

WWU student arrested in connection with racist vandalism on campus

A Western Washington University student was arrested Sunday by University Police in connection with recent vandalism that included racist slurs on the WWU campus.

The student, a 20-year-old man from Gold Bar, was taken into custody by University Police late Sunday night and booked into Whatcom County Jail on suspicion of residential burglary and malicious mischief. A resident of Western's Birnam Wood apartment community on campus, the student as an interim measure has been trespassed from all university housing and dining halls. He remains in jail awaiting a hearing scheduled for this afternoon.

The case remains open and University Police are continuing to investigate the incidents.

On Sunday, Nov. 18, nine name tags on residents' rooms on four floors of the Nash Residence Hall as well as a Nash stairwell were defaced with racist language, a homophobic slur, and a threat of sexual violence. The following day, a racial epithet was discovered scrawled on the "Wright's Triangle" sculpture near the Ross Engineering Building. A poster in front of Arntzen Hall also was defaced with racist language. The messages are believed to have been left as part of one continuous incident. They included slurs targeted at the African American, Latinx, Japanese, and the LGBTQ+ communities. The name tags have been replaced, the stairwell cleaned, and the racial epithet removed from "Wright's Triangle," a prominent outdoor artwork on campus by noted sculptor Richard Serra.

There are resources available for WWU students, faculty and staff in the wake of these incidents.

- Western's Counseling Center staff is available to meet or speak with any student. The Counseling Center can be reached during normal business hours (8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) by calling 360-650-3164. For after-hours crisis support call 360-650-3164 and select Option 1.
- LGBTQ+ Western is available weekdays by calling 360-650-7500.
- The Washington State Employee Assistance Program is a resource available for faculty and staff. EAP counselors are available for in-person or phone appointments. The EAP office can be reached by calling 877-313-4455 (toll free). The toll-free after-hours help line is 866-704-6364. TDD/TYY users, please call via WA Relay at 711.

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