



BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Subject: Bias-Free Policing Policy	Number: PG-29
Category: Patrol Guide	Type: Policy
Effective Date: December 10, 2019	Next Review Date: December 20, 2021
Issuing Authority: Chief David Tillinghast <i>David A. Tillinghast</i>	
Amends or rescinds: n/a	
Compliance Standard(s):	

General Considerations

The Bridgewater State University Police Department is committed to building and maintaining trust with all members of the community. Actual or perceived bias by police undermines this trust and damages relationships with the community — relationships that are at the heart of an effective community policing approach. Bias practices are unfair, ineffective, promote mistrust, and perpetuate negative and harmful stereotypes. The Bridgewater State University Police Department is committed to fair, impartial, and bias-free policing.

Purpose

Biased policing undermines legitimate law enforcement efforts and alienates community members. Therefore, this policy will identify ongoing efforts to ensure that biased policing does not occur. This policy will also clarify circumstances in which officers can consider personal characteristics such as race, ethnicity, and national origin to ensure that biased policing does not take place.

Community Engagement

The Department is committed to an ongoing and open dialog with community leaders, including student leaders, to ensure that it is engaging in bias-free policing. The department is committed to community policing and, specifically, engaging and interacting with community members to build relationships, solve problems, and prevent crime.

Training

The Department is committed to ensuring that all police officers receive training in procedural justice, including a review of constitutional mandates and procedures for the proper documentation of police interactions in order to reduce the effects of implicit bias (i.e., internal or unconscious bias) and to more effectively serve the community.

Use of Personal Characteristics in Law Enforcement Activities

An officer engages in biased policing if the officer's enforcement decisions are based on personal characteristics such as race, ethnicity, or national origin, except when credible information relevant to the location and time frame links a person or people of a specific race, ethnicity, or national origin (or other protected characteristics) to a specific unlawful incident, incidents, criminal patterns or schemes. Therefore, police officers must not, when engaged in law enforcement activities such as criminal investigations (or non-criminal student conduct matters), consider personal characteristics such as race, ethnicity, or national origin except in the limited circumstances outlined above.

However, when officers are participating in proactive community policing activities, focusing on specific racial or ethnic groups is central to building relationships and strengthening trust in those diverse communities the Department serves. Implicit biases can be reduced through positive contact with stereotyped groups. Accordingly, such proactive positive engagement is a goal of community policing and is encouraged.

Supervision and Disciplinary Action

Supervisors must ensure that all personnel in their command are familiar with the content of this policy and will immediately respond to instances of biased policing by those under their supervision. Any violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, retraining, or other remedial intervention as appropriate to the violation.