

## **Bias Incidents**

### **FACTORS AND INTENSITY SCALES**

**(To be considered in determining an appropriate response)**

#### **a. Bias incident (including hate crimes):**

Factors to be considered in assessing the severity of an incident include: evidence of unprivileged or unwanted verbal or physical contact; unsolicited verbal or electronic contact; size and graphic nature of vandalism, graffiti, or display; egregiousness and persistence of behavior; interference with another person's right to education; academic or employment opportunities; evidence that behavior was motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate. (Adapted from "FIRE's Guide to Free Speech on Campus")

#### **Examples from least to most intense**

- Off-hand statement lacking any threat.
- Offensive name called in the heat of an argument.
- Offensive word written on memo board, not targeted, easily erased.
- Offensive action that is disruptive or interferes with the benefits and entitlements of participation in the community (ex. yelling, pounding, slamming doors).
- Offensive word intended for members of a protected category, regardless of perceived intention.
- Offensive word intended for members because of their actual or perceived protected category.
- Symbol or slogan of violence (ex. swastika or cross burning, "wetbacks don't belong on our campus") targeted at a member of a protected class of people.
- Confronting someone with offensive words or actions at or in a particularly inflammatory time or manner.
- Destroying or vandalizing personal property of a member of a historically protected category of people, with offensive references.
- Stalking and referencing a person's or group's protected category.
- Physical violence.

#### **b. Threat to safety:**

Specificity of method, time, place, target group or individual, detail of plan or thought. The more specific, the more likely the threat may be real.

#### **Examples from least to most intense**

- Short verbal altercation that ends in apology.
- Threatening words against a person or group within a protected class that are vague regarding time, place, or method.
- Specific threats against a member or members' protected class status. This can include any one, combination, or all of the following: time, place, method.
- Unprivileged or uninvited physical contact.
- Violence.

#### **c. Public nature:**

Buildings, sidewalks, throughways that are open and accessible to the public, websites that are not password protected, electronic communication that is mass distributed.

**Examples from least to most intense**

- Within a dorm or apartment room.
- Between participants only.
- In a lounge or hallway of a dorm.
- In a classroom or academic building.
- Outside, and/or with loud voices, or large graffiti.
- In public areas where the voice or writing, or symbolism cannot be ignored.

**d. Appearance of pre-meditation:**

Vandalism that is pervasive, incidents that lack evidence of spontaneity, violation of password protected electronic communications and websites, individuals or groups identified by name.

**Examples from least to most intense:**

- Impromptu, blurting out, or using non-permanent materials (pencil) to write or mark.
- Writing an Instant Message.
- Writing an email.
- Posting to a blog or other social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube.
- Waiting for someone to emerge from a class, dorm, or other facility.
- Sending a letter.
- Using visual aids and materials.