

Bias Education Support Team (BEST) Annual Report 2025-2026

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 throughout the academic year is included below:

Erin Doggette, Chair, Executive Director for Cultural, Civic, & Community Engagement

Michael Eskenazi, Associate Professor of Psychology/Faculty Senate Chair

Lynn Schoenberg, Dean of Students

Jes Day, Executive Director of Residential Living and Learning

Anne Eible, Assistant Director of Career Success

Reed Barkowitz, Hillel Program Director

Kelcey Ferguson, Assistant AD for Sports Medicine/Health Care Administrator

Alexandria Belk, Associate Director of the Cross-Cultural Center

Max Digman, Residential Life Coordinator

Jill Arlaud Holmes, Residential Life Coordinator

In total, 19 reports were submitted during the academic year, and all 19 were actual BEST cases. The majority of those reports involved racial bias ($n = 12$), and the rest of the reports included bias based on gender identity ($n = 5$), religious bias ($n = 3$), national origin ($n = 2$), disability ($n = 2$), and political bias ($n = 1$). *5 Reports were classified in multiple categories, which is why the total number across the categories (25) exceeds the 19 actual BEST cases. Most reports occurred in an academic building ($n = 5$) or online ($n = 5$), with additional reports in a residential building ($n = 3$), non-academic buildings ($n = 3$), off-campus ($n = 2$), and elsewhere on campus ($n = 1$). Over time, reports related to race, gender identity, and sexual orientation have historically been the most frequent, though this year no reports involved sexual orientation bias — the first time in the report's history that this category has been at zero. The rate of cases related to race increased slightly this year (63.16%, up from 61.11% last year) and remains within its typical range. The rate of cases related to gender identity increased for a second consecutive year (26.32%, up from 22.22% last year), continuing an overall upward trend over the past several years. Sexual orientation cases dropped from three last year to zero this year, a marked departure after several years of consistent representation among the most common categories. National origin and disability bias reappeared this year after several years without any reported cases in those categories. Political bias was reported for a second consecutive year, though at a lower rate than last year. Overall, conclusions cannot yet be drawn about whether these findings reflect actual changes in the frequency of bias-related incidents on campus or shifts in students' likelihood of reporting them.

Figure 1. Percentage of three most common types of cases over time

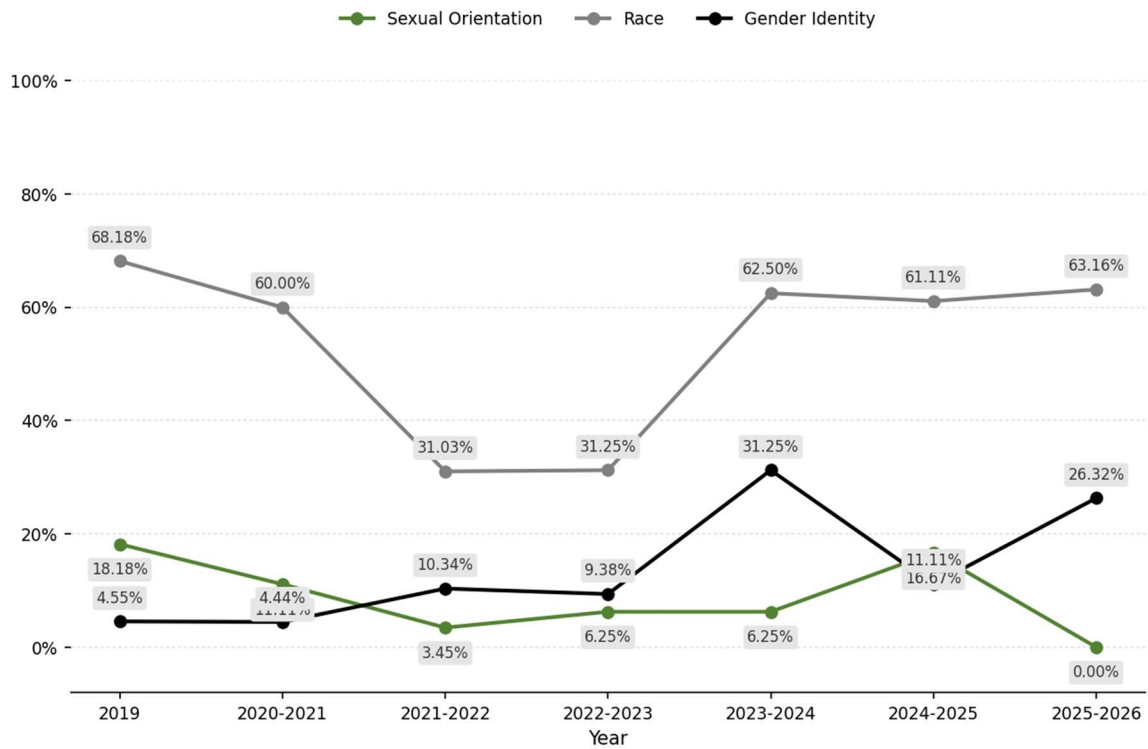


Table 1. Summary of the number of reports in each category over time.

	2019	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Race	15	27	9	10	10	11	12
Gender Identity	1	2	3	3	5	2	5
Sexual Orientation	4	5	1	2	1	3	0
National Origin	1	5	5	3	0	0	2
Language	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Religion	0	0	2	4	0	1	3
Political	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Body Size	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Disability	0	2	2	2	0	0	2
Age	0	2	2	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	5	4	0	1	0
Various	0	0	0	4	0	3	5
Total	22	45	29	32	16	18	19

*5 Reports were in multiple categories. The reports in the various category are distributed in their additional categories. The "Total" row is the actual number of reports reviewed and not a sum.

Date: August 31, 2025

Basis of Bias: Race

Location: Residential Building

Summary: Reporting student attempted to go down the stairs of their residential building. Two students were sitting on the stairs, and the reporting student asked them to allow him to pass. One of the persons closed off the stairway with their arms, not letting the reporting student pass. After a second request, the student was allowed to pass. The student was then asked about their nationality as they were getting on their bicycle. After that, they started asking questions such as “Are you a spy?” or “Do you hate Americans?” Students said they are not residents of Carson. One of them had a green shirt with “Stetson Athletics.”

Summary of Response: BEST followed up with the student after several attempts to communicate, and the student indicated they only wanted to make someone aware of what occurred. The reported were unidentified.

Date: September 5, 2025

Basis of Bias: Religion, Gender Identity, National Origin (various)

Location: Residential Building

Summary: A student wearing hijab for religious reasons reports being repeatedly exposed without their religious head covering when male guests enter the apartment unannounced, and being mocked by guests for their religious dress. The complainant describes feeling "targeted, disrespected, and pushed out" by suitemates who made it clear from the beginning that the student was "not expected." This pattern demonstrates potential religious discrimination through disrespect for Islamic modesty requirements and mockery of religious attire, gender-based harassment through inappropriate male presence without consent, and cultural bias through systematic exclusion and ridicule of the student's requests for basic courtesy.

Summary of Response: BEST followed up with the reporting student, and the student declined additional BEST support. The student has a new housing arrangement and feels the matter has been resolved.

Date: September 25, 2025

Basis of Bias: Race

Location: Residential Building

Summary: Resident Assistant reported that student disclosed experiencing and witnessing racial microaggressions and use of racial language from roommate.

Summary of Response: The student met with a BEST member to discuss the reported information and determine what support was desired. Student declined additional BEST support and no action moving forward with any educational measures. Residential Living and Learning action taken, roommate relocated. Student feels situation is resolved.

Date: October 7, 2025

Basis of Bias: Political

Location: Academic Building

Summary: During a class discussion, a student made statements indicating intent to remove two political student organizations from campus. The reporting student and other organization members expressed ongoing concerns about safety on campus and while tabling for their organization.

Summary of Response: BEST met with the reporting student to gather additional context and assess impact. Public Safety was notified of the safety concerns. A follow-up meeting with the reported student

has been requested to clarify intent and address the behavior. The reporting student will be contacted via email regarding next steps and ongoing support. BEST team member met with reported student and had a positive educational dialogue.

Date: October 13, 2025

Basis of Bias: Race

Location: Academic Building

Summary: A student was walking to class using a crosswalk near the Green area when a group of individuals passing by called out "Hey there snow bunny" and laughed while continuing to make comments using that phrase. The student did not respond and continued walking to class. The group consisted of five people, including two teenagers who made the comments.

Summary of Response: Sent initial intake email and follow up email with no response. Case Closed on 11/12/25.

Date: October 14, 2025

Basis of Bias: Gender Identity

Location: Non-Academic Building

Summary: A member of a student organization has been reported by the E-board for repeatedly misgendering another member despite corrections, speaking over and ignoring the vice president, and using inappropriate gendered language that makes other members uncomfortable. The E-board states that former members have cited this individual as the reason they no longer attend events, and the behavior has worsened after a previous temporary improvement. The member has also been reported for viewing suggestive social media content during meetings and attempting to engage others in discussing it.

Summary of Response: A member of BEST met with a student organization's E-Board to discuss the specific incidents of bias. Two letters were sent to the reported with no responses. The E-Board requested assistance from BEST with writing up talking points to aid them in having a conversation with the reported.

Date: November 7, 2025

Basis of Bias: Race

Location: Online

Summary: A student experienced insults, slurs, and a tense and uncomfortable environment while living with her roommate. The student endured significant stress and poor academic performance as a result.

Summary of Response: The reporting student indicated the situation did improve with her roommate but ultimately decided to withdraw from Stetson. She sought no further action from BEST. An additional report was submitted earlier in the semester that was related to this case. Two support resources were provided to the student at the beginning of the semester and end of the semester.

Date: November 20, 2025

Basis of Bias: Disability

Location: Non-Academic Building

Summary: During a private student group event, a member of this group made an identity-based remark to another member of the organization publicly at the event. Another member reported the remark to their supervisor as it made them uncomfortable and knowing someone who holds the identity used.

Summary of Response: BEST member emailed to set up with impacted student; BEST member also met with reported student.

Date: January 18, 2026

Basis of Bias: Race, Religion (various)

Location: Off-Campus

Summary: A faculty member reported the following: A student told them that another student required them to use a derogatory term as a condition of entering a space, and that same student also made an antisemitic joke.

Summary of Response: Dean of students met with the reporting student to better understand what the desired outcome was for the student. The student received ongoing support from the Dean of Student's office and had the option to escalate the case to conduct. They opted to move forward with future education for the program but no individual meetings with the students.

Date: February 4, 2026

Basis of Bias: Race, National Origin (various)

Location: Online

Summary: Two student leaders reported concern with a student groups online social media post, believing it to be racist and minimizing of current dynamics around immigration

Summary of Response: Dean of Students worked with Student Development and Campus Vibrancy to dialogue with the student group while educating the two students that the post was allowed under policy. Numerous other students posted similar concerns back to the group publicly on social media which was viewed favorably by the student reporters.

Date: February 10, 2026

Basis of Bias: Race

Location: Online

Summary: a professor used a derogatory racial term repeatedly without known context. The word was not used in relation to any specific students or people but rather it was used in relation to course content. Throughout the course, students felt the overall course and their grades were negatively impacted following the reports of concern. Several students are now in the grade grievance process.

Summary of Response: Throughout the Fall 2025 and early Spring 2026 semesters, Dean of Students connected 8 students to Academic Affairs leadership, Human Resources and other relevant campus resources regarding concerns in an academic course.

Date: February 19, 2026

Basis of Bias: Race

Location: Academic Building

Summary: Swastika found on a sidewalk near Davis Hall

Summary of Response: Facilities removed the swastika, and a message was sent out to the Stetson community to inform and reassure.

Date: February 27, 2026

Basis of Bias: Race

Location: Online

Summary: Student shared a derogatory racial reel in a group chat and offended other members of the student group. Student later indicated the text was intended for one person.

Summary of Response: A member of BEST met with the reporting student. Student desired to have the reported student educated on the impact of sharing racial posts through any media, and those conversations occurred.

Date: March 20, 2026

Basis of Bias: Race

Location: Online

Summary: Student shared with Public Safety concerns of harassment from peers in their class and group chat because of a post they made on a social media chat. The student thought the incident was reported to BEST and reached out the Chair of BEST to report the incident.

Summary of Response: A member of BEST and Community Standards met with a student who reported harassment by anonymous posters on a social media platform. The case was primarily handled through Community Standards with BEST serving in a support role.

Date: March 23, 2026

Basis of Bias: Gender Identity

Location: Academic Building

Summary: A student reported seeing an openly transgender student entering a restroom designated for female use. Student concerned about CS/HB 1521 making the use of the restroom unlawful and the discomfort felt by other students who identify as female

Summary of Response: DOS met with the reporting student. DOS will move forward with a supportive/education conversation with reported student.

Date: March 27, 2026

Basis of Bias: Gender Identity

Location: On Campus (unspecified)

Summary: A student filed a report about the new housing system and gender configuration of the selection process. Specifically highlighting lack of equity and access for transgender students when participating in the Housing Selection and introducing barrier to students with mixed gender assignment needs.

Summary of Response: BEST member met with reporting student. Student presented that although they were able to get the support they needed in selecting their housing assignment for the Fall 2026, they knew of another student who had not. They shared the impact of lack of communication in their situation and other students and frustrations about the lack of inclusivity in the process. The student also understood how systems and software can have barriers and discussed with BEST member solutions for how to improve communication should this be the case. The BEST member was able to provide an update to the student that Residential Living and Learning will no longer be using the same system in 2027 and on; and had plans to improve communication during the summer second chance selection that will operate in the same system.

Date: March 30, 2026

Basis of Bias: Race, Disability (various)

Location: Academic Building

Summary: During an IFC meeting about growing numbers in diversity, a representative of a fraternity made remarks asking about meeting identity-based quotas being met and was also accused of mentioning micro-aggressions such as stating that costs would have to be lowered to ensure certain racial backgrounds would be able to afford entering into the fraternity.

Summary of Response: BEST members met with both reporting and reported students. Reporting student shared major concerns over the comments made by the reported student and asked that an educational conversation take place with the reported student to ensure they know what language was used and how it had come across hurtful to others. During the reported student meeting, the student shared regret over their comments and their wish that immediate feedback was given to them immediately rather than waiting to go through a process like this. Reported student mentioned some eager wants to be coached through words to and to not say that can come across as micro-aggressions, especially surrounding DEI conversations.

Date: April 9, 2026

Basis of Bias: Gender Identity

Location: Non-Academic Building

Summary: During a campus event, two students were identified and reported for allegedly sending messages in group text chats that were found to be misogynistic in nature. The report was submitted anonymously.

Summary of Response: BEST members met with both reported students. Both students expressed that they were genuinely unaware of what specific incident or messages the report was referencing. They confirmed their presence at Take Back the Night, noting they attended alongside several other football players and were active in multiple group text chats, but neither student acknowledged sending the messages in question. Both students expressed feeling frustrated and troubled that someone would perceive them in that way, emphasizing that they felt deeply empathetic and respectful during the event and toward the testimonies shared that evening. The students also voiced concern over the anonymous nature of the report, sharing that they would have preferred to address the situation directly with the reporting individual rather than going through a formal process.

Date: April 25, 2026

Basis of Bias: Race, Religion (various)

Location: Off-Campus

Summary: Numerous messages in a group chat that were religiously biased towards the reporting student and racially biased towards others. Previously met with DOS regarding incidents that occurred against other by students on an off-campus internship. The student submitted this report as an official report on record. The student wanted to wait until they felt safe to make the official report.

Summary of Response: Student met with DOS and will meet with Conduct as the incidents were deemed to be matters needing to be addressed by Conduct.