

## Campus Conversations with the President

December 04, 2018 2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Administration Building, Fuller Auditorium

- President thanked everyone for attending this fall semester meetings
  - This is the last for the semester
  - When the notes get shared we will also announce the dates for Spring 2019
- The Campus Conversation today will include a presentation from the Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT)
  - BIRT was created based on student feedback
  - The group is a diverse group of faculty, staff and students
    - Gina Endres, Student, Adrian Gage, Assistant Dean and Director of Residence Life and Housing, Jason Kapurch, Director and Chief, University Police, Josh Katz, Staff Associate, and Conduct Coordinator, Manasseh Konadu, Student Trustee, Tanya Mears, Associate Professor, History and Political Science, Laurie Murphy, Associate Dean for Health and Wellness, Jennifer Quinn, Director of Health Services and Title IX Coordinator, Maureen Stokes, Assistant Vice President of Communications and Marketing, Isaac Tesfay, Director of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity, and Marcela Urbie- Jennings, Assistant Dean for Multi-Cultural Affairs
  - The group is receiving ongoing training
- President asked that faculty and staff join him for the President's Holiday Reception on December 11th
- A question was asked about gender neutral housing and the plumbing code and that UMass had received a permanent variance from the Plumbing Board and will WSU do something similar?
  - WSU as well as all of the state Universities put in for a similar variance for residence hall spaces for gender inclusive bathrooms
    - There are about 5 bathrooms in the WSU residence halls that will meet that criteria
    - We did not put in for the same variance that UMass did
    - We are continuing to work with the MA State Plumbing Board on this issue and will look into what the variance is that UMass received
- President handed the floor over to the BIRT team for their presentation. Isaac Tesfay Director, Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity, led the presentation and introduced the members of BIRT
- BIRT emerged out of a year-long study focused on students
  - The recommendations that went forward were based off of that data, BIRT was one of those recommendations
- Please see the attached for the BIRT presentation
- Isaac and the team explained what bias is, what the Universities reporting procedures are, the members of BIRT, what BIRT will do, how community members can file a report with BIRT, and how BIRT and WSU will respond to reports

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- A question was asked about whether or not the group would follow their definition of protected class
  - BIRT will use the definition of bias they laid out in the presentation which was provided by the University lawyers, Rubin and Rudman
- A question was asked about how the group defines incidents and what is their scope
  - The BIRT Team is complementing existing structures. The Campus Climate Committee is looking more at culture
  - The Campus Climate Survey will also start surveying faculty and staff
  - The group is open to suggestions for where they can improve upon and what more they can address
- A question was asked if BIRT is involved in the communications that are sent out after an incident on campus
  - If an incident occurs, the group convenes and if they feel it is important for them to send out a campus wide message, they will work with the appropriate people to do so
- A statement was made that the BIRT team serve as campus ambassadors, representing a large variety of the campus, and that they convene and talk about how to address different issues on campus
- President mentioned that the Climate Committee and the BIRT team are looking for volunteers as an attempt to represent the entire university and if there is anyone else that would like to be involved, contact Provost Wims and or Director Tesfay. The BIRT group process is an attempt to assist WSU with the response to campus civility incidents. The President wants WSU to have a thoughtful and inclusive response to incidents that may occur on campus community. The group will talk about how we can continue to engage and train the campus. If you have concerns or want to bring anything up to this group or would like this presentation done at your department, please let the President or anyone on the BIRT committee know

Spring 2019 Campus Conversation Dates are:

February 20, 2019 8:30 a.m. Fuller Theatre

March 19, 2019 2:30 p.m. Fuller Theatre

April 24, 2019 8:30 a.m. Fuller Theatre

May 14, 2019 2:30 p.m. Fuller Theatre

For a copy of previous notes please go to [www.worcester.edu/Campus-Conversations/](http://www.worcester.edu/Campus-Conversations/)