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Butler University College Republicans

Delivered Electronically

RE: Bias Investigation Determination

On October 15, 2023, the University received seven bias reports from campus and community members stating the student group, Butler University College Republicans (BUCR), engaged in bias and discriminated against another student group, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), because of SJP's involvement in a demonstration on October 12 at Monument Circle in downtown Indianapolis. Information provided in the incident reports cited statements made within the October 14 BUCR news release.

Upon review of the incident reports and interviews with involved parties, we have determined that the incident does not violate Butler University's Harassment & Discrimination policy. The standard articulated in the policy is "to be unlawful, such conduct – verbal, graphic, physical, electronic, or otherwise – must be so severe or pervasive that it unreasonably interferes with a student's ability to benefit from educational opportunities or an employee's ability to work or take advantage of the benefits of employment."

Butler University espouses the exchange of ideas and the opportunity to critically analyze and express different viewpoints that are essential to a free and vigorous academic environment. The expression of an idea or point of view some may find offensive or inflammatory is not necessarily harassment, discrimination or bias.

On November 9, President Danko shared the following in the State of the University address:

"The challenge we face on campus is to balance our commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech with the need for respectful, open discussion, and the sharing of diverse perspectives. We value such discussions and the learning they foster. Yet, I ask everyone to exercise thoughtfulness and consideration when expressing political or social beliefs, especially mindful of the students in our classrooms who may hold opposing views, or who may be the sole member of an underrepresented group. A comment, even if factually accurate, can be hurtful if not delivered with care."

None of us can be unbiased at all times, but we can all commit to being respectful at all times. As we navigate these difficult conversations, let's not dismiss the feelings of others. Instead, let's reach out with compassion to those who may be suffering in silence.

In closing, I call on each of you to consider the impact of your words and actions. Let's use our voices to heal, not divide; to uplift, not belittle; to foster understanding and peace, not spread hate. This is the Butler way, and together, we will uphold it.

Let us unite as a community, not only in search of solutions but in pursuit of knowledge, understanding, empathy, and mutual respect. Let's navigate these challenging times with the grace and dignity that define us as a community, ensuring that Butler remains a beacon of hope, learning, and unity."

We invite you to take advantage of the many campus and community resources available on our website www.butler.edu/bias. There you will find educational resources, FAQ's and support options.

Best regards,

Office for Institutional Equity

Cc: Barry Collier, Advisor (bcollier@butler.edu)