University Task Force on Individual, Institutional and Systemic Bias

The Executive Committee of the Task Force on Individual, Institutional and Systemic Bias on July 31, 2019 approved in concept several preliminary recommendations of task force work groups for referral to appropriate administrative units to explore implementation. Specific details of implementing the frameworks set forth in the recommendations will be developed by these units, with in-depth consideration of associated concerns and processes, after which the recommendations will presented to senior leadership for adoption.
STUDENT AND EMPLOYEE SUPPORT WORK GROUP

QUESTION #2
Incident feedback loop – Are we as effective as we can be in archiving, documenting and sharing information with other university level constituencies? And what should we expect in terms of a timeline for action? What are the barriers to community response, legal and non-legal, and how can these be addressed?

Task.ISB Executive Committee Meeting - July 31, 2019
Problem/Situation

When responding to bias incidents, there are no clear, all-encompassing guidelines at VCU. The Office of Equity and Access Services (EAS) investigates complaints of discrimination as a part of its responsibilities under the university’s non-discrimination policies. Bias incidents that do not constitute discrimination are referred to the appropriate offices for response: (1) incidents by employees are referred to management and/or the Office of Human Resources (HR) and are handled through HR processes and procedures and (2) incidents by students are referred to the Office of Student Affairs.
Research

• VCU students have a clear process of reporting bias incidents through the Dean of Students Office. They are able to report via the Dean of Students website at [https://students.vcu.edu/resources/bias-response-team/](https://students.vcu.edu/resources/bias-response-team/).
• The VCU Police Department also has a clear process for an individual who feels that there may have been a bias act committed by a VCU Police officer. An individual is able to report the incident at [https://police.vcu.edu/](https://police.vcu.edu/).
• EAS responds to, investigates and addresses complaints of discrimination. The Office of Integrity and Compliance (I&C) also collects and triages reported employee concerns of bias, harassment or discrimination. If a bias incident is preliminarily investigated by EAS and found to constitute an act of discrimination based on a complainant’s protected class status, EAS then responds according to its policies and procedures.
Recommendations

• Further develop the communications plan for reporting bias incidents (currently).
• Develop a unified system for reporting bias incidents.
• Develop clear guidelines for VCU responses to reported bias incidents, including guidance about where and how faculty and staff can report a bias incident and what they can expect during the process of a reported bias incident.
• Provide training to senior leadership and equip them with guidelines about critical incident management and what information can and cannot be shared during a bias incident.
• Invite more student leaders and activists to participate in meetings/task forces about student conduct policy.
• Continue holding informational forums if incidents of national magnitude occur.
• Create spaces for students, faculty, and staff emotionally impacted by bias incidents where they can be heard and affirmed regarding any frustration with law, policy and justice.
• Include information about incident engagement events on all social media platforms, in the TelegRam, and through email notification. Continue live-streaming and arranging online public comment periods.
• Be transparent about privacy limitations that must be balanced against transparency and actively work to educate the community about procedural timelines and information sharing.