



Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

W SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND FOREST SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

College of the Environment

URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for University of Washington and the School of Environmental and Forest Sciences

This is what was found to be publicly available by SEFS URGE pod at the University of Washington on university and departmental policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes. Resources for reporting at the university level are included here, but in sections with details on processes and procedures we focused on the departmental level.

The links to the reporting policies at our organization are here:

- [University of Washington policies on reporting bias](#)
 - Primary bias reporting tool - other options are listed below.
- [SEFS policies for reporting concerns and grievances](#)
- Are reporting policies regularly reviewed? What is the process for changing policy?
 - No specific information about this at the department or university level
 - Department policy is fairly new, the decision of how and when to review may still be TBD. Feedback may currently be provided to the director's office.
 - Bias committee report does make note of the "user experience", but not how that may inform updates.
- Are the rates of reporting made publicly available (e.g., # of reports each year)?
 - University Bias Incident Advisory Committee puts out an [annual report](#)
 - Data includes number of reports and the discrimination topics.
 - There may be a short description of particularly notable incidents.
 - University-wide climate survey provides self-reported data on how many people have experienced harassment, racism, and/or microaggressions.

What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?

University of Washington

- [UW Bias Reporting tool](#)
 - Evaluated by UW's Bias Incident Advisory Committee
 - May consult with VPs for Student Life & Minority Affairs regarding institutional response.
- UW [Office of the Ombud](#): "provide high quality, client-focused services for preventing, managing, and resolving conflict at this university."
- [SafeCampus](#) "is the University of Washington's violence-prevention and response Program. We support students, staff, faculty and community members in preventing violence... Our caring, trained professionals will talk you through options and connect you with additional resources if you want them."



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- Can call SafeCampus anytime to anonymously discuss safety and well-being concerns.
- [Confidential Advocates](#): “The University of Washington offers free advocacy and support for students and employees impacted by sexual assault, relationship violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual harassment, and other related experiences. Advocacy is a safe and confidential starting point for any student or employee affected by these issues. Meeting with an advocate does not trigger any investigation or formal reporting or complaint process.”

Concerns from pod members about resources:

- Most resources for helping you through complaint, rather than getting action.
- Vague wording on consequences

Department level - School of Environmental and Forestry Science (SEFS)

[SEFS policies for reporting concerns and grievances](#)

- Individuals for reporting incidents:
 - Advisor/supervisor
 - If advisor/supervisor is part of the problem, complaints can be escalated to the following positions. * indicates those who receive anonymous reports (current individual and email in parentheses):
 - Student Academic Services Manager (Katherine Kim – kkim22@uw.edu) or Graduate Program Coordinator (Patrick Tobin – pctobin@uw.edu) for student-initiated complaints
 - HR Manager (Wanjiku Gitahi – wanjiku@uw.edu) or Administrator* (Jenn Weiss – jenweiss@uw.edu) for staff-initiated complaints
 - Associate Director for Academic Affairs (Clare Ryan – cmryan@uw.edu)* or Associate Director for Research (Monika Moskal – lmmoskal@uw.edu)*
 - SEFS Director (Dan Brown – danbro@uw.edu)*
- Can reports be made online? Yes [SEFS online reporting tool](#)
 - Anonymously? Yes, same link option to remain anonymous on the form.
- Who do in-person and online reports go to? Who has access to see reports?
 - Receives reports- HR Manager (Wanjiku Gitahi – wanjiku@uw.edu) or Administrator.
 - Associate Director for Academic Affairs (Clare Ryan – cmryan@uw.edu)
 - Associate Director for Research (Monika Moskal – lmmoskal@uw.edu)
 - SEFS Director (Dan Brown – danbro@uw.edu)
 - Who can access- Not publicly listed/Unknown
- Are police included in the process? When and how? Are individuals accompanied by an advocate or someone from the organization?



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- The departmental bias reporting tool includes a section “For concerns about safety.”
 - Urgent Concerns for Physical Safety – call 911.
 - Any other safety or well-being concerns about yourself or others – call SafeCampus (206-685-7233) They will listen to your concerns and provide guidance and safety plans tailored to your situation. Reports can be made anonymously and reported back to any individual or office you wish.
 - And offers UWPD as a resource for reporters- [UWPD Victim Advocate](#) – A confidential and safe starting point for students affected by crime, including sexual assault, relationship violence, domestic violence and stalking. It is not necessary to make a police report in order to meet with the UWPD Victim Advocate.

What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?

- This information is not available at the department level on the website, or to our personal knowledge.
 - This may be because the department has only recently organized around official reporting processes and the information isn’t available yet.
 - This may be because of confidentiality or legal concerns.
 - There is information available about potential outcomes or consequences at the university level.
- The SEFS reporting website states that the department is not able to investigate complaints- only to escalate them to the UW level, so no consequences-
 - “SEFS is not authorized to investigate or adjudicate claims against faculty, staff or academic student employees, who have rights to appeal personnel actions as outlined in law, the Faculty Code, and various union contracts. Reports to SEFS can, however, result in corrective actions in our processes, procedures, and professional development that can reduce the potential for future harm.”
- Concerns about if/how issues will be escalated to the UW level. “Allegations of serious misconduct must be reported to the appropriate authority, described below.”
 - “Discuss with the person you reported to how and to whom you permit them to share the information you have provided. Some information (e.g., information about suspected child abuse) requires mandatory reporting.”
 - “Be informed of what the individual or office you have contacted can and cannot do and what the next steps are for addressing your concerns. Depending on the complaint and desired resolution, you may be referred to an office with investigative authority. If desired, a SEFS staff member can assist you in the process.”



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- Students expressed concerns that if they submit complaints, they will lose control of what happens to that information, especially if it must be escalated to the university level.

Who decides the outcomes/consequences? What is the process?

- At the department level the complaint can inform department policy such as approaches to professional development. If the complaint is considered to be more serious- “Depending on the complaint and desired resolution, you may be referred to an office with investigative authority. If desired, a SEFS staff member can assist you in the process.”
- Are reports tracked? How are they tracked? By whom?
 - This information is not available to us at the departmental level, although one mission of the SEFS DEI committee is to track DEI related statistics- so this may be happening.
 - Are repeated complaints escalated to a disciplinary board? What is the process?
 - This information is not available to us.

What resources are available for individuals reporting?

- [SafeCampus](#) – The central reporting office to discuss safety and well-being concerns for yourself or others. (Calls may be made anonymously.)
- [Office of Ombud](#) – Offers you a collaborative and private place to discuss work challenges. The Ombud will not conduct investigations but can help you assess complaint resolution options and navigate University resources.
- [Bias Reporting Tool](#) – If you encounter or suspect incidents of bias, you are encouraged to use this tool. The UW’s Bias Incident Advisory Committee compiles and analyzes data from submitted reports to inform future educational and prevention efforts. (Reports may be made anonymously.)
- [Counseling Center](#) – Provides confidential personal counseling to UW students for issues such as stress, anxiety, depression and relationship problems.
- [LiveWell Confidential Advocate](#) – A confidential and safe starting point for students affected by sexual assault, relationship violence, domestic violence and stalking.
- [UWPD Victim Advocate](#) – A confidential and safe starting point for students affected by crime, including sexual assault, relationship violence, domestic violence and stalking. It is not necessary to make a police report in order to meet with the UWPD Victim Advocate.

“NOTE: Sharing information with the Counseling Center or a confidential advocate is not the same as making a report to the University for the purpose of starting an investigation. Advocates can help you understand your rights and support you in creating a plan for your situation.”

What resources are available to groups raising issues or proposing changes?



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- Unclear at the moment, other than just bringing them to the attention of someone in power. Adding the need for clarification on this to our action items.

POD action items

- Check in with director's office and/or DEIC committee about process for updating and reviewing reporting policies.
- Concerns about training for people receiving complaints - follow up on the need for training across all levels (advisors, students, admin, etc.)
- Recommend that information about potential outcomes and consequences be included on the SEFS website.
- Concerns about elevation of complaints- if a complaint is not a mandatory reporting issue- will it only be elevated with the complainant consent?
- Share this information with first-year students!

Questions from our pod to the SEFS administrative pod

- What kind of training do supervisors receive when dealing with complaints?
- What did the COE directors put in their deliverable?
- Are repeated complaints escalated to a disciplinary board? What is the process?
- What actions can actually result from the anonymous reporting tool and why are they not put on the website?
- How can we address concerns about the limits of anonymous reporting, fear of retribution, and controlling the process of how a complaint progresses?
- How do we ensure there are counselors or advocates people feel comfortable with, especially those of the same race, ethnicity, and gender?
- What is in place as far as protection against retaliation or repercussions?