes	No Response to outreach from the BRG
9/14/20	Fall	Online	Student reported to Campus Safety that while in a chat room, unknown subjects, who claimed to be Skidmore students began making comments that were directed at people with disabilities, racist language and also comments based on sexual orientation. The student advised that there is no positive confirmation that these individuals are Skidmore students, as the photos appeared to be altered and only used screen names.	Campus Safety contacted IT Department to see if they can offer any form of assistance if these subjects were on our network. Leadership Activities worked with Student Conduct and involved students to explore other, more secure online platforms.	Yes	

9/6/20	Fall	Case Center	Student reported that a Campus Safety Officer targeted students of color for mask violations outside of Burgess Café while ignoring violations by white students.	Reached out to reporting party to provide support resources and invite them to meet with BRG to discuss follow up. Shared report with Campus Safety for follow up (officer noted in report is incorrectly identified).	No	No Response to outreach from the BRG
8/29/20	Fall	Residence Hall or on-campus Apartment	Resident had "Black Lives Matter Trans Lives Matter" written on the whiteboard placed on their door. The resident came to their RA at around 7pm to show that someone had purposely attempted to erase the part of the message that spoke about Trans Lives. The L in Lives had been almost complete wiped off and seemed to be an intentional doing.	Shared incident with the Office of Residential Life for follow up.	Yes	
8/26/20	Fall	Residence Hall or on-campus Apartment	Someone made a sign in big bold letters that says "The Nunnery" and posted it on the entrance to the 7th floor of Jonsson Tower (the Women's Floor).	Reached out to reporting party to provide support resources and invite them to meet with BRG to discuss follow up and shared incident with the Office of Residential Life.	Yes	
8/20/20	Fall	Residence Hall or on-campus Apartment	Report of noise violation/party in the on-campus apartments and the use of homophobic and racist language.	Reached out to reporting party to provide support resources and shared information with the Office of Residential Life. Letter sent from Res Life administrator to apartment community.	Yes	

Appendix 3
9/28/20 Letter to Community

Subject: Bias Response Group: Postings On Campus

Date: Monday, September 28, 2020 at 6:00:25 PM Eastern Daylight Time

From: Mariel Martin

Dear Skidmore Community,

As members of the Bias Response Group (BRG), we write to address reports of stickers posted around campus featuring a white supremacist, neo-Nazi, American nationalist group.

We will continue to uphold, honor, and respect our students, staff, and faculty from all backgrounds. The racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic, white supremacist views expressed and embodied by this organization have no place on this campus and are entirely out of line with [Skidmore's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion](#).

~~We also~~ acknowledge that expressions of hate such as this can cause significant pain, anger, and fear. The [Counseling Center](#), the [Office of Student Diversity Programs](#), the [Office of Religious and Spiritual Life](#), the [Employee Assistance Program](#), and other offices around campus are all here to help. We encourage you to take care of yourselves and be in community with one another. Additionally, please know that these offices ~~and the BRG are available to any student wishing to discuss experiences they are having on and off-campus.~~

Below is a list of resources community members should contact if they have any information about the origin of these postings, feel unsafe, or need to report a bias or hate incident.

Bias Response Group (BRG)

<https://www.skidmore.edu/bias/index.php>

Campus Safety —————

Phone Number: 518-580-5567

Emergency Number: 518-580-5566

TIPS Hotline: 518-580-8477

Email: campus-safety-list@skidmore.edu

Saratoga Springs Police

Non- Emergency Phone Number: 518-584-1800

TIPS Hotline: 518- 584-TIPS (584-8477) or email TIPS@SaratogaPolice.org

Off-Campus Emergency Number: 911

In Solidarity,

Mariel L. Martin, Associate Dean of Student Affairs and BRG chair

Janet Casey, Associate Dean for Diversity and Faculty Affairs

Malchijah Hoskins '22

Sanjna Selvarajan '21

Joshua C. Woodfork, Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity

Mariel L. Martin

Appendix 4
10/28/20 Letter to the Community

Subject: A message about Halloween from Student Affairs
Date: Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 12:12:55 PM Eastern Daylight Time

Attachments: BRG Halloween booklet.pdf

Dear Students,

Halloween is upon us and we write with reminders about health and safety and the choices you make around costumes. Before making choices about what to do during Halloween weekend, we encourage students to revisit the COVID Pledge and to continue to follow our health and safety guidelines including:

- Wear a mask
- Practice social distancing
- No visitors on campus
- Limit off-campus travel to emergency and essential purposes
- Gather in groups of 10 or fewer
- No gatherings in your residence hall rooms
- Test for COVID during the weekend

In addition to these now familiar guidelines about health and safety, we ask that you be thoughtful in your Halloween attire and consider any costumes in terms of respect for identity and culture. Dressing up as an ethnicity, race, religion, or culture that is not your own is problematic and can be hurtful. Skidmore students are creative and smart, we know that you can create fun and interesting costumes without resorting to racist, sexist, and other derogatory stereotypes.

This reminder is particularly relevant to Skidmore as there have been incidents here in the past involving costumes that caused harm to others in our community.

See the attached brochure shared by the [Office of Student Diversity Programs](#) (OSDP) for reminders and tips for assessing your costume choices and speaking to your peers about theirs. Remember that much of the harm caused by culturally and racially-based costumes is more about impact than intent. We may mean well but the impact is the same.

We appreciate your attention to these matters as you plan. We want you to have a fun and safe Halloween.

Take care,
The Division of Student Affairs