

ASSOCIATION OF FRATERNITY/SORORITY ADVISORS
Annual Meeting Bias Response Incident Protocol

Guiding Context:

AFA's Position Statement on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access reinforces the following core values critical to a thriving sorority/fraternity profession:

- That every individual brings value to AFA and the fraternity/sorority profession in all of their identities and lived experiences, and to fully actualize our mission and vision, DEI must be integrated into all facts of the work of the Association;
- That the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion means that members of all identities have both opportunity and voice within the Association and the profession; and
- That barriers to access and meaningful involvement should be actively challenged, and efforts to center those experiences that have been historically othered is critical to the equity work of AFA and of the fraternity/sorority profession.

AFA's vision statement calls for a profession of 'increasing inclusion' and actively condemns any acts of hatred and discrimination including but not limited to discrimination based upon race, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, ability status, and socioeconomic status.

When acts of bias occur within the context of our Association, AFA calls upon our professional community and our individual members, stakeholders, and educational partners to uphold our commitment to physical and emotional safety. When incidences of bias occur within AFA, our goals are:

- To prioritize the safety of those involved and those who could be potential victims of bias,
- To identify and evaluate the extent to which reform and restoration can occur in cooperation with all constituents involved (if able), and
- To review and, if needed, shift our collective practice(s) that allows for a reduction in the likelihood of bias.

Definitions:

This section outlines types of bias incidents that may occur at the AFA Annual Meeting, but is not representative of an exhaustive list of potential incidents. It is important to note that bias targets a marginalized identity (whether real or perceived) perceived to be a part of a recognizable group or affiliation.

- **Discrimination** - Discrimination is defined as any conduct that limits or denies any individual or group equal privilege or access to a particular activity or opportunity based upon the individual or group's real or perceived identity.
- **Harassment** - Harassment is defined as any unwelcome conduct based upon an individual or group's real or perceived identity that interferes with the individual or group's ability to fully engage in the conference experience or creates an environment of intimidation, hostility, or unnecessary anxiety. This includes but is not limited to images, slurs, jokes, electronic communications, or other conduct that may be physical or verbal.
- **Bias-Related Violence** - Bias-Related Violence, in any form, is defined as any crimes (or alleged crimes) that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, gender or gender identity/expression, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity (US Office of Justice Programs, n.d.).

AFA identified that there may be two types of incident reports regarding incidences of bias:

- **Internal Bias Incidents** - Internal bias incidents are described as comments, activities, or events that occur during an AFA event within an AFA contracted property (i.e. the conference hotel of the AFA Annual Meeting), often including AFA program participants.
- **External Bias Incidents** - External bias incidents are described as comments, activities, or events that occur during an AFA event that may either include non-AFA program participants or events outside of the contracted event property (i.e. a local restaurant outside of the conference property but during the AFA Annual Meeting).

Response Protocol:

Notification:

- [Online Notification Form](#): Any registered program attendee may complete an online notification form. The form is sent directly to the AFA Executive Director or a designee within the Central Office. This is the preferred method, as it provides the most direct account of an incident. The online notification form will ask involved or witnessing parties to describe:
 - The details of the incident, including key individuals involved, witnesses, a description of the incident, the nature of the alleged bias, and other details that may provide helpful contextual understanding);
 - The date/time/location of the incident;
 - If an immediate threat to attendee safety exists;
 - Request for follow-up or anonymity.
- Any other attempts for notification by those individuals experiencing or witness to bias-related incidents will be directed back to the online notification form.
- Information on wellness services will be linked at the end of the form to support those who may need additional support.

Review:

- Following an online notification of bias, a three (3) member review team will be convened within 24 hours to review the incident and to determine appropriate next steps. Additional members may be appointed to the review team as appropriate for the incident, particularly if the relevant social identities of the targeted individual or group are not represented on the review team. These review team members will include:
 - One (1) member of the AFA Central Office Full-Time Staff including:
 - AFA Executive Director
 - AFA Assistant Executive Director
 - Two (2) members of the sitting AFA Board of Directors.
 - The Shirley-Jefferson Fellow for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The Fellow will serve as a potential advisor and consultant in all review cases if needed.

Prior to any on-site engagement in the bias response process, all review team members will be required to complete bias response training.

Confidentiality & Anonymity:

- Confidentiality serves as a core commitment of AFA's bias incident response. AFA will not involve or engage other individuals in bias response or investigation outside of those explicitly named in reports, either as a potential victim of bias or a witness to bias.

- AFA Annual Meeting attendees reporting incidences of bias can request anonymity. If anonymity is requested, AFA will take reasonable steps to review the incident and respond consistent with the request.
- While there may be some broad reporting to program attendees that a bias incident was reported, personal, identifiable information of those involved will remain confidential.
- Should a reporter choose to remain anonymous, AFA will be unable to follow up directly with any anonymous submissions as their information will not be collected.
- Additionally, any attendee reporting bias may opt out of any coordinated response between the accused and reporting party in order to maintain anonymity. If two parties submit online incident forms against each other, and one chooses to remain anonymous, that person may be contacted for furthering a coordinated response.

Response to Internal Bias Incidents:

- If no immediate threat to safety exists:
 - AFA's response to bias-related incidents will be educationally focused on restorative practices designed to collectively identify and address harm in order to facilitate healing and restoration (Zehr, 2002).
 - A timely and transparent response will be critical to the successful management of the incident and to ensuring those who have experienced a bias-related incident are safe, supported, and provided with necessary resources. Additionally, AFA is committed to treating all parties with respect and dignity with a willingness to hear perspectives.
 - AFA will convene the aforementioned review committee to review the incident report and determine the appropriate course of action.
 - While each bias incident may warrant a different consideration for response based upon the involved parties and the extent to which harm has been done, the following list provides examples of response approaches that may be used:
 - A moderated conversation between parties;
 - A conversation with AFA leaders;
 - An agreed-upon and documented behavior change on the part of the offending party;
 - Notification to the hotel or conference event property to inform them of potential safety concerns;
 - A more broad suggested and actualized change in event policy or practice.
- If it is deemed that a more immediate threat to safety may exist:
 - AFA's highest priority is attendee safety, and immediate threats to safety will warrant an accelerated approach to incident management and resolution.

- AFA also recognizes that it may not be uniquely positioned to respond to an immediate safety threat, and encourages those experiencing incidences of bias that pose an immediate safety threat to engage appropriate law enforcement or security if advisable and appropriate.
- AFA will convene the aforementioned review committee in an accelerated fashion to review the incident report. Should there be an immediate safety threat and sufficient evidence to identify that threat, the review committee will make a recommendation on the appropriate safety protocol to the AFA Board of Directors, including but not limited to attendee removal from the event.

Response to External Bias Incidents:

- AFA recognizes while it is unable to guarantee attendee safety outside of the confines of the event, that attendee safety in the communities upon which AFA descends is important to how attendees experience the event.
- AFA encourages attendees to use the [online notification form](#) to report any incidents of bias they may experience or witness that are outside of the event property and are likely to include non-attendees.
- The aforementioned review committee will review any reports of incidents of external bias, meet with those in cases where follow-up is permitted, and determine to what extent attendee notification may be necessary, focused on allowing attendees to make more informed choices that may reduce their likelihood to experience a bias-related incident.

Reporting:

- Should the review team identify that there may be a safety risk to attendees and needs broader notification to the event attendees, AFA will inform attendees of the following, while preserving confidentiality regarding any details that may be attributable to any specific individuals:
 - The nature of the incident that occurred;
 - The nature of the review and response to the incident;
 - If there are recommended behavior changes for event attendees.
- Should there be an electronic mechanism for communicating with all attendees at the event (i.e. a conference app), AFA will inform attendees through the provided conference app.
- Should there not be an appropriate electronic mechanism for communicating with all attendees at the event, AFA will utilize conference session time to inform attendees.

- After the close of the event, a summary of all bias-related incidents and their outcomes, redacting identifying information, will be provided to the AFA Board of Directors to inform event review and event policy amendments.