COMMUNITY REPORT

September 2014

BIAS REPORT AND SUPPORT SYSTEM
Bias Report and Support System

Charge: The Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) working group will work towards the development and implementation of a BRSS at Washington University. Through the BRSS, students will be able to report incidents of bias. The working group will conduct thorough research on existing bias reporting systems at several institutions across the country and will work with students, staff, and faculty to elicit feedback on the structure, mission, and roles of the BRSS team. The working group will then implement their recommendations.

Tasks: 1. Research best practices of Bias Report and Support Systems across the country; 2. Create a BRSS that addresses the University’s unique needs; 3. Launch a BRSS by January 2014.

Outcome: The goal of creating a Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) at Washington University in St. Louis is to promote an inclusive community by supporting students through a clear and streamlined process for reporting incidents of hate, bias, and/or discrimination. To achieve this goal, the BRSS is tasked with three primary responsibilities:

- **Support**: Support BRSS reporters by acknowledging and validating their experiences
- **Refer**: Refer BRSS reporters to appropriate University resources
- **Inform**: Inform the larger Washington University community of the number and nature of bias incidents reported to the BRSS

Membership Structure, Roles, and Responsibilities
Staff and faculty members of the BRSS are appointed annually, to two-year terms, by the Washington University Vice Chancellor for Students. In other words, after the first year, half the team will be in their first year of service and the other half will be in their second year of service. Student members will be appointed to one-year terms, to allow for greater student participation. The membership of the BRSS consists of one BRSS Coordinator and eight to ten BRSS team members. The BRSS Coordinator leads the BRSS Team in promoting an inclusive and welcoming campus environment, supporting students who have witnessed or been the target of bias related incidents, and referring students to the most appropriate campus partners, groups, and individuals to receive ongoing support.

Methods of Reporting
There is a single, standardized form used for reporting, including via the online reporting system, phone, hard copies, and in-person intake sessions.

- **Online report**: The BRSS Coordinator receives a notification when a report is filed through the online reporting system (found at brss.wustl.edu)
- **Phone report**: The phone reporting system is answered by a staff member, when available, during business hours. After business hours, the system is automated and the BRSS Coordinator will follow up with any and all messages within a reasonable timeframe (314-935-8118).
• Paper report: All paper reports can be submitted in person or via campus mail to the BRSS Coordinator’s office at Campus Box 1061.

• In-person report: If the reporter prefers to file a report in person, they may request a meeting with the BRSS Coordinator or a BRSS team member by emailing the BRSS email address at brss@wustl.edu

Report Classification
Each reporter will select a classification of their report—“For Information Only” or “For Support & Referral”. Reports that are classified as “For Information Only” will be incorporated into the semester and annual reports, but will not receive a follow-up contact by a BRSS member. Reports that are classified as “For Support and Referral” will follow the same process used with “For Information Only” reports, but will additionally include a meeting to provide support and discuss appropriate referrals to other resources. At the end of this process, the reporter will receive a follow-up email from the assigned team member and the case will be considered closed by the BRSS; the file can be reopened or augmented as needed.

BRSS Response
If the reporter selects the “For Support and Referral” option, they can either request to meet with a specific team member or one will be assigned to them. The purpose of the meeting is to provide support and detailed referrals to campus partners.

If more than one individual separately files a report for the same incident, BRSS members will meet with each individual separately, and also provide the option for group meetings if desired.

When possible, it will be up to the reporter to follow up on referrals given. This is intentional, since the BRSS team wishes to empower individuals to make their own decisions about disclosure. However, because the university may have an obligation to address certain reported incidents, the university cannot guarantee complete confidentiality where it would conflict with the university’s obligation to investigate meaningfully or, where warranted, take corrective action. Even when some disclosure of the university’s information or sources is necessary, it will be limited to the extent possible.

Summary of Reports
Each quarter, reports will be generated and made available to the WUSTL community by the BRSS on their website. Reports will reflect a brief summary of each incident reported, and will respect the confidentiality of all parties involved by not including information that would allow a community member to know the identity of any party. These reports will be freely accessible. With the release of the summary report, the BRSS Coordinator will meet with the Vice Chancellor for Students, the Vice Provost, and the Senior Associate Dean for Education at the School of Medicine to discuss trends and potential University action.
Next Steps:
1. The BRSS will be housed in the Center for Diversity and Inclusion and will be coordinated by the Director.
2. BRSS team members will continue to assess the system as it relates to campus needs, and seek feedback from community members when needed.
3. The BRSS will create an online system for anonymous assessment; that is, a way for people who do file reports “For Support and Referral” to provide de-identified feedback on their experience with the system.

Members:
Chair: Gaby Dinkin, College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2014
Chair: Naomi Sigg, Former Assistant Director of Student Involvement and Leadership
Chair: Ashley Viager, Residential College Director
Stan Braude, Senior Lecturer in Biology
Amy Gassel, Assistant Director of Graduate School Financial Services and Diversity Programs Coordinator
Linda Lindsey, Adjunct Professor in American Culture Studies
Nate Lucena, Doctoral Student, Arts & Sciences
Gwen Patton, Police Sergeant
Essie Rochman, Director of Student Affairs, Brown School of Social Work
Seiko Shastri, College of Arts and Sciences, Class of 2015
Reuven Shechter, College of Arts and Sciences, Class of 2015
Christiane Merritt, Doctoral Student, Arts & Sciences
Jessica Wilen, Special Projects Coordinator
Jonathan Williford, College of Arts and Sciences, Class of 2016