



SUPPORT SERVICES For Bias Incidents and Hate Crimes



Commitment to the University Community

The University of Chicago is a community of scholars dedicated to research, academic excellence, and the pursuit and cultivation of learning. Every member of the University community—student, faculty, and staff—makes a commitment to strive for personal and academic integrity, to treat others with dignity and respect, to honor the rights and property of others, to take responsibility for individual and group behavior, and to act as a responsible citizen in both a free academic community and in the larger society. Any student’s conduct—on or off campus; as an individual or in a group—that threatens or violates this commitment may become a matter for action within the University’s system of student discipline (*The Student Manual of University Policies and Regulations, 2007–08*; page 1).

Each of us must seek the appropriate balance between protecting academic freedom in our “marketplace of ideas” and protecting the right of members of the community to participate freely and fully in the life of the University.

The University is committed to fostering a community in which each member treats all others with dignity and respect, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, veteran status, or membership in any other protected class under the law. It is the responsibility of each member of the University community to foster an environment of respect, openness, and understanding so that we can explore and discuss different views . . . even those that are unwelcome or offensive. The University has a number of policies and statements that reinforce the University community’s commitment to diversity, civility, and equity. In addition to the University policies, there are other policies that apply to specific University organizations and locations (e.g., student activities, libraries, housing). For additional information about University policies, visit civility.uchicago.edu/policies.shtml.

Bias Incidents

Bias is a pre-formed negative opinion or attitude toward a group of persons who possess common characteristics (e.g., skin color; or cultural experiences, such as religion or national origin). Bias incidents involve actions committed against a person or property that are motivated, in whole or in part, by bias against race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, gender, gender identity, age, or disability. By contrast, a hate crime is a criminal offense committed against a person or property that is motivated, in whole or in part, by bias against a race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, or religion. All hate crimes are bias incidents, but not all bias incidents are hate crimes. Among the incidents that will be addressed by the Bias Response Team are actions that are motivated by bias but may not include elements that would make it possible to prove that a crime has been committed. Some examples of bias incidents follow:

- A student returns to his dorm room to find a derogatory message written on his whiteboard that references the race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or national origin of another individual or group of individuals.
- Harassment or threats referencing race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, veteran status, or any other protected class are made via the internet.
- Flyers posted around campus by a Recognized Student Organization are systematically or repeatedly torn down and/or defaced.
- Remarks perceived as derogatory are made about a student by a classmate or faculty member.
- Although a request for assistance is made in advance, a disabled student is unable to attend a University event because accommodations for the individual situation are not made.

Hate Crimes

Hate crimes are criminal acts committed by reason of the actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or national origin of another individual or group of individuals, regardless of the existence of any other motivating factor or factors. Examples of criminal acts that become hate crimes under Illinois law because they are committed by reason of the victim's protected class status include assault, battery, aggravated assault, misdemeanor theft, criminal trespass to residence, misdemeanor criminal damage to property, criminal trespass to vehicle, criminal trespass to real property, mob action or disorderly conduct, or harassment by telephone or through electronic communications. Some examples of hate crimes follow:

- A sukkah, an outdoor structure built for celebration of the Jewish holiday of Sukkot, is defaced with a swastika.
- An African American student receives email messages warning him to get off campus and threatening violence against him if he stays.

If you believe you have experienced a hate crime, call the University Police Department at 773.702.8181 (or 123 from campus phones).

Reporting an Incident: The Bias Response Team

The Bias Response Team is made up of administrators who are available to support and guide students seeking assistance in determining how to handle a bias incident. Members of the Bias Response Team assist the Vice President and Dean of Students in documenting and reporting incidents that occur on campus with the purpose of providing holistic educational programs and the implementation of better evaluative tools and processes.

*For additional resources that include a list of area Deans-of-Students, visit civility.uchicago.edu. In the event that you do not feel safe, call the University Police Department at 773.702.8181 (or 123 from a campus phone). You may also contact the Bias Response Team Member-on-Call at **773.702.2427**.*

Members of the Bias Response Team

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Protecting the Rights of Each Member of the Community

Examine your own background and identity to help you determine how you can contribute to and benefit from the community. A good understanding of diversity begins with the “capacity for critical examination of oneself and one’s traditions,” according to Martha C. Nussbaum, the Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor, Law School, Department of Philosophy, Divinity School, and the College. It is normal to find comfort and acceptance with people who have a similar set of interests and ideas. A fundamental and essential aspect that a university provides is the gathering of persons of diverse experiences and a multitude of perspectives. We assume that students will explore the different viewpoints and ideas represented at this university and will develop their own as well. Here are some general guidelines:

- Think before you speak. Could the way in which you express your ideas and opinions be hurtful to someone else?
- Broaden your experience. Attend campus lectures and workshops, visit museums, and participate in cultural events.
- It is to be expected that there will be disagreements with others that should be articulated. In the spirit of open debate, it is also expected that you will remain respectful of the points of view that are expressed by others.
- Remember to listen. In some cases, that is all the other person wants you to do.
- Learning also occurs outside the classroom. Be open to and respectful of what you can learn from others. Do not prejudice or dismiss other points of view.
- Challenge your own assumptions about people, and feel free to question the assumptions of others. Test your ideas and engage with the ideas of others.
- Take the lead in trying to make others feel included and valued in the community.

- Speak up when another person says something offensive or hurtful; otherwise, your silence might be interpreted as agreement with the offending remark.
- Communicate. If you have offended someone, talk to him/her. Try to understand that person's perspective and why the comment was perceived to be offensive.
- Urge anyone who feels personally attacked to report the incident to a member of the Bias Response Team by visiting civility.uchicago.edu and filling out an incident form.

