

Procedural Guidelines for Graduate Students Facing Bias, Discrimination, or Problematic Behavior in the HDFS Department

Human Development and Family Science (HDFS) faculty are committed to promoting a climate of inclusion, access, and respect. When bias, discrimination, or other problematic behaviors occur in our department, we want to address and remedy it.

Definitions

Bias: an unreasoned attitude, judgement, or outlook in favor of or against a person or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

- Prejudice: an unjustified attitude, typically unfavorable or intolerant, towards an individual based on the individual's membership of a social group (includes but not limited to sex, race, sexual orientation, gender presentation, social class, religion, national origin, age, etc.).

Discrimination: negative behavior or actions towards an individual or group of people based on their social group or perceived social group (includes but not limited to sex, race, sexual orientation, gender presentation, social class, religion, national origin, age, etc.).

Problematic behavior: Other negative or unwanted behavior that is harmful to an individual or work setting.

We understand that there is conscious and unconscious bias. Conscious bias is an active, understood, and chosen way of behaving towards another person. Unconscious bias, also called implicit bias, is a behavior, action, or inaction a person performs unconsciously. In this instance, a person may have no idea they are acting in a way that favors some people and excludes others. We recognize both as a department and will work with students to address the behavioral manifestations of bias and mitigate the adverse consequences of bias regardless of whether they are driven by conscious or unconscious factors.

Process for Requesting Support within the Department

If you experience bias, prejudice, discrimination, or other related problematic behaviors in any form, we have a suggested process to begin addressing it. Resources also are provided below that may be helpful, including additional or alternative processes you can access.

- Start by speaking with a trusted other, for example, a faculty member, another graduate student, the graduate program officer (GPO), and/or the Department Head.
- If you are not sure who to turn to first, consider utilizing the HDFS online inquiry tool. This is a brief Qualtrics survey that allows you to voice your concern and describe the support you need (see Appendix A to review the questions asked on the online survey). The responses to this survey are received by the Department Head who will review and follow up, as needed. You can report concerns anonymously if you prefer.
 - Survey link: https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5gKJa60C3kByXeB
- You may wish to convene a meeting with a subset of faculty (a Student Action Response Committee, SARC) to voice your concerns and work on a remedy to the situation. The makeup of the SARC will be at your discretion; it is not a standing committee. In many cases, this meeting will include the department head.

However, you may choose not to have the department head there if you prefer. You may request one or more faculty members from the HDFS department or from other departments.

- It is recommended that you include one or more members of the AEI committee. Committee members are trained to help students and colleagues who are coping with discrimination and bias. However, it is not a requirement that a member of the AEI committee be on the SARC.
- You **may** also include as part of the SARC trusted peer(s) or staff within the department.
- *Note.* Membership on a SARC will be kept confidential unless the SARC deems it necessary for a faculty member to come forward to meet one of more of the student's needs. Under no circumstances will a graduate students' membership on a SARC be disclosed to other members of the department, college, or university.
- This meeting can serve multiple purposes; the goal is to address your concerns and needs. Therefore, the meeting will be arranged with your objectives in mind. The following are some, but not all, of the objectives you have for the meeting:
 - You may want to communicate with department leadership (e.g., department head, graduate program officer, program director) what has been occurring and have a listening ear.
 - You may want to have someone speak on your behalf to those engaging in the biased behavior.
 - Although we never want students to cope with bias on their own, and the primary goal will always be to stop the bias, you may want help brainstorming how you should respond until the bias has been addressed.
 - You may request changes to reduce your exposure to the bias, prejudice, or discrimination.
 - You may desire administrative intervention and consequences for the offending parties.
- You will not be pressed to share any details that you feel uncomfortable disclosing. However, actionable steps directed at those who perpetrated the discrimination or biased behaviors may not be feasible unless you are ready to discuss the details of what happened and when.
- If the SARC and student decide that an actionable step is needed, a member of the SARC will be identified who will be responsible for initiating that action. The SARC will be responsible for continuing to work with the student to make sure the student feels appropriate steps are being taken.

Process for Requesting Support from Entities Outside the Department

If a situation arises for which you uncomfortable working with department faculty or that requires more immediate action from the university, we suggest that you go to one of the following (going to one of these units does not limit your ability to also approach HDFS department faculty for help):

- You can submit a report to BERT. <http://studentaffairs.auburn.edu/bert/>
- You can speak with staff in Auburn's Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment or fill out a report/complaint. <https://cws.auburn.edu/TitleIX/pm/aaeeo>
- You can talk, confidentially, to the University ombudsman, Kevin Coonrod (at 844-7170; kcc0024@auburn.edu) <https://www.auburn.edu/administration/ombuds/index.php>

More information on each of these resources is provided below.

BERT- Auburn's Bias Education and Response team

The Bias Education and Response Team is a non-judicial team of faculty, staff, and administrators which supports members of the Auburn family by:

- Ensuring that all members of the Auburn family have a means to report bias incidents.
- Serving as a safe resource for members of the Auburn family to raise concerns regarding bias-related incidents, acts of harassment, and discrimination on campus.
- Collecting information about incidents and providing an annual report of all reported bias-related incidents impacting the Auburn University community.
- Advocating for prevention and awareness programs which educate all Auburn family members about bias-related incidents and reporting options.
- Connecting those affected by bias-related incidents with immediate and ongoing support systems.
- Working with university stakeholders to ensure transparent and open communication following the report of a bias-related incident.
- Supporting opportunities for dialogue and restorative justice, when possible, for those impacted by bias-related incidents.

AA-EEO Office

You may decide to speak with Auburn's Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment.

<https://cws.auburn.edu/TitleIX/pm/aaeeo>

The AA/EEO strives to ensure an inclusive and equitable working, living, and learning environment for members of the Auburn University community. The Office provides guidance for promoting equal access to employment and educational opportunities and resolves issues of harassment and discrimination based on protected class.

Our services include oversight and support for the University's compliance with federal and state laws in the areas of equal opportunity, affirmative action, harassment, and discrimination; supervision and monitoring of the AU Equal Opportunity Program; investigation of complaints of potential violations of University policies regarding equal opportunity, affirmative action, harassment, and discrimination; and training and outreach for the Auburn University community.

Kelley Taylor

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University Ombudsperson

The Office of the Ombudsperson assists all members of the Auburn University community navigate through difficult situations encountered at the University. The Ombudsperson is responsible to the principles of independence,

neutrality, confidentiality and informality, as well as the values and mission of Auburn University. Every visitor to the Ombuds office is treated with respect, dignity and honor.

University Ombuds Office: <https://ba.auburn.edu/ombudsperson/>

Ombudsperson Office

Quad Center, Suite 005

(Located on the ground floor)

(334) 844-7170 Office

(334) 844-7089 Fax

C. Kevin Coonrod, JD

University Ombudsperson

(334) 844-7170

ombuds@auburn.edu

Dona Yarbrough, PhD

Associate Ombudsperson

(334) 844-7174

aumbuds@auburn.edu

Appendix A

Online Reporting Questionnaire (Link: https://auburn.qualtrics.com/fe/form/SV_5gKJa60C3kByXeB)

At Auburn HDFS, we are committed to a work and learning climate that is supportive and enriching for all. When possible, we take an educational approach to addressing examples of when we do not live up to our aspirations. This Qualtrics mechanism allows for department members to share with the department head concerns they have about our work and learning climate. Clear violations of University policy should be reported to the AU Office of Affirmative Action/ Equal Employment Opportunity.

Thank you for seeking out department assistance for a concern about our climate. Please answer the following questions to help us understand the problem. We will do our best to respond to your concern within a week.

If this is an urgent manner that needs immediate assistance, please contact Angela Wiley immediately at: arw0044@auburn.edu.

This survey has been set-up in a way that your response is completely confidential, if you wish. You are welcome to leave your information if you would like to be contacted about this matter and its resolution. In all cases, your concern will be treated with respect and confidentiality.

Who is involved in the issue of concern?

Describe the concerning behavior or situation, as completely as you can.

How would you like to see this concern resolved?

If you wish to be contacted about this issue, please leave your name and contact information. As a reminder this survey is anonymous. You are not required to leave any identifying information.

Your name (1) _____

Email Address (2) _____