



According to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) Crime & Safety Surveys, the amount of reported hate crimes at U.S. colleges has reached its highest level since 2005. Alarming, over two-thirds of all hate crimes reported in 2021 by 2- and 4-year public and private colleges across all 50 U.S. States and the District of Columbia were motivated by race, religion, ethnicity, or national origin. And nearly all (95%) hate crimes motivated by race, religion, ethnicity, or national origin consisted of incidents of intimidation, destruction of property, and assault. It is clear that colleges and universities have much work to do to improve campus climates.

We use the term [campus racial climate](#) to describe the attitudes, behaviors, and practices of faculty, staff, and students at a higher education institution toward students based on their race/ethnicity. This becomes far more important in light of the Supreme Court’s limitation on race-conscious admissions and the [movement](#) by various states to ratify legislation prohibiting colleges from having diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) offices and policies.

Research shows that college students of color who feel safe and welcomed on campus and receive continuous, tailored support have positive social and academic outcomes, including increased participation and graduation rates. Given the limited federal data on campus climate experiences, we urge federal and state policymakers to ensure colleges and universities create positive campus racial climates for the benefit and success of all students. Here, we answer your frequently asked questions.

Q1 What reporting requirements exist at the federal level to monitor college campus racial climates?

ED’s Office of Civil Rights (OCR) reports general data on [complaints](#) filed to OCR by individuals alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in postsecondary educational programs or activities. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protections apply to all public elementary and secondary schools and to all colleges and universities — public or private — that receive federal financial assistance. While general data on annual complaints filed to OCR is available via OCR’s [annual report](#), there is no disaggregated data available on annual Title VI complaints filed to OCR by college/university, student education

level, student race/ethnicity, resolution status, and type of Title VI violation.

Based on [OCR’s Fiscal Year 2022 Report](#), there were 18,804 total complaints filed across all educational levels, with complaints of race, color, or national origin discrimination across all educational levels comprising 17% of all complaints.

Additionally, The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics (Clery Act), passed in 1990, requires all colleges and universities participating in financial programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (HEA) to report crime statistics for crimes that happen on or near campus, including hate crimes.

The law also requires colleges and universities to report crimes against women and crimes related to gender identity in its crime statistics and implement emergency response measures for crimes on campus.

Under this piece of federal legislation, all colleges [must](#):

- Collect, classify, and count crime reports and statistics, including, the following:
 - Hate crimes (Eight categories):

1. Race	5. Gender identity
2. Religion	6. Ethnicity
3. Sexual Orientation	7. National origin
4. Gender	8. Disability
 - Criminal offenses
 - Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) offenses
 - Arrests and referrals for disciplinary action
- Submit crime statistics by type, location, and year to ED each fall.
- Publish an annual security report containing safety- and security-related policy statements and crime statistics and distribute it to all current students and employees — and prospective students and employees must be informed about its availability.



- Issue campus alerts that represent an ongoing threat to the safety of students or employees and emergency notifications upon the confirmation of a significant emergency or dangerous situation.
- Provide educational awareness and prevention programs and campaigns about Clery Act crimes.
- Have procedures for institutional disciplinary action in cases of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

Q2 What steps can colleges take to welcome a student body that is racially and ethnically diverse?

Despite SCOTUS' limitation on race-conscious admissions, colleges may [continue](#) to articulate missions and goals tied to student body diversity and may use all legally permissible methods to achieve that diversity. Here are some ways to foster a positive campus racial climate:

- **Acknowledge the historical legacy of inclusion/exclusion for students of color at your college and its detrimental impact**
 - Colleges should review how their current policies and practices may disproportionately harm college access and success for students of color and work to remedy them.
- **Consider the structural diversity of your college**
 - While increasing the representation of students of color, colleges should also adopt specific targets for [increasing faculty of color](#).
 - While working to increase diversity, college leaders must facilitate cross-racial interactions among students and faculty. For example, peer groups can be encouraged in the classroom along with formal mentoring programs where students are matched with supportive faculty.

- **Consider the psychological climate of your college**

What are the experiences of students of color on your campus and how do they affect their mental health and wellbeing? Do students of color on campus perceive themselves as likely to experience discrimination or racial conflict by their peers or faculty? And how do they perceive conflict or discrimination will be addressed by their college?

- Colleges should design and implement systematic and comprehensive educational programs to help all members of the campus community (students, faculty, and staff) identify and confront the stereotypes and myths that people have about those who are different from them.
 - Colleges should create clearly stated, formal policies and procedures to help the campus community report, confront, and resolve incidents of racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination.
 - Colleges must implement regular and ongoing [assessments of the campus racial climate](#) that include students, faculty, and staff.
- **Consider the social behavior of your college**

How do students of different racial/ethnic backgrounds interact with each other, faculty, and staff?

 - Colleges and universities should clearly provide opportunities for cross-racial interaction whenever possible — both in and out of the classroom.
 - Contact and communication with students and staff should be regular, ongoing, and viewed as equal in status by all participants. There should be cooperation, not competition.



Q3 What steps can *federal policymakers* take to ensure positive campus racial climates?

We recommend that OCR takes the following steps to improve college campus racial climates:

- Promote OCR’s student complaint process to all incoming and current college students.
- Share disaggregated annual data on Title VI complaints filed to OCR by college/university name, student education level, student race/ethnicity, resolution status, and type of Title VI violation.
- ED’s National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) recognizes accreditation agencies for postsecondary institutions. Each accreditation agency that is federally recognized by NACIQI has a complaint process where students or other individuals can submit a complaint that violates the agency’s criteria, standards, and policies. OCR should promote federally recognized accreditors’ complaint processes to incoming and current college students.

We also recommend ED’s Office of Inspector General — an independent entity that conducts independent audits, investigations, and identifies areas of improvement for ED operations — audit OCR’s student complaint process to better understand how the process resolves Title VI complaints at colleges/universities and improve upon it.

We recommend that NACIQI:

- Encourages federally recognized accreditors to incorporate campus racial climate measures within their existing accreditation requirements.
- Provides guidance on best practices for improving campus reporting systems for students reporting incidents of discrimination due to race/ethnicity.
- Publicly shares annual data from federally recognized accreditors’ complaint processes, including data on student incidents of discrimination.

Lastly, we encourage Congress to hold colleges accountable for creating positive college campus racial climates via HEA by doing the following:

- Require all colleges to inform incoming and current students about campus policies prohibiting discrimination due to race/ethnicity and audit any existing systems on campus for students to report incidents of discrimination.
- Require all colleges to inform incoming and current students about their college’s annual data on student reports of discrimination from their own campus reporting system, OCR’s data on Title VI complaints, and federally recognized accreditor complaints.
- Require all colleges to conduct annual campus racial climate assessments.
- Fund the implementations of annual campus racial climate assessments and auditing of campus reporting systems nationwide.
- Increase appropriations for OCR and the Inspector General’s Office given their roles in enforcement, dissemination, and monitoring of Clery Act and Title VI requirements.

Q4 What steps can *state policymakers* take to ensure positive campus racial climates?

State policymakers can require colleges in their states to enact the following positive interventions to help them measure and improve their campus racial climates:

- Inform incoming and current college students about campus policies prohibiting discrimination by race/ethnicity.
- Improve campus systems for students to report incidents of discrimination.
- Strengthen programs and initiatives supporting students of color on campus and strengthen campus data on reported student incidents of discrimination.



We encourage *state legislatures* to hold colleges accountable for creating positive college campus racial climates by doing the following:

- Make metrics on campus racial climate mandatory in state outcomes-based funding measures.
- Require all colleges to inform incoming and current students about campus policies prohibiting discrimination due to race/ethnicity and audit any existing reporting systems on campus.
- Require all colleges to inform incoming and current students about their college's annual data on student reports of discrimination due to race/ethnicity from their own campus reporting system, OCR's data on Title VI complaints, and federally recognized accreditor complaints.
- Require all colleges to conduct annual campus racial climate assessments.
- Require all colleges to set goals and benchmarks for addressing student and faculty racial/ethnic diversity.
- Fund the implementations of annual campus racial climate assessments and auditing of campus reporting systems at colleges and universities in the state.
- Increase appropriations for state commissions of higher education and attorneys general given their roles in enforcement, dissemination, and monitoring of state campus racial climates.

We encourage *federally recognized accreditors* to:

- Review their accreditation requirements for colleges/universities to incorporate campus racial climate measures within their existing accreditation requirements.
- Publicly share annual data on student complaints received through their student complaint process, including data on student incidents of discrimination due to race/ethnicity.

- Promote their student complaint process to incoming and current college students as a way to report unresolved/not fairly resolved incidents of discrimination.

We encourage *state commissions of higher education* to:

- Enforce campus racial climate metrics in state outcomes-based funding measures.
- Provide colleges guidance for creating a campus student complaint process that is fully accessible to all students and provides the option for students to remain anonymous.
- Create statewide higher education working groups that include representatives of the state commission of higher education, ED's federally recognized accreditors, state colleges, and current college students, staff, and faculty to explore alternative ways beyond existing reporting processes for students to report incidents.
- Require colleges to audit the racial/ethnic diversity on their respective Board of Trustees and assess how the Board invites and includes the concerns of students of color and student cultural organizations in Board decision-making.

We recommend *state attorneys general*:

- Investigate the state of campus racial climates for colleges in the state, especially given that negative campus racial climates are harming students' wellbeing and success. Investigations should evaluate a college's historical legacy of inclusion/exclusion of students of color, structural diversity, psychological climate, and social behavior.
- Help their state's higher education commission develop a system to monitor colleges struggling to achieve a positive campus racial climate.