

## **Bias Education Support Team (BEST) Annual Report**

### **2023-2024**

Stetson's Bias Education and Support Team (BEST) aims to provide students with an opportunity to receive education, support, and resolution in response to perceived biases. Our goal is to empower students to find resolutions on their own, to provide support and education when needed, to foster personal and intellectual development, and to promote resiliency. As part of our plan to be transparent, we release an annual report after the academic year to anonymously summarize each case, how it was handled, and to provide trends across time.

BEST members represent a wide range of experts and have experience addressing various bias-related matters across campus. The full list of BEST members through the academic year is included below:

Michael Eskenazi, Chair, Associate Professor of Psychology  
Lynn Schoenberg, Dean of Students  
Larry Correll-Hughes, Associate Vice President for Campus Life and Student Success  
Jes Day, Executive Director of Residential Living and Learning  
Lizzie Dement, Associate Director of Leadership and Student Events  
Jackson Dennis, Residential Life Coordinator  
Anne Eible, Assistant Director of Career Success  
Reed Barkowitz, Hillel Program Director  
Todd Campbell Jr., Director of Religious & Spiritual Life, University Chaplain  
Kelcey Ferguson, Head Athletics Trainer/Health Care Administrator

In total, 15<sup>1</sup> reports were submitted during the academic year. The majority of those reports involved racial bias (n = 10), and the rest of the reports included bias based on gender identity (n = 5) and sexual orientation (n = 1). Most reports occurred in a residential building (n = 9) with two reports each in other spaces including academic buildings, the DuPont Ball Library, or the CUB. Over time, reports related to race, sexual orientation, and gender identity have been the most frequent. After a two-year reduction in the rate of cases related to race, that percentage is back up to its typical trend line. The rate of cases related to gender identity has been steadily increasing over time. This year included the lowest number of reports submitted. Conclusions cannot yet be drawn about whether this means that fewer bias-related incidents are occurring on campus or whether students simply were less likely to report them.

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<sup>1</sup> One report was classified in two categories, which is why the total number across the categories exceeds 15.

Figure 1. Percentage of the three most common types of cases across time.

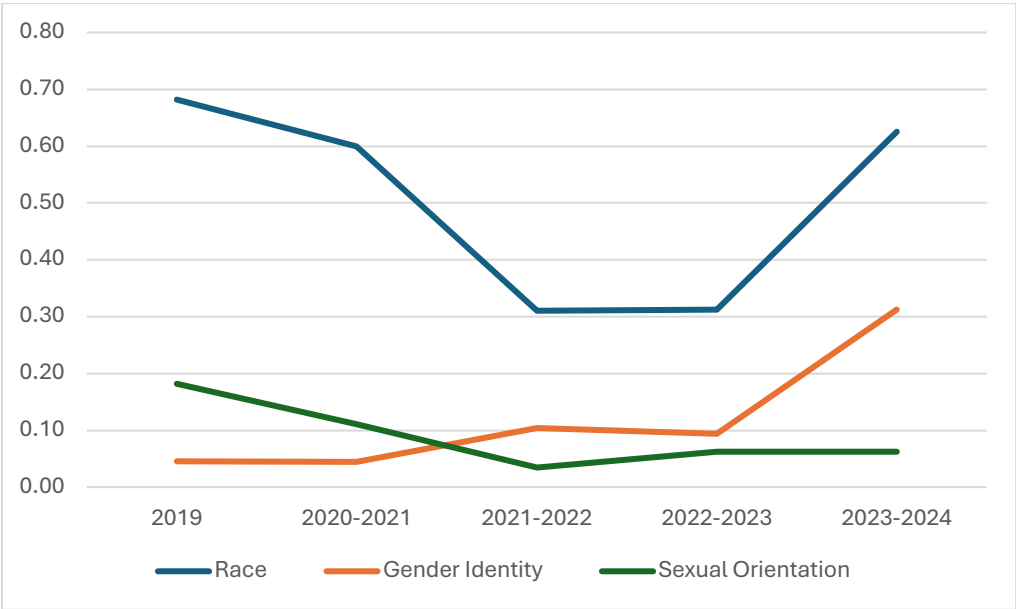


Table 1. Summary of the number of reports in each category across time.

	2019	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Race	15	27	9	10	10
Gender Identity	1	2	3	3	5
Sexual Orientation	4	5	1	2	1
National Origin	1	5	5	3	0
Language	0	1	0	0	0
Religion	0	0	2	4	0
Body Size	1	1	0	0	0
Disability	0	2	2	2	0
Age	0	2	2	0	0
Other	0	0	5	4	0
Various	0	0	0	4	0
Total	22	45	29	32	16

**Date:** August 20, 2023

**Basis of Bias:** Race

**Location:** Academic Building

**Summary:** During an orientation meeting, a student used the n-word multiple times in casual conversation. This student does not identify as Black or African American.

**Summary of Response:** The reported student met with a member of BEST to discuss their use of this word. The student said that he commonly uses this word with his African American friends and that they do not have a problem with it. After the conversation, the student reported a better understanding of the history of this word and how context matters.

**Date:** August 27, 2023

**Basis of Bias:** Gender Identity

**Location:** Residential Building

**Summary:** The reporting student was outside by her car when a group of men drove by and made sexually explicit noises at her.

**Summary of Response:** The reporting student met with a BEST member to discuss the incident and determine if any support was needed. Since the reported people could not be identified, no follow-up meetings occurred.

**Date:** August 28, 2023

**Basis of Bias:** Gender Identity

**Location:** Residential Building

**Summary:** Sexually explicit comments were made to female students that were viewed as offensive and inappropriate. Reporting students wanted reported students to understand how and why these comments would be interpreted as hurtful and offensive.

**Summary of Response:** After multiple attempts at reaching out to the reported students, no response was received, and the case was closed.

**Date:** September 14, 2023

**Basis of Bias:** Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity

**Location:** Outside CUB

**Summary:** The reporting student was wearing a shirt that said “no room for hate” with a rainbow flag on it, and another student walking by and said, “there is room for a little hate” in response to the shirt.

**Summary of Response:** A BEST member met with the reported student to discuss the incident. The reported student said that they did not remember making this comment, but someone in his friend group might have. He understood how this comment would be hurtful.

**Date:** September 22, 2023

**Basis of Bias:** Race

**Location:** Residential Buildings

**Summary:** Reporting student listed a series of misconduct violations that they have been accused of and reported that the misconduct accusations were motivated by racial bias. No individual was reported as being the person with the racial bias.

**Summary of Response:** A BEST member reached out to the reporting student twice to set up a meeting to learn more about the incidents and the alleged racial bias. No response was received from the reporting student, and thus no further action could be taken.

**Date:** October 2, 2023

**Basis of Bias:** Gender Identity

**Location:** Residential Building

**Summary:** Reporting student said that transphobic comments were written on a bulletin board in the residence halls.

**Summary of Response:** The reporting student did not need any additional support but wanted an educational meeting to happen with the person who made the comments. Since no person was identified who wrote the comments, no further action could be taken.

**Date:** October 17, 2023

**Basis of Bias:** Race

**Location:** CUB

**Summary:** The reporting student noted that homecoming t-shirts were created that said: "party like it's 1883." The reporting student viewed this slogan as offensive as 1883 was not a time that many marginalized people would want to go back to.

**Summary of Response:** This report was submitted anonymously, so it was not possible to meet with the reporting student. The message was forwarded to campus vibrancy so that they could be aware of how some people on campus are interpreting their slogans.

**Date:** November 20, 2023

**Basis of Bias:** Gender Identity

**Location:** DuPont Ball Library

**Summary:** During a conversation in the library between students, one student expressed negative attitudes towards transgender people and repeatedly used the deadname of a transgender student.

**Summary of Response:** The reporting student requested that no follow-up be made but submitted the report so that it would be on record.

**Date:** November 26, 2023

**Basis of Bias:** Race

**Location:** Residential Building

**Summary:** The reporting student says that the reported student was mocking their native language and name and made a post about it on Snapchat.

**Summary of Response:** A BEST member met with the reporting student and the reported student separately to learn more about the situation. The reporting student wanted the reported student to understand how this behavior could be hurtful and offensive. The reported student said that they did not remember making these comments even after viewing the Snapchat evidence. The BEST member spoke with the reported student generally about how racially insensitive comments can make other people feel and the reported student understood why the reporting student would feel the way they did.

**Date:** January 25, 2024

**Basis of Bias:** Race

**Location:** DuPont Ball Library

**Summary:** During a discussion of decolonization, a staff member made dismissive comments about the racial demographics of the upper administration.

**Summary of Response:** Since the report involved a staff member, it was referred to HR to handle.

**Date:** February 6, 2024

**Basis of Bias:** Race

**Location:** Residential Building

**Summary:** Students report that during a disciplinary hearing, racially biased comments were made about them and their behavior.

**Summary of Response:** A BEST member met with the students to provide support.

**Date:** February 12, 2024

**Basis of Bias:** Race

**Location:** Residential Building

**Summary:** When meeting with a residential life staff member, a student requested to have a white roommate and not a black roommate. The requesting student is black.

**Summary of Response:** A BEST member met with this student to discuss their perspectives and preferences on race. The student reported many stereotyped and biased views of people from different races. After the conversation, the student understood more about prejudice and overgeneralization.

**Date:** February 13, 2024

**Basis of Bias:** Race

**Location:** Academic Building

**Summary:** The student reports that she was falsely accused of cheating and that the accusations were racially motivated. The professor also made rude comments about her level of intelligence.

**Summary of Response:** A BEST member met with the student to learn more about the situation and to give them some options. The student was presented with options to use the Honor Council, have a mediated conversation with the professor, or have the BEST member meet with the professor on their behalf. The student used the Honor Council and declined to use the other options.

**Date:** April 17, 2024

**Basis of Bias:** Race

**Location:** Residential Building

**Summary:** Student reported microaggressive behaviors from their roommate.

**Summary of Response:** A BEST member was unable to meet with the students involved to find a resolution through conversation, but the reporting student was relocated to a different room.

**Date:** May 3, 2024

**Basis of Bias:** Race

**Location:** Residential Building

**Summary:** Student reported a series of actions taken by their RA that were perceived to be biased and evidence of favoritism. The reporting student believed that the RA was acting out of racial bias towards them.

**Summary of Response:** The reporting student had a conversation with their RA to work through the information in the report and were able to work through their challenges. No additional follow-up or support from BEST was needed after the conversation.