Executive Summary

The 2023-2024 academic year (FY24) marked the fifth year of operation for the Bias Response Team (BRT) in its current structure. In an effort to become more transparent to the WPI community, we are sharing the data presented in this report collected from Bias Incident Reports during the 2023-2024 academic year, offering insight into trends over the years.

Note: The Bias Response Team (BRT) is not a judicial group with the authority to adjudicate. Instead, it serves as a coordinated network of support for WPI’s formal reporting channels. The incident form should not be completed because of a disagreement with someone’s personal opinions or viewpoints. Participation in any meeting or engagement with a member of the bias response team, including individuals allegedly responsible for bias incidents, is entirely voluntary. Depending on the nature and severity of the behavior, the bias incident will be addressed through educational initiatives, restorative practices, mediation, community dialogue, or referral to appropriate offices for review, investigation, and resolution.

Key Trends for FY24:

- WPI received 105 reports for the 2023-2024 academic year. This is notably higher than the 70 reports received during the 2022-2023 academic year and the 62 reports received during the 2021-2022 academic year.
- There is a fluctuating trend in the number of reports submitted per month, with specific months exhibiting higher activity. For instance, November 2023 saw 29 reports submitted, while December 2023 had 15 reports.
- There were 102 anonymous reporters compared to 45 non-anonymous reporters, indicating a higher prevalence of anonymous reporting.
- Students consistently represent the largest reported population, with most reports attributed to them.
- Bias incidents and microaggressions demonstrate higher reporting rates compared to other incident types.
- Verbal assault/slur and destruction/damage are the most frequently reported incident classifications, highlighting areas of concern within the university community.
Highlighted Recommendations Include:

- Recurring patterns suggest some challenges in fostering an inclusive environment at WPI, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and proactive measures to address biases and discrimination effectively.
- Variations in reporting activity highlighting the importance of ongoing monitoring and responsive strategies to ensure a safer and more inclusive campus environment.

At the start of January 2024, returning BRT members welcomed new members to the team. Before this transition, BRT members discussed effective ways to share information, focusing on university communication, and enhancing the visibility of the BRT and reporting options. To maintain consistency in our campus communications and processes for reporting, upon receiving an incident report, the following process initiated:
All BRT members contribute equally to discussions, drawing from their professional expertise and experiences. The BRT Co-chairs maintain a log to track bias incidents, follow-ups, and outcomes for data analysis, which informs an educationally focused strategy for the incorporation into our reporting processes provided below.

Analysis of data from the Bias Response forms from 2022 to the present reveals several trends:

1. **Reports Submitted Per Month:**

   ![Reports Submitted Per Month](chart)

   - There's a fluctuating trend in the number of reports submitted per month, with the data showing fluctuations in the number of reports submitted per month, with specific months having higher activity. For example, in November 2023, there were 29 reports submitted, and in December 2023, there were 15 reports.
   - Peaks in reporting occur towards the end of each year, evident in the consistently higher numbers in November and December compared to earlier months.
2. **Would the Reporter like to Remain Anonymous:**

   Most reporters prefer anonymity, with consistent trends across different years. For instance, in the data, there were 111 anonymous reporters compared to 53 non-anonymous reporters. The preference for anonymity remains stable over time, as indicated by consistently higher numbers choosing to remain anonymous.

3. **Population Being Reported:**
Students consistently represent the largest reported population, with reference to the number of reports submitted. For example, in the data, there were 31 reports concerning students, compared to 16 concerning faculty and 3 concerning staff. The trend of students being the most reported population remains consistent across different years, indicating recurring issues within the student body.

4. Incident Type Being Reported:

- Bias incidents and microaggressions show higher reporting rates compared to other incident types. For instance, in the data, there were 44 reports of bias incidents and 23 reports of microaggressions, whereas other types of incidents had lower numbers.
- These higher numbers indicate the prevalence of bias and discrimination-related issues within the institution.
- The category “other” relates to incidents such as slurs, and/or verbal attacks.
5. **Classification of Incident Being Reported:**

- Verbal assault/slur and destruction/damage are the most frequently reported incident classifications. For example, in the data, there were 35 reports of verbal assault/slur and 16 reports of destruction/damage.
- These specific numbers highlight the prevalence of certain types of incidents within the reported data.
- The category “other” relates to incidents such as slurs, and/or verbal attacks.

The recurring patterns suggest some challenges in fostering an inclusive environment at WPI, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and proactive measures to address biases and discrimination effectively. Additionally, the variations in reporting activity highlight the importance of ongoing monitoring and responsive strategies to ensure a safer and more inclusive campus environment.
**BRT Members**

Tony Laing, Assistant Vice President, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (Co-Chair)

Meredith Merchant, Assistant Director of Facilities & Recreation (Co-Chair)

Colleen Callahan-Panday, Director of International Student Life

Amy Curran, Director of Accessibility Services

Matthew Foster, Director of Housing & Residential Experience Center

Stanley Horton, Director, Equal Opportunity & Outreach and Title IX Coordinator

Kathryn Keyes, Director of Talent Strategies

Arnold Lane, Director of Multicultural Education and Community Engagement

Lisa Stoddard, Associate Professor of Teaching, The Global School

Catherine Whittington, Assistant Professor, Biomedical Engineering