**Oregon State University**
**Office of Institutional Diversity**

**Bias Response Team**

**2021-2022**
**Annual Report**

## I. Executive Summary

The Bias Response Team (BRT) has completed its fifth year in its current structure. Information shared in this report highlights data gathered during the 2021-2022 school year from university bias incident reports and University Housing and Dining Services (UHDS) bias incident reports. Where helpful, context is provided regarding trends in data between years.

Notable trends for 2021-2022 include:
- An increase in BRT report submissions. Report counts for 2021-2022 almost doubled those of 2020-2021 (n=196, 96% increase) and increased 31% (n=150) and 40% (n=140) from 2019-2020 and 2018-2019, respectively.
- An increase in acuity of reports. More reports were triaged and ultimately referred to the office of Equal Opportunity and Access (EOA) for further review. Reports to EOA (n=42, 21%) more than doubled from previous years.
- Reports stemming from online environments (n=44, 22%) continued to increase from pre-COVID 19 pandemic counts.
- Reported bias motivated by race and ethnicity continue to account for the majority of cases (n=58, 30% of all cases), followed by an increasing number of reports motivated by gender and gender expression (n=53, 27%).

Highlighted recommendations based on 2021-2022 data include:
- Prioritization of the university's efforts to prevent and address bias based on race/ethnicity and gender identity and expression, in structural and individual efforts; this may include expanded efforts of environmental accessibility, like gender inclusive restrooms, changing rooms, and education.
- A review of resources dedicated to the function of the BRT, as report counts and acuity of reports increase. Initial bias report triage and follow up with reporting/impacted parties are managed by two employees in the Office of Institutional Diversity almost exclusively, as a part of their duties. A review should answer whether existing resources are appropriate or if different resources are needed.

## II.    Introduction

The BRT is responsible for applying the university's Reported Bias Incident Response Protocol, which provides a process to comprehensively, collaboratively, and consistently address bias incidents that affect Oregon State University (OSU) students, faculty, and staff.

Coordinated by the Office of Institutional Diversity, the BRT includes members from partner offices across the university. The team aims to:
- Provide care and support to OSU community members who may be negatively affected by bias incidents;
- Engage in a restorative process to educate community members about the harmful impact of bias incidents; and
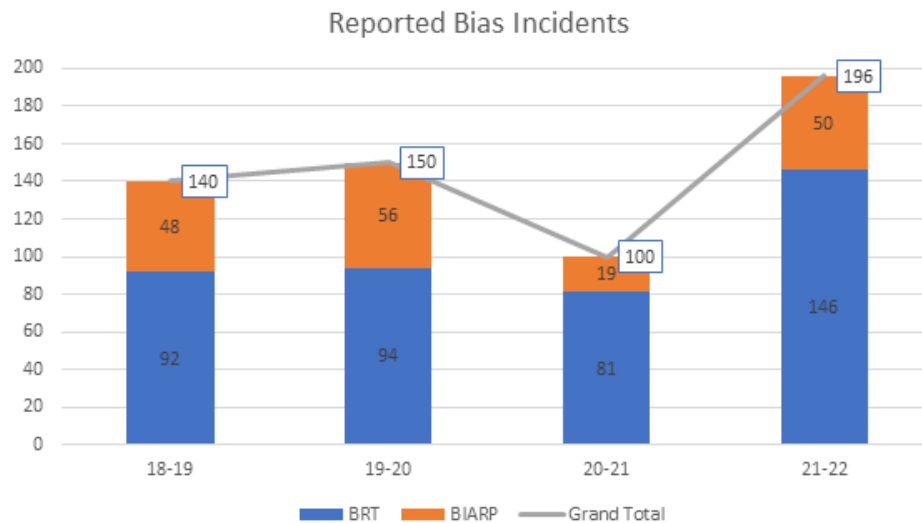- Develop and implement strategies to reduce the occurrence of bias incidents.

As part of its work, the BRT produces an annual report to summarize annual bias incident reporting data, describe trends, and provide recommendations for additional analysis and attention. This 2021-2022 report is the first standalone report for the Bias Response Team. Previous reports have been distributed as a part of the annual report from the President and Provost's Leadership Council on Diversity Equity and Inclusion.

The BRT recognizes that reports submitted through this process may not account for all instances of bias at OSU. Other university data like the Student Community Climate Survey and Employee Community Climate Survey suggest that students, faculty and staff do not report all instances of bias. OID conducted an internal review of the BRT process in 2021 to better understand the efficacy of the process and opportunities for improvement. The review underscored that underreporting may stem from various factors like fear of retaliation, lack of awareness of bias reporting, or lack of trust in a university process. The BRT has sought to mitigate these barriers by providing expanded education to key university stakeholders (e.g., student employees in Diversity and Cultural Engagement, University Housing and Dining Services; online modules for staff and faculty, unit presentations, inclusion of BRT information in OID trainings, etc.). OID also redesigned the BRT website to provide more clarity about the BRT process and engagement of those who experienced bias and those who have been named in a report.

## III.    Data Review and Analysis

Data analyzed in this report include incidents reported to the university's BRT and through University Housing and Dining Services' Bias Incident Assessment and Response Protocol (BIARP). While the BRT and BIARP processes run independently, data collection and analysis are coordinated to provide a comprehensive picture of bias incident response efforts at the university. OID analyzed consolidated data from the 2021-2022 academic year and where appropriate compared these data to data from previous academic years: 2018-2019, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. For this analysis the academic year starts on July 1 of each calendar year and ends on June 30; summer term data is split between two different academic years.

### a. Reported Bias Incidents

**Reported Bias Incidents**

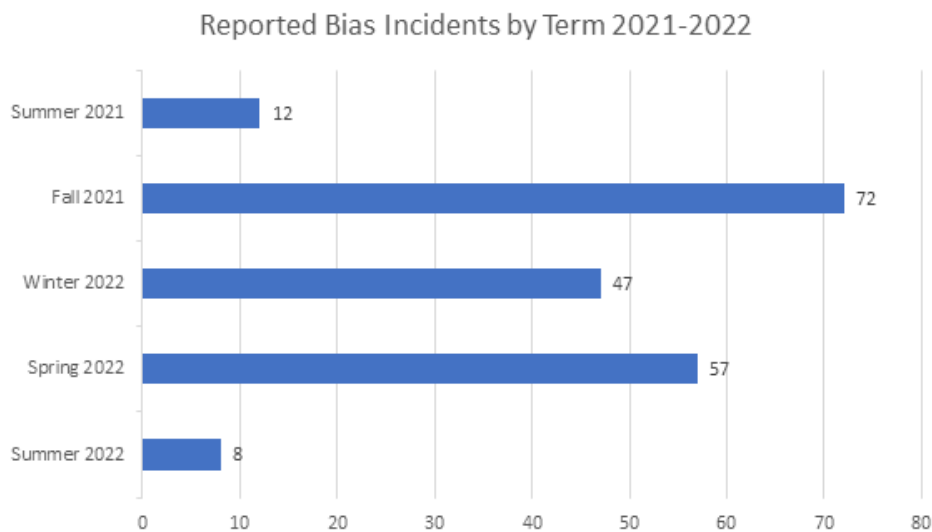| Year | BRT | BIARP | Grand Total |
|------|-----|-------|-------------|
| 18-19 | 92 | 48 | 140 |
| 19-20 | 94 | 56 | 150 |
| 20-21 | 81 | 19 | 100 |
| 21-22 | 146 | 50 | 196 |

Unique report counts show an increase in the number of reported bias incidents during the 2021-2022 academic year. Report counts for 2021-2022 almost doubled (96%, n=196) those of 2020-2021 and increased 31% (n=150) and 40% (n=140) from 2019-2020 and 2018-2019, respectively. Report counts may have decreased during Winter 2020 through Spring 2021 because of COVID-19 pandemic impacts. OSU community interactions, especially in person, were restricted during this period. Interestingly, the increase was observed primarily in reports submitted to the Bias Response Team and not through the UHDS BIARP reports, which remained relatively steady in count from pre-COVID years.

There are two possible explanations for the increase in reports, which are not mutually exclusive.

First, reports may be following an existing upward trend of reporting observed prior to COVID-19 pandemic impacts. This explanation is supported by the 7% increase in report counts between years 2018-2019 to 2019-2020. However, if this rate of increase held, we would only expect approximately 172 reports in year 2021-2022. In this first explanation, increased reports may also be a result of more effective knowledge of bias reporting and increased trust in institutional response processes, resulting in improved opportunities to mitigate harm by providing care to those impacted. It is notable that a sharp increase in report counts was seen in reports coming directly to the BRT via the online reporting form but not via UHDS-linked reports which are only submitted by student and professional staff. This pattern may suggest that education regarding the BRT online information and reporting form may have some correlation to higher counts. Generally, an increased number of reports is received as a positive indicator that the community has greater awareness and an increased willingness to report bias incidents to the university. Such increases are expected as awareness of support resources increase and previously unreported incidents are reported.

The second possible explanation is that the 2021-2022 academic year presented unique challenges for the OSU community as students and employees returned from COVID precautions to more typical in-person class, work and living interactions, leading to increase report counts. The period of time in isolation, or with less community interaction, may have impacted the skills and practice necessary to interact within a community as was normal before the pandemic. Other campus offices that track reports like the Student Conduct and Community Standards Office and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access have anecdotally reported similar sharp increases. It will be important to analyze data from future academic years to better understand if this academic year was an outlier, or part of a larger pattern of increased reporting.

**b. Reported Bias Incidents by Term**
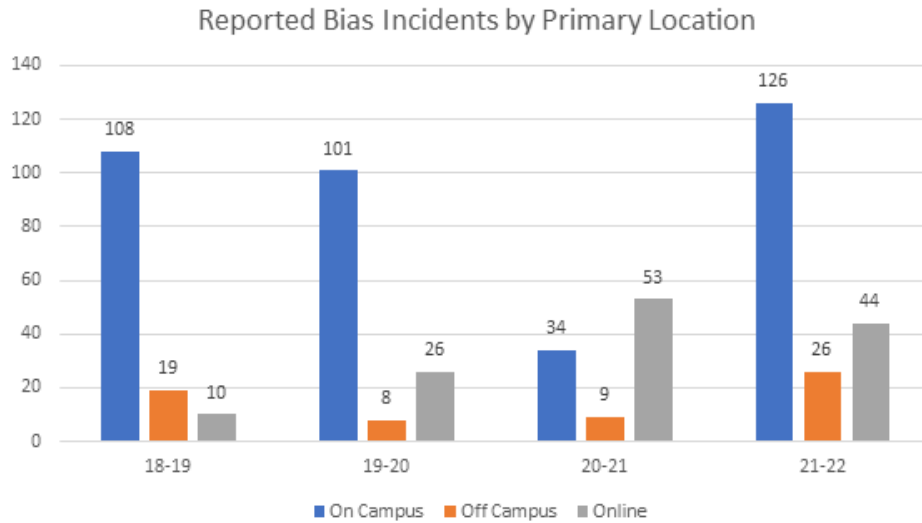


Reported Bias Incidents by Term 2021-2022

Following patterns from previous academic years, 2021-2022 saw more reports submitted in Fall term (n=72, 37%). However, unlike previous years, this academic year saw more reports in Spring term (n=57, 29%) than in Winter term (n=47, 24%). Summer terms (total n=20, 10%, across Summers 2021 and 2022) has historically had less reporting likely tied to a decrease in university activity for current students and teaching faculty, which is consistent in the 2021-2022 academic year.

One possible explanation for increased reports in fall term, is that fall is the first term for many new and returning OSU community members resulting in new interactions with other community members. This can be a learning experience as university community members with multiple social identities and lived experiences begin to engage in learning, working and living environments with each other.

Data should be reviewed in future years to understand if the increase in Spring 2022 is a new pattern or simply an isolated term change. It is also important to note the continued cluster of cases in fall terms as this helps plan for staff time necessary to triage and respond to reports.
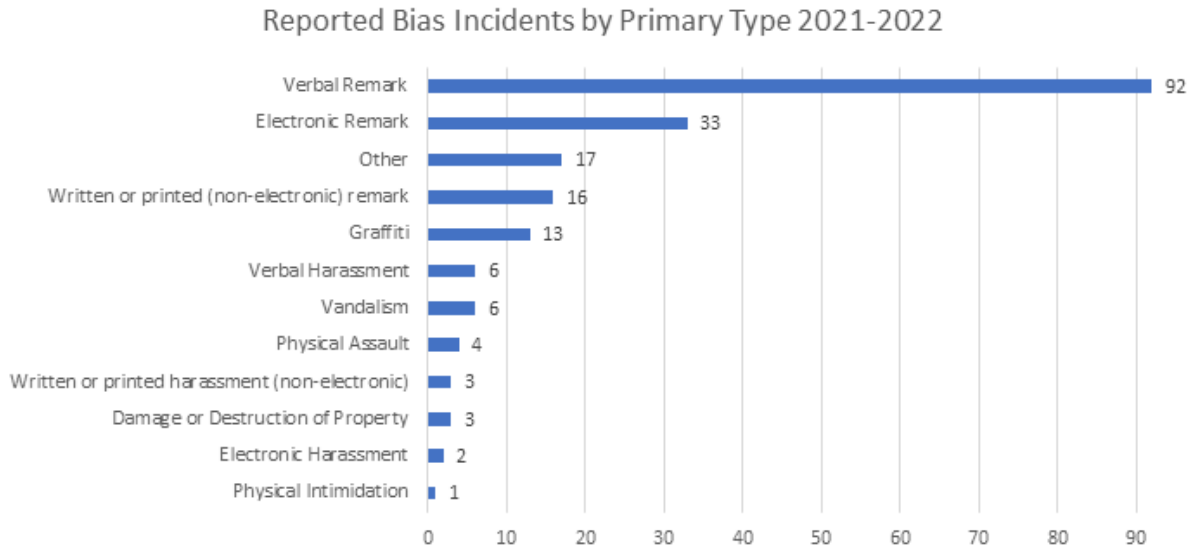
4

### c.  Incident Location
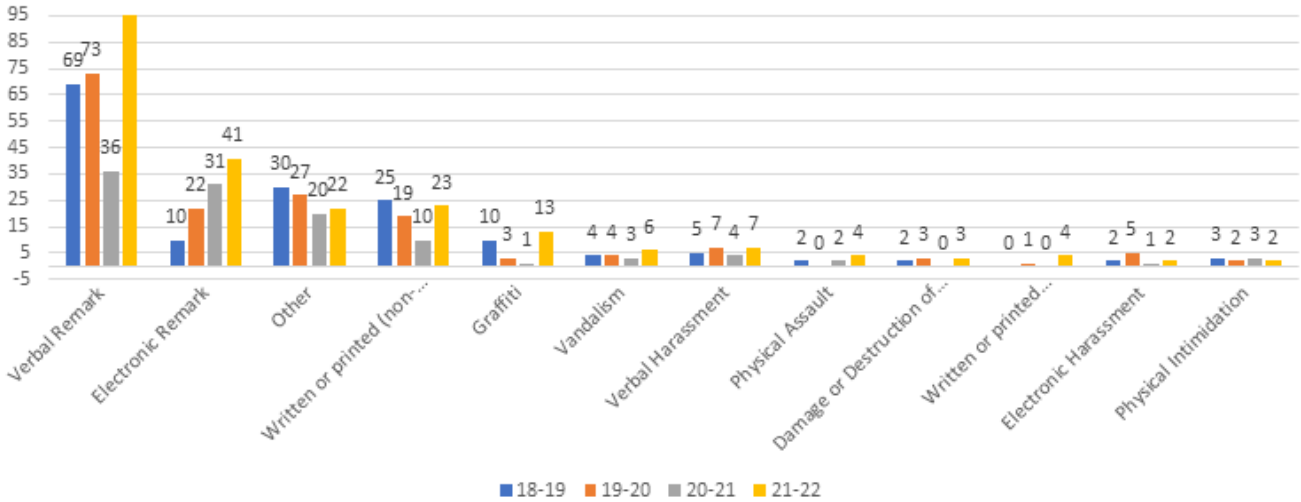
**Reported Bias Incidents by Primary Location**



During the 2021-2022 academic year, the majority of reported incidents took place on-campus (n=126, 64%), which is consistent with previous years' data with the exception of 2020-2021 when most university engagement was remote due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The on-campus designator is defined as any environment OSU operates such as the Corvallis campus, Bend campus, Hatfield Marine Science Center, Portland Center, etc.

This academic year, while on-campus incidents remained the most frequent location, reports stemming from online environments (n=44, 22%) continued to increase from pre-COVID 19 pandemic counts. Given shifting norms around expectations to conduct university business in remote environments post-pandemic, it is possible that reports tied to online locations may continue to increase proportionally as total report counts increase.

### d.  Incident Type

**Reported Bias Incidents by Primary Type 2021-2022**



5

## Reported Bias Incidents by Type (Total)



Chart legend: ■ 18-19  ■ 19-20  ■ 20-21  ■ 21-22

Data values by category (18-19, 19-20, 20-21, 21-22):
- Verbal Remark: 69, 73, 36, 95
- Electronic Remark: 10, 22, 31, 41
- Other: 30, 27, 20, 22
- Written or printed (non-…): 25, 19, 10, 23
- Graffiti: 10, 3, 1, 13
- Vandalism: 4, 4, 3, 6
- Verbal Harassment: 5, 7, 4, 7
- Physical Assault: 2, 0, 2, 4
- Damage or Destruction of…: 2, 3, 0, 3
- Written or printed…: 0, 1, 0, 4
- Electronic Harassment: 2, 5, 1, 2
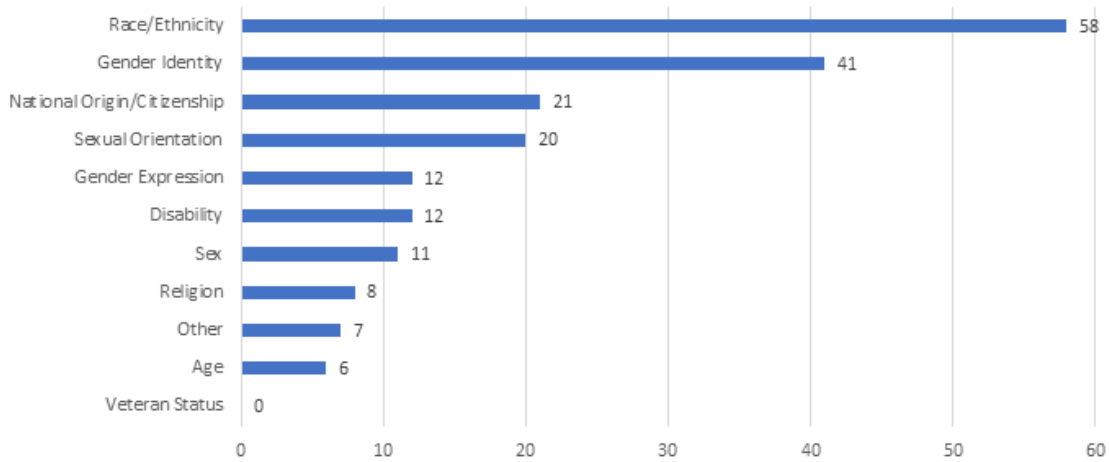- Physical Intimidation: 3, 2, 3, 2

Bias report data uses a labeling system that identifies the types of bias reports submitted. Incident type refers to the delivery method of the bias experienced. Some examples of incident types are verbal remarks, graffiti, and physical assault. Bias data also identifies different levels of incident type when multiple types of bias are present. Data identifies these "primary, secondary, and tertiary" types of bias reports. Determining "primary" types of reports allows identification of the most impactful type of delivery method of experience that prompted the report. For example, a bias report may include a verbal remark and destruction of property, after reviewing the report it would likely be determined that the primary incident type is destruction of property as it was likely the most impactful delivery method of bias. Primary type in bias reports is different than a "total count" of all bias report types. A "total count", in contrast, includes any type of delivery method of bias that is included in the report. These experiences may take a secondary or tertiary role in the impact of the bias incident. They are labeled as secondary or tertiary and presented in aggregate. Following the previous example, both a verbal remark and destruction of property would be identified in a "total count" of that report.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, three out of the top four primary types of bias incidents reported were classified as "remarks", which are defined as personal interactions that are less severe than harassment.
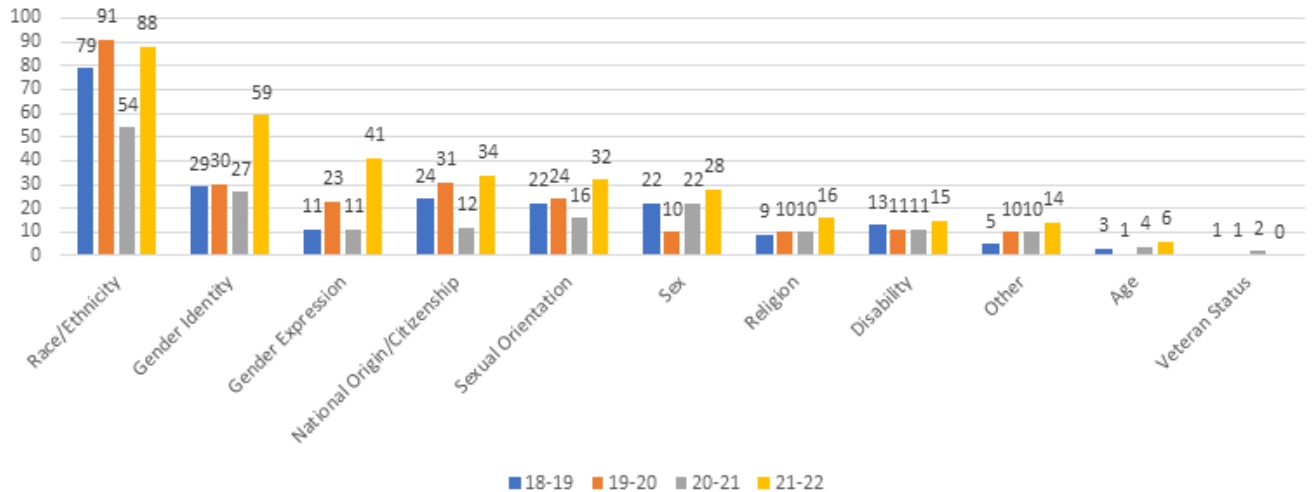
The top five primary types of incidents consist of verbal remarks (n=92, 47%), electronic remarks (n=33, 17%), other (n=17, 9%), written or printed remarks (n=16, 8%), and graffiti (n=13, 7%). Reviewing total counts of bias incident types across years 2018-2022, there is a consistent upward trend in verbal remarks and electronic remarks, excluding COVID-19 pandemic impacts previously discussed. There is a downward trend of incidents classified as "other" suggesting the BRT process has matured to better classify bias incidents.

## e. Perceived Motive

### Reported Bias Incidents by Primary Perceived Motive 2021-2022

| Motive | Count |
|---|---|
| Race/Ethnicity | 58 |
| Gender Identity | 41 |
| National Origin/Citizenship | 21 |
| Sexual Orientation | 20 |
| Gender Expression | 12 |
| Disability | 12 |
| Sex | 11 |
| Religion | 8 |
| Other | 7 |
| Age | 6 |
| Veteran Status | 0 |

### Reported Bias Incidents by Perceived Motive (Total)

| Motive | 18-19 | 19-20 | 20-21 | 21-22 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Race/Ethnicity | 79 | 91 | 54 | 88 |
| Gender Identity | 29 | 30 | 27 | 59 |
| Gender Expression | 11 | 23 | 11 | 41 |
| National Origin/Citizenship | 24 | 31 | 12 | 34 |
| Sexual Orientation | 22 | 24 | 16 | 32 |
| Sex | 22 | 10 | 22 | 28 |
| Religion | 9 | 10 | 10 | 16 |
| Disability | 13 | 11 | 11 | 15 |
| Other | 5 | 10 | 10 | 14 |
| Age | 3 | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| Veteran Status | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |

The top five primary perceived motives of bias incidents in the 2021-2022 academic year were: race/ethnicity (n=58, 30%), gender identity (n=41, 21%), national origin/citizenship (n=21, 11%), sexual orientation (n=20, 10%) and gender expression (n=12, 6%). Gender identity and expression, while distinct, are connected. If aggregated as gender identity and expression (n=56, 27%) these categories almost tie for the top primary perceived motive in the 2021-2022 academic year. Perceived motives for bias reports for total reports, including secondary and tertiary motives in aggregate reveal the same pattern over the academic year.
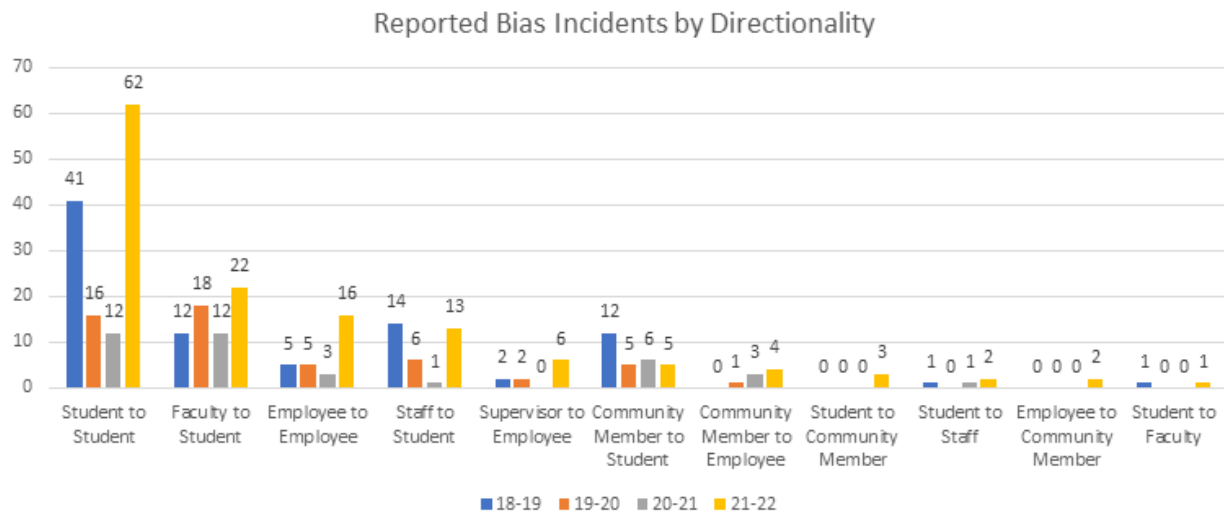
Compared to previous years, two patterns emerge: the consistency of race/ethnicity as the top total perceived motive and an increase in reports stemming from gender identity and expression.

7

Total report counts that include gender identity as a motive (n=59) almost doubled the last highest count last reported in the 2019-2020 academic year (n=30), a 96% increase. Similarly, gender expression (n=41) had an increase of 78% from the last highest count (n=23), also in the 2019-2020 academic year. While these reports represent an array of narratives, two overarching trends emerge: (1) reports related to a need for gender inclusive restroom facilities; and (2) instances of repeated errors in acknowledging university community members' gender identity, especially by using correct pronouns.

Even with large increases in gender identity and expression-motivated incidents, reports that include race/ethnicity as a perceived motive continue to persist as the most predominant primary motive (n=58, 30%) and total count by motive (n=88). Race/ethnicity has been the most predominant perceived motive since bias report data has been collected in its present form. This academic year, bias reports that included race/ethnicity as a motive include an array of incidents but several reports stemmed from a pattern of graffiti depicting swastikas in fall 2021, which may have been part of a larger pattern of swastika graffiti reported off campus in Corvallis over the summer and fall of 2021.

Several reported incidents motivated by race/ethnicity were notable for their significant negative impact on individual students, which were ultimately referred to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access for investigation.

### f. Incident Directionality



Reported Bias Incidents by Directionality

Incident directionality is data that highlights the connection between the impacted party and the alleged respondent in a bias report and to understand the types of power relationships parties have in an interpersonal bias incident. Tracking directionality may reveal asymmetries in authority or perceived power, such as when a faculty member or supervisor are alleged respondents in a report. Tracking directionality also helps define and prioritize the focus of university wide bias education in future years.

Not all reports include an incident directionality as some reports are not interpersonal in nature and, thus, there is no relationship to track in a report. Incident types like graffiti and vandalism often do not have known alleged respondent parties to document for directionality, for example.

In the 2021-2022 academic year, the most frequent direction of interpersonal bias incidents, by total count, was from student-to-student (n=68) followed by faculty to students (n=22). Comparing past years, student-to-student directionality does not seem to show a clear pattern, though this may be due to pandemic impacts. Student-to-student reports were also the most prevalent in 2018-2019 and were reported in similar total counts to faculty-to-student reports in other years.

One interesting change to note in the directionality of reports is the increase in employee-to-employee reports. These reports have historically been reported in single digit report counts, five reports in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, and only three reports in 2020-2021 during the pandemic changes to mostly remote work. However, the 2021-2022 academic year saw a count of 16 reports; while still a lower count, this represents a more than tripling of report counts.

### g. Report Referrals

As part of the BRT process, reports are referred to the most appropriate office for follow up. An example of this is when a report describes a student experiencing distress without any indication that bias has occurred. In this instance, a referral is made to student care team members in the Dean of Students Office for further support. For the 2021-2022 year, the BRT referred six reports to the Dean of Students Office. This is the first year the BRT tracks this data. Subsequent years will be needed to understand if any trends in referrals to the student care team exist.

The BRT is not an investigatory body and does not have authority to recommend any discipline of students or faculty/staff. The BRT makes referrals to the office of Equal Opportunity and Access (EOA) when a reported bias incident contains information indicating a possible violation of university policy or if the reporting party requests an investigation. Typically, these reports may be more acute or severe in nature, describe persistent experiences, or may significantly impact the ability of a student, faculty, or staff to pursue their academic or work endeavors.

During the 2021-2022 year, the BRT referred 42 reports to EOA, this comprises 21% of all BRT reports. This count is an increase of at least 27 reports, or more than double, the previous highest count of referrals. Referrals to EOA occurred much less frequently in the past. In the past three reporting years, the BRT referred reports to EOA by the following total counts and percentage of all reports in the given year: 15 reports in 2018-2019 (11%), seven reports in 2019-2020 (5%), and 12 reports in 2020-2021 (12%). Given the unique circumstances that indicate an appropriate referral to EOA (which include a possible policy violation, possible discrimination, or an impacted party interested in an investigation), data suggests the BRT

9

received more reports of higher acuity or impact. These reports are typically more complex and take more staff time to triage, refer and process appropriately.

## IV.    Trend Highlights

In summary, several trends emerged over the 2021-2022 academic year:
- A sharp increase in report counts for 2021-2022. Report counts almost doubled (n=196, 96%) those of 2020-2021 and increased 31% (n=150) and 40% (n=140) from 2019-2020 and 2018-2019, respectively.
- Reports by term continued to follow trends from previous academic years. The highest concentration of reports occurred in fall term (n=72, 37%).
- Reported incidents occurring in online environments (n=44, 22%) continued to increase from pre-COVID 19 pandemic counts.
- Verbal remarks (n=92, 47%) continue to account for the most frequent total incident type, followed by electronic remarks (n=33, 17%), "other" incident types (n=17, 9%), written or printed remarks (n=16, 8%), and graffiti (n=13, 7%).
- Reports that include race/ethnicity as a perceived motive continue to persist as the frequently reported motive (n=58, 30% as primary motive and n=88 in total motives).
- Combining gender identity and expression as a primary perceived motive (n=56, 27%) almost ties for the top primary perceived motive in the 2021-2022 academic year. The total report count that involves gender identity as a motive almost doubled (n=59) the total report count in academic year 2019-2020 (n=30).  This represents a sharp increase in cases involving gender identity and expression compared to previous academic years.
- There was a noticeable increase in reports involving employee-to-employee interpersonal interactions. The 2021-2022 academic year totaled 16 such reports compared to 3-5 reports seen annually from academic years 2019-2021.
- Reports referred to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access comprised 21% of all reports this year. The total count of EOA referrals (n=42) more than doubled from previous years. This suggests more reports with higher acuity and more staff effort to triage and refer appropriately.

## V.    Recommendations

Based on identified trends, several recommendations emerge:
- This year, as in every year since data collection began, race/ethnicity was the most prevalent perceived motivation for reported bias incidents. The multifaceted negative impacts of racism are well-documented. We recommend the university continue to prioritize its anti-racist goals in structural and individual efforts. The continued trend of race/ethnicity as the top motive of bias reports suggest that more study of this area is needed to understand what structural interventions may be necessary to curb and prevent bias in this area.
- There is a growing number of reports over the last four years based on gender and gender expression. Increased rates of bias incidents directed toward trans community

members, in particular, require further analysis and institutional response. Among the recommended responses, should be an effort to address shortfalls in institutional data collection which often do not include trans community members, and a structural analysis of built environments that considers accessibility for to all gender identities, such as gender inclusive restrooms.

- The overall increase of bias reports and the increase of reports that were more acute or complex required additional response time and resources and led to more staff time and energy dedicated to responding to these reports. As the university community continues to be more aware of bias reporting options, we should anticipate more reports. A review of university resources dedicated to the BRT is recommended to better understand if capacity is appropriate given the expanding need for triage and care.

- Staff, faculty, and student staff should be aware that a higher proportion of bias cases occur in the fall term. While there are many reasons why this may occur, staff and faculty, should prepare themselves to respond/intervene, where appropriate, in bias incidents occurring in their relative functional areas with special attention to fall term.