Me: About how many cases of hate crimes do you encounter or deal with each year?
R: Difficult question to answer because I don’t get to determine whether or not something in hall is considered a hate crime or not. The ones that I can say for sure that I dealt with were 6 in the past 2 yrs. Only 2 of the 6 were directed towards a person on the floor, the other 4 were pictures, written somewhere in the whole.
Me: Do you know how many were towards Muslims?
R: I don’t think any.
Me: Is this just for FAR?
R: Yea.

Me: What do residence halls do to respond to hate crimes?
R: There are standard procedures when anything happens whether good or bad. Usually the undergrad staff person will contact me, there’s always someone on call 24 hrs a day. Then we will try to assess whether it was a hate crime, if a professional person does, then they would immediately contact the UIPD and then my supervisor would come in. We would take pictures of it and fill out an incidence report and a police report, depending on what it was, we would take pictures of it and remove it from wherever it is, if can’t do it then and there, then someone would call the maintenance staff and tell them to take care of it when they first come into work. If it was written or directed towards someone, there is a group within the department that would meet 48 hrs after an incident to discuss community response, do we need to send a statement to the community or the hall, and then it goes from there.

Me: How do residence halls deal with the police when it comes to hate crimes?
R: Honestly the UIPD relationship is odd. It’s there because we obviously have to work together. It can be better. For what they do, they are more concerned about violating laws and they are not really concerned about developing people or students, so we have a different focus at times, there’s things that they do that they don’t need to tell us and they don’t, and sometimes it feels that they’ll tell us things that we need to know, or keep information from us, so it could be frustrating to not be able to know everything. I feel that we are doing more within the department and I’ve been here for 4 yrs and it is getting better. What is a hate crime? Etc. I don’t know what the police do, I think they could do more and they could always use more training. There are officers who are assigned to housing and I don’t know how they determine that. Some housing officers may be specially trained but I think that overall the police nationally need more training on lots of different things, because that’s just not their focus, they don’t really care. I and the staff just have a different focus. Sometimes it’s difficult because we’re both there for a person but the way we get there is different.

Me: If a hate crime is reported to a residence hall official, do the police have to be involved or contacted?
R: Yes, if I’m notified then I have to. If an RA or MA doesn’t and I don’t find out about it then that’s something they have to sleep with. I tell them that they’re supposed to. Same thing with a sexual violation case, they have to report it. By law it’s required.

Me: What punishment if any can the University put on the hate crime offender?
R: It really depends on what it is as is with everything, there’s a university system and a housing system, they are different but they can intersect. That person would meet with a director for discipline and I would give feedback, b/c my hall. I’ve seen people relocated, I’ve seen people removed from housing, that’s probably the most severe thing, there’s a process for that, I don’t know if anyone was ever removed from the university because of hate crimes. As with a lot of things, we don’t really know who did it, we would only know a little. More things happen with men then with women in my opinion.

Me: What steps can the university residence hall take to educate the students about diversity on campus?
R: I think some things that we’re doing. Create a team to assess what happened. That wasn’t in place until last year. I think the department is growing and looking at new strategies. A year or two ago, all the professional staff had to go through training with disasters such as columbine, they worked with police, etc. Personal free speech is always something that will be debated. I think that there are some ways that the University residence halls can take that the greater community can’t because the people that live here are like renting the room, so they are not in their own homes to be able to write on walls, etc. It’s not their property. That’s just U of I and U of I students.

Me: I heard one person give a suggestion that the university do a FYI-care but with diversity on campus. What do you think about that?
R: I think that U of I is ahead of the game as with technology, but in other things we are in the stone age. I still can’t understand why Lincoln Hall is falling apart, and there is no freshman class. There should be a two parter freshman orientation class that talks about things because the people that come here are smart as hell but they have low social skills. B/c people are coming from very isolated and segregated places. They don’t have the skills to interact with each other as people, and I think that the university has the responsibility to educate as well as put that in the curriculum b/c that’s not gonna change if you go to a company, the company will fire you for writing or saying something, so I think the University is way behind. It shouldn’t take incidents like the Tacos and Tequila party or Chief Illiniwek being here forever for things to finally be pushed forward. It should be done for the good of the students and the university. If you don’t like it then go somewhere else. Even if they are resistant to it, over time it will work. I’d love to see it in the curriculum and for people to get credit for it. Having a class like that would help a lot and money is not an issue. People would be mad, but if people don’t want to be here then they’ll leave.

Me: If someone reports a hate crime to a residence hall staff, what is the process that the residence hall or university would take?
R: We have a lot of paperwork to do. It’s being documented in different ways. We always encourage students that if something happens individually or in a group to fill out a
police report but we can’t mandate them to do that, but they know we will always write it. If something happens, it will be put in the database whether or not you talk to the police, and will be destroyed after 7 yrs. If something happens, we will have documentation. It’s 50/50, some people will press charges and others won’t.

Me: Is it a smooth process to work with the police?
R: It really depends on the officer. There are some officers that are just rude. I appreciate them but I’ve had some interactions when they are just rude. There’s a power dynamic. I am low on the totem pole. It’s picking your battles. I would not interact with the police if I don’t have to.

Me: Is there a lot of red tape:
R: There is a pretty quick protocol, if something happens, we react immediately, within a 24-48hr period. It will be documented.

Me: Do you think students would just keep it to themselves because they might think that there would too many things to do?
R: Yea, for a hate crime, you have to prove contempt. I was talking to one of my sorority sisters, in dekalb. A latino was at a bar after working there………….tell rest of story) It was not a hate crime. You have to prove contempt. Most students don’t know what a hate crime is, they know what’s offensive, and they know their limitations and there are people that don’t care. There are people where things happen to them and they are so used to it that it is part of their life. Some people just crack and they report it. It depends on the person. People should be more educated. It should be more consistent. Some people are ignorant and some people just don’t care.

Me: I know you said you were here for only here for four yrs, after 9/11 were there any noticeable hate crimes against Muslims, wherever you were?
R: I was at Eastern Illinois University and there is not many people of color there at all, and here there was more but not as much. If something happens, there is always a heightened sensitivity, for anyone. There were not many Muslims at Eastern. If the country goes and bombs a country, then people are going to make comments about people as their ways of “bombing” the person. It’s not as much know but it still exists.

Me: Do you have any personal stories about hate crimes, especially those against Muslims?
R: I had a resident who lived here, and someone was calling her using an intermediary phone line and saying really nasty things to her, just because she’s Muslim and that she’s a women. I was both. That was quite an ordeal for her and the community. There were people blaming her just because of who she was and how she acted. This happened because she is Muslim and being a women added fuel to the fire. She was scared to her safety and it became this evolved thing. But now it’s over. When we found out how did this, I didn’t know what happened to them. I was disappointed that they weren’t removed from housing. It is the director of housings decision. There are things that people do that they should be thrown out and they’re not, like the Facebook tomahawk incident. Some people just keep it to themselves.