

# AUGUSTANA BIAS EDUCATION AND SUPPORT TEAM

## Fall 2023 Semester Summary

### Overview

Augustana College is committed to strengthening a diverse, inclusive and thriving campus community for our students, faculty, staff and administration. As part of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion's Strategic Plan, the Augustana Bias Education and Support Team (BEST) was restructured as a specific strategy to create a sense of belonging for all campus community members. Engaging the campus community in anti-bias work has resulted in the creation of a team composed of faculty and staff with a stated commitment to diversity work. This team has engaged in professional development and weekly team meetings. BEST works as a collaborative partner to align and interact with other college offices, policies and procedures. BEST is not a sanctioning body, and works to engage reporting and responding parties in a restorative process. We invite readers of this report to obtain additional information about BEST, including team membership, on our web pages.

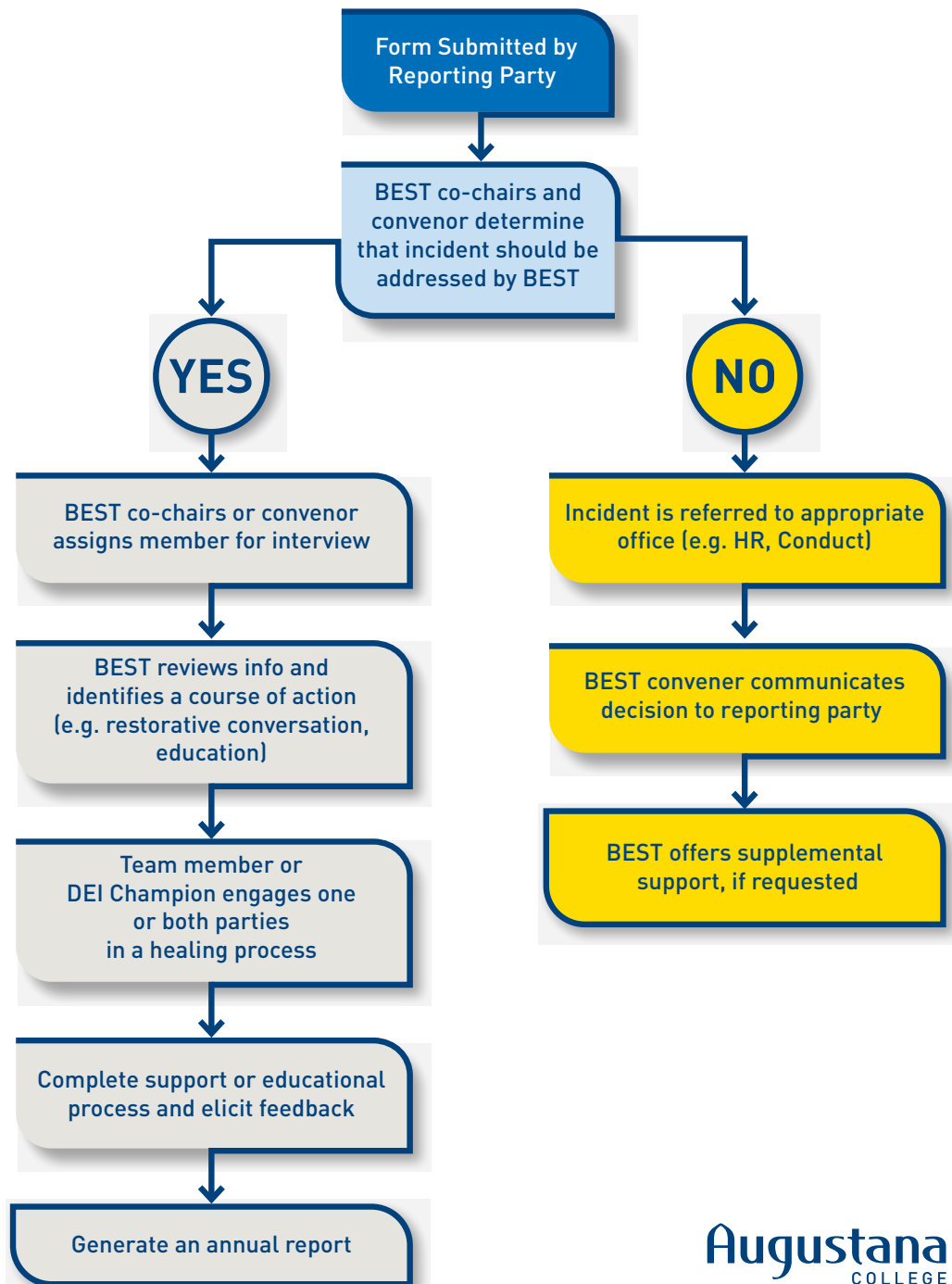
The role of BEST is to:

- Educate the community about how to notify the Bias Education and Support Team of bias incidents, and maintain records of reports and responses
- Receive, review and assess bias incident reports to provide appropriate assistance based on the nature of the incident
- Provide assistance, support and guidance to those negatively impacted by bias-related incidents by connecting them to campus resources that can provide assistance and support
- Work collaboratively to provide educational outreach to the campus
- Educate the community about impacts and histories of such bias and actions to prevent future similar acts
- Gain a holistic understanding of bias-related incidents on campus
- As requested, provide insight and perspective on incidents that rise to the level of a policy violation to a college department/office responsible for responding to such allegations.

## BEST Membership and Process

BEST is composed of 10 faculty and staff members from designated offices across campus. The vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion serves as the convenor, and a core group of team members conduct a preliminary review of each incident report to determine if the case will remain with BEST or be directed to another more appropriate campus office. The entire team is apprised of all incident reports but only review those cases that are determined to be bias-related. Please refer to Figure 1 below. BEST is supported by an additional six campus-wide DEI champions, who engage in professional development opportunities along with the team.

## BIAS EDUCATION AND SUPPORT TEAM



## Outreach and Reporting to the Campus Community

During the fall, members of BEST conducted a series of informational sessions for groups of faculty, staff and students. The purpose of our outreach was to ensure the community was aware of the team's restructuring and engage the campus as a partner for reporting incidences of bias to the team.

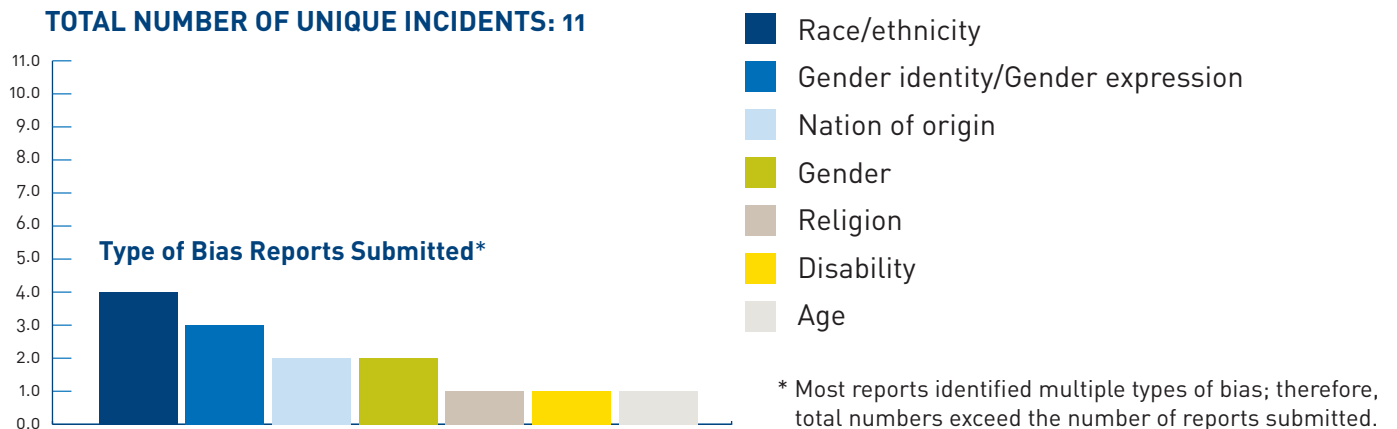
An important commitment from the restructured BEST is to be transparent with its work and provide a report to campus every semester. To this end, BEST will provide a semester summary report about cases in aggregate, while maintaining confidentiality to the greatest extent possible.

## Summary Report – Fall 2023

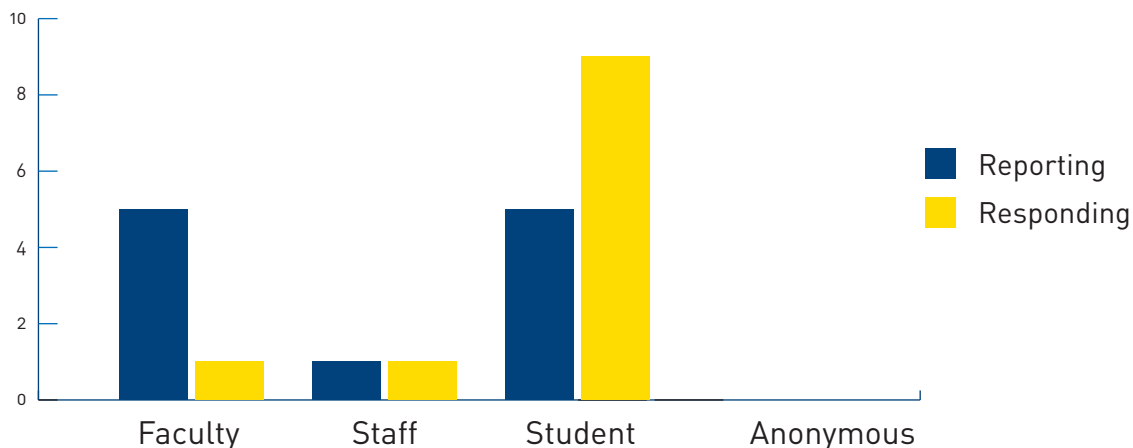
A total of 11 unique incident reports were submitted to BEST between October and December 2023. Of the 11 incidents submitted, three were submitted as for "report only purposes." It is important to note that in some instances, incident reports for "report only purposes" were still reviewed by BEST, and outreach was conducted based on the circumstances of the case.

At the time of this summary, four reports were referred to other campus offices for initial investigation. In each instance, the reporting party was informed of BEST's decision but offered to re-engage following the outcome of the initial investigation. Three reports were referred to BEST, and disposition of one report was pending. Targeted and campus-wide education was the primary form of intervention by BEST, followed by supportive measures. Supportive measures included one-on-one conversations and targeted referrals such as counseling.

### TOTAL NUMBER OF UNIQUE INCIDENTS: 11



### REPORTING AND RESPONDING PARTIES



## **BEST Goals for Spring 2024**

1. Develop a repository for ongoing policy and procedural development.
2. Create a satisfaction survey for participants involved in the BEST process.
3. Provide continuous professional development opportunities for current team members and DEI champions.
4. Develop a sustainable mechanism for campus outreach each semester, particularly for first-year students and new employees.

Report Submitted by:

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