URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for Southern Methodist University

This is what was found by SMU URGE Pod at Southern Methodist University on policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes. Some information was public; answers that were only found through follow up with contacts are noted. We are continuing our efforts to make contact with and get information from the SMU BERT program.

- **The link(s) to the reporting policy at our organization are here:**
  
  - SMU directs students, faculty and staff to an organization called BERT or *Bias Education and Response Team* for reporting a bias incident.
  - [https://www.smu.edu/StudentAffairs/GetHelp/BiasEducationResponseTeam](https://www.smu.edu/StudentAffairs/GetHelp/BiasEducationResponseTeam)
  - Reports on discrimination can also be made to the [Office of Institutional Access and Equity (IAE)](https://www.smu.edu/StudentAffairs/GetHelp/BiasEducationResponseTeam)
  - BERT is not centralized to the university, the only contact on the website is an email address: bert@smu.edu

- The website utilizes the following graphic to illustrate reporting steps, there are no further details of the steps other than on the website:

  ![BIAS INCIDENT REPORTING](image)

  - Are reporting policies regularly reviewed? What is the process for changing policy?
    - *Information is not made public.*
  - Are the rates of reporting made publicly available (e.g. # of reports each year)?
    - *Information is not made public, website mentions an annual report will be forthcoming.*
What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?

○ Can reports be made online? Where? Anonymously?
  ■ Incidents can be filed anonymously or non-anonymously, on-line or in person.

○ Who do in-person and online reports go to? Who has access to see reports?
  ■ The core Bias Education and Response Team is composed of representatives from the Office of Social Change and Intercultural Engagement; Women and LGBT Center; Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards; and the Office of Institutional Access and Equity.
  ■ As the team receives incident reports, the group will determine when or if other departments or individuals are included in the response process, depending on the nature of the incident. These responders may include but are not limited to Residence Life & Student Housing, International Student and Scholar Services, Violence Prevention & Support Services, and Caring Community Connections.

○ Are police included in the process? When and how? Are individuals accompanied by an advocate or someone from the organization?
  ■ If the action violates the law or any SMU policy, further action may be taken by the following individuals or offices:
    ● SMU Police
    ● Office of Institutional Access and Equity
    ● Human Resources
    ● Office of the Provost
    ● Appropriate campus administrators (vice presidents, deans, or supervisors)

What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?

○ Information is not made publicly available.

What resources are available for individuals reporting?
Unclear, website states: ‘BERT’s purpose is to supplement and work with campus units to connect those who have been a target of an act of bias or those who have witnessed such an act with appropriate support and resources.’

From the Sexual Harrassment Grievance Procedure

- The University will provide non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the University’s education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including 2 measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. Supportive measures may include counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work or housing locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and other similar measures. Parties may also drop a course in which both parties are enrolled without academic penalty. The University will maintain as confidential any supportive measures provided to the complainant or respondent, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of the University to provide the supportive measures. Please contact the Title IX Coordinator to request supportive measures.

- Students affected by sexual harassment may also arrange confidential crisis counseling with a counselor in the SMU Health Center. The SMU Chaplain's Office is also a confidential resource for students. Confidential crisis counseling for faculty and staff may be arranged through the University’s Employee Assistance Program.

Actionable Steps By Earth Science Department:

Work with BERT to produce a bias reporting statement to be included on syllabi.
Encourage faculty and TAs to include statement on all syllabi.