

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for Amherst College Geology Department

This is what was found by the Amherst College Geology Department 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.

- **The link(s) to the reporting policy at our organization are here:**
 - Organization, Company, University Policies
 - [Amherst College Bias Handbook](#)
 - [Community Standards Reporting Form for Students](#)
 - [Identity-based Harm Incident Report Form](#)
 - Department, Lab, Division, Advisor or Supervisor Policies
 - No policies at these levels yet exist.
 - Are reporting policies regularly reviewed? What is the process for changing policy?
 - It is unclear at the time of this writing. The text from the Bias Handbook is as follows:

The identity-based harm resolution process has built-in assumptions and mechanisms that make this policy more transparent than adjudication processes allow, without breaches of any individual's privacy rights. We will track the frequency and routing of incoming reports without compromising any identifying information. Beyond that, by conducting routine and robust analysis of this policy, we will record the types of conflict that arise and examine the systems and structures that may contribute to those conflicts, with an eye toward evaluating existing policies and proposing changes as indicated. This approach will allow us to create educational programming that is responsive to community needs, and to communicate openly and transparently with the community.
 - Are the rates of reporting made publicly available (e.g. # of reports each year)?
 - No, but the Bias Education and Response Team will track the frequency and outcomes of ident
- **What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?**
 - Who are the designated individuals/positions for reporting incidents?

There are several different pathways for reporting: historically, this has been done through the college Ombudsperson for faculty and staff (<https://www.amherst.edu/offices/ombuds>), with students reporting through the office of the Director of Community Standards (https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?AmherstCollege&layout_id=4). Now, the college, through the Center for Restorative Practices, is unifying the bias reporting protocol for all groups through a common portal (https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?AmherstCollege&layout_id=8)

- Can reports be made online? Where? Yes, [Link](#)
- Anonymously? Yes
- Who do in-person and online reports go to? Who has access to see reports?
Reports made through the Center for Restorative Practices are viewed by the identity-based harm review team (led by the Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer) for triage.

If the report does not indicate bias, but instead discrimination, harassment, a Title IX or a community standards violation, the report and/or the reporting party will be referred to the appropriate campus partner (i.e., Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty for faculty, Office of Student Affairs for students, or Human Resources for staff) for follow-up.

If the review team does find evidence of bias, a remediation plan is developed by the Bias Education and Response Team (BERT). The BERT consists of the CRP Assistant Director, and representatives from the student body (2), Resource Centers Team, the faculty (2), and at least one from each of the Office of Student Affairs, and Residential Life

- Are police included in the process? When and how? Are individuals accompanied by an advocate or someone from the organization?
Amherst College has adopted a policy that excludes municipal police from campus, and limits college police intervention in student affairs by resolving complaints of this type through the Center for Restorative Practices:
<https://www.amherst.edu/offices/restorative-practices>

- **What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?**

- In response to incidents of bias, the College will use a variety of tools, including restorative practices and education, to support those who experience harm. Restorative work requires the engagement of all those involved in and affected by experiences of harm. Using restorative practices as a means of addressing instances of reported bias makes Amherst's approach especially promising; rather than being punitive, it focuses on reparative work for the individuals involved and for the community as a whole. It will promote inclusion and equity by helping ensure that our commitments to respect for persons and to academic and expressive freedom are available to all. The educational outcomes of bias

incidents include facilitated engagement, education, and community outreach. [The Center for Restorative Practices \(CRP\)](#) introduces restorative philosophies, practices, and techniques to the campus to provide tools to build community as well as options to resolve conflict, preparing all members to deal with conflict that may arise as we work to create a more inclusive Amherst. The restorative options being developed include: 1) Restorative Circles, 2) Meditation and Structured Listening, 3) Workshops and trainings.

- Who decides the outcomes/consequences? What is the process?
 - If the Identity-Based Harm Review Team determines that an incident report describes actions potentially indicating identity-based bias that is not discrimination, harassment, or a violation of the honor code, yet still harmful to the reporting individual or the community, the BERT will be notified and develop a response.
 - The Bias Education and Response Team (consisting of the Center for Restorative Practice Assistant Director, two representatives from the student body, two representatives from the faculty, and representatives from the Resource Centers Team) will decide the outcomes and consequences. The purpose is to have broad representation from key constituencies while remaining nimble and responsive. This team will work to bring together the reporting party, the involved party, and/or any relevant individuals or affiliated organizations, with the purpose of identifying, addressing, and repairing the harm that has been caused. Student, staff, and faculty ambassadors will be recruited to support, guide, and advocate for all individuals involved throughout the bias response process.
- Are reports tracked? How are they tracked? By who?
 - Yes, reports are tracked by the Bias Education and Response Team.
- Are repeated complaints escalated to a disciplinary board? What is the process?
 - No, not at the time of this writing.
- **What resources are available for individuals reporting?**
 - **Support for Students:**
 - Amherst College Health Services | 413-542-2266
 - Amherst College Counseling Center | 413-542-2354 ○ 24/7 Resource Center Team | 413-542-5114
 - Office of Religious & Spiritual Life | 413-542-8149
 - Office of Student Affairs Administrator on Call | 413-542-2337 ○ after hours, by contacting ACPD dispatch at 413-542-2291
 - **Support for Staff:**
 - Amherst College Human Resources | 413-542-2372
 - Employee Assistance Plan | 800-828-6025
 - Amherst Omsbudperson, Larry Hunt | 413-542-5156
 - Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion | 413-542-5822
 - **Support for Faculty:**

- Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty | 413-542-2334
 - Faculty Equity & Inclusion Officers | 413-542-2777
 - Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion | 413-542-5822
 - Amherst Omsbudperson, Larry Hunt | 413-542-5156
- Protection against retaliation or repercussions, accommodations for continuing work/courses, option for pass/fail or outside assessment.
 - None, other than the option to report anonymously.
- **What resources are available to groups raising issues or proposing changes?**
 - What is the follow-up process for town halls and meetings?
 - Working groups or committees with power to change or propose changes to policy.
 - It seems that the Identity-Based Harm Review Team listed in the Bias Response Handbook is the only group with the power to change the policy.
 - Cultural surveys, regular or only after wide-spread reports or high-profile incidents.
 - Leadership proactively asks students and/or staff for input on how to improve.