

International Counseling Psychology Conference Working Group Proposal:
Responding to Hate in Institutions of Higher Education

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The U.S. Department of Justice (2001) defines a *hate crime* as a crime which in whole or part is motivated by the offender's bias toward the victim's status, and is intended to hurt and intimidate individuals because they are perceived to be different with respect to their race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender or disability. A *hate incident* or *bias incident* is an action in which a person is made aware that her/his status is offensive to another, but does not rise to the level of a crime.

The Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project identified 844 active hate groups in the United States in 2006. States with the largest numbers of active hate groups were California (63), Texas (55), Florida (49), South Carolina (45), Georgia (44), Tennessee (35), New Jersey (34), North Carolina (33), Ohio (31), and Virginia (31).

According to FBI statistics, the most common forms of hate crimes involve racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual-orientation bias, and college and university campuses are among the top locations for such acts.

Incidents involving the use of nooses as symbols of hate and intimidation have begun to appear across the country with such frequency that DiversityInc.com has initiated a website dedicated as "Noose Watch," in which documented cases are posted and described. Among the 37 incidents listed on their website, 5 took place on college or university campuses.

The focus of the proposed working group is to raise awareness among counseling psychologists in higher education institutions about the prevalence and consequences of hate crimes and bias incidents on college and university campuses. Variations in the types of hate crimes and bias incidents will be reviewed along with psychological research on the impact on victims and witnesses. The group will also investigate best practices intervention strategies on both individual and institutional levels. Action plans will be developed for the dissemination of the work group products to higher education institutions, national and regional associations, and broadly within the APA.