



BENTLEY
UNIVERSITY

Spring 2024 Bias Incident Response Team Report

Produced by The Bias Incident Response Team



Letter from the BIRT Core Team

Members of the Bentley Community,

Launched in the Fall of 2017, the Bentley Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT) was created to help the university respond to bias related incidents on Bentley's campus. A bias incident is characterized as a behavior or act – verbal, written, or physical – which is personally directed against or targets an individual based on perceived or actual characteristics such as race, color, religious belief, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national or ethnic origin, disability, veteran status, or age.

The BIRT consists of staff and faculty members representing a cross section of the campus, including the Office of Diversity & Inclusion, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs and Human Resources. This team ensures that individuals affected by bias or a bias-related incident have appropriate resources. This can include educational conversations, connections to official reporting structures, or assistance in accessing academic and counseling support services. The BIRT does not investigate incidents nor does it have the authority to discipline any member of the community. The role of BIRT is to be a resource for the reporting party who decides how the process moves forward

As the university continues to work towards greater equity and accountability, the Bias Incident Response Team has committed to increasing transparency about our reports and responses. Each semester, we will release regular reports detailing the number and type of reports received. Identifying information is removed to ensure privacy of the reporting parties.

For more information about the Bias Incident Response Team, our policies and procedures and how to file a BIRT report please visit our [website](#). If you have any questions about BIRT, please contact Matt Banks (matthewbanks@bentley.edu), the Associate Director for Diversity & Inclusion. The BIRT Core Team encourages anyone experiencing bias to submit a report.

In solidarity,

The BIRT Core Team

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BIRT Reports by the Numbers

(Spring 2024)

Total Number of BIRT Reports and Discrete Incidents

Total Number of Reports	Number of Discrete Incidents ¹
7	7

¹ BIRT defines a discrete incidents as singular incidents that are reported. This semester, we received six reports that each involved a different incident.

Summary of Reporting Parties

Reporting Party	Number of Incidents
Student	5
Staff	2
Faculty	0
External Community Member ²	0

² An external community member is an individual not currently enrolled at or employed by Bentley University.

Summary of Affected Individual

Affected Individual	Number of Incidents
Self	4
Someone Else	2
Non-Targeted ¹	1

¹ A non-targeted incident is one in which an individual or group was not explicitly targeted, but bias actions or language were used (e.x., graffiti in a public space that was reported for record by a non-affected individual).

Primary Identity Involved in Bias Incident

Primary Identity Involved in Incident	Number of Incidents
Race	2
Ethnicity or National Origin	3 ¹
Religion	0
Age	1 ²
Disability	0
Sex	0
Gender Identity or Expression	0
Sexual Orientation	1
Marital Status	0
Veteran Status	0
Other	0
Not Bias Related	1

¹ One incident under ethnic and national origin was specific to antisemitism on campus. Given the nature of the report, BIRT chose to classify as relating to ethnic bias.

² One report dealt with an incident involving both potentially race and age-based bias. As such, it was categorized under both.

Location of Incidents

Location of Incident	Number of Incident
Residence Hall	0
Classroom	1
Administrative Office	0
Campus Service	1
University Sponsored Event	1
Student Organization	2
Student Assignment of Project Group	0
Social Media or Other Virtual Space	1
Work Environment	0
Other	1

Summary of Type of Incidents

Type of Incident	Number of Incidents
Personal Encounter	2
Use of Slur or Derogatory Language	2
Overheard Remark	0
Classroom Incident	1
Social Media or Email	0
Sexual Harassment	0
University Operations	0
Graffiti or Written Language	1
Not BIRT Related	1

Historical Overview of BIRT Reports

Semester ³	Total Number of Reports for the Semester
Fall 2017	17
Spring 2018	11
Fall 2018	11
Spring 2019	7
Fall 2019	6
Spring 2020	3
Fall 2020	12
Spring 2021	6
Fall 2021	16
Spring 2022	12
Fall 2022	3
Spring 2023	6
Fall 2023	8
Spring 2024	7

³ Fall semesters are defined as July 1st through December 31st. Spring Semesters are defined as January 1st through June 30th.

Summary of BIRT Reports and Responses

Bias Incident Themes

The BIRT received reports of seven distinct bias or bias-related incidents during the Spring of 2024. The reports received involved concerns related to race, nationality, ethnic origin and age. Incidents included reports about classroom dynamics, hostile environments around ethnic origin, and personal interactions in student organizations and over social media or messaging apps.

BIRT Responses

The Bias Incident Response Team contacted the reporting party for each report received. While the response varies by incident, a member of the BIRT emails the reporting party within 48 hours to offer to meet to discuss the incident. If the reporting party agrees to meet, one or more members of the BIRT team will connect at a convenient time for the reporting party to review the report, offer support and resources, and review possibilities for next steps. Ultimately, the response BIRT pursues is decided by the individual who created the BIRT report.

Example of actions taken by BIRT this semester include:

- Referring reports to the Office of Institutional Equity for conversations about potential responses
- Coordinated with Graduate Academic services to provide support for faculty navigating difficult classroom environments
- Planning educational opportunities with student organizations about cultivating inclusive environments
- Strategizing with Fraternity and Sorority Life about recruitment practices and education for chapter members

It is important to note that the incidents in this report represent only those incidents where individuals felt comfortable or empowered to report and meet with the BIRT team. BIRT will pass along information to different university offices in the event of a repeating pattern of behavior or in the event of danger to a person. However, individualized responses are usually not taken by the BIRT team when an individual reports to BIRT but chooses or is unable to meet with the BIRT team.

This semester, we saw an increase in relating to ethnic and national origin, including an incident stemming from tensions related to the Israel-Palestine conflict. From this report and other incidents on campus, BIRT is coordinating with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to explore learning and development for faculty and staff focused on both antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Resources

Below, you will find a list of additional campus resources students, faculty and staff may utilize or refer individuals to. These offices are just a few of the resources the BIRT team helps connect affected individuals to when responding to bias-related incidents. In addition, the BIRT has provided resources to prevent and combat bias.

Campus Resources

Counseling Center

The Counseling Center is available for all students who are struggling and seeking mental health support. Through the use of secure and confidential telehealth software, Counseling Center staff will connect with students online to assess and determine the best course of action to help them. If appropriate, staff can schedule students for short-term teletherapy. Should it be determined that more long-term, intensive, specialized or local support is necessary, we will assist with connecting students with those resources.

Office of Equal Opportunity and Institutional Equity

The Office of Institutional Equity is responsible for coordinating Bentley's response and compliance efforts with respect to state and federal anti-discrimination and anti-harassment laws such as Titles VI, VII, and IX. The office acts as a centralized and resourced office charged with ensuring timely, consistent and equitable responses to reports of bias, discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. The office reports to the chief diversity and inclusion officer, and collaborates with partners in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Human Resources.

Ombuds Office

The Ombuds Office provides a safe, confidential, informal and impartial place for faculty, staff and students to discuss concerns and actual or potential conflicts and to address them in a positive and constructive way.

Deans' Offices

The Dean of Business and the Dean of Arts & Sciences, along with the University Provost, oversee the academic programs and integrity of the university. Students experiencing bias related issues in the classroom or academic support services can contact the Deans to discuss and address the issues.

Human Resources

The work of the Human Resources team supports the mission of the University by providing services and programs that attract, develop and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce. Whether you are faculty, administrative staff, a retiree, or a prospective employee, the welcoming team in HR is committed

to providing you with timely and professional service and strategic solutions. The core values of the Bentley Beliefs guide our interactions with the whole Bentley community and we are dedicated to treating all with respect and dignity. Information about the university's discrimination, harassment, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policy can be found [here](#).

[Office of Diversity & Inclusion](#)

The Office of Diversity & Inclusion is responsible for fostering an inclusive community by leveraging interactions between offices, educating the entire community and working to increase the diversity at all levels of the University. While the office coordinates university-wide, diversity-related programs and initiatives, many other departments, centers, offices, and organizations at Bentley contribute to improving the diversity climate through varied and persistent efforts.

[Student Equity & Inclusion](#)

The Student Equity and Inclusion team provides support, advocacy, and care to students throughout their Bentley experience as they explore their identities. We aim to equip all students with the knowledge, awareness and skills needed to be successful in an increasingly diverse campus and world. The offices under Student Equity & Inclusion are the Multicultural Center, Gender and Sexuality Student Programs, the Center for International Students and Scholars (CISS), Spiritual Life Office and Student Success.

Resources to Fight Bias

[Wellness, Health Promotion & Prevention](#)

The Wellness, Health Promotion & Prevention is the unit within Student Affairs working on health related needs for students. It includes the Office of Wellness & Health Promotion, which oversees Bystander Intervention trainings for students and the Relationships and Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) educators.

[Bentley University Inclusive Teaching & Scholarship SharePoint](#)

This site includes several resources for faculty members to utilize in creating inclusive classroom spaces.

[Speak Up: Responding to Everyday Bigotry](#)

This online resource from the Southern Poverty Law Center includes resources on how to respond to biased language in a variety of situations from conversations with family, to interactions during customer service interactions, and presentations in the workplace.



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BENTLEY UNIVERSITY is more than just one of the nation's top business schools. It is a lifelong-learning community that creates successful leaders who make business a force for positive change. With a combination of business and the arts and sciences and a flexible, personalized approach to education, Bentley provides students with critical thinking and practical skills that prepare them to lead successful, rewarding careers. Founded in 1917, the university enrolls 4,200 undergraduate and 1,000 graduate and PhD students and is set on 163 acres in Waltham, Massachusetts, 10 miles west of Boston. For more information, visit bentley.edu.