# Addressing Campus Climate Flashpoints

A Briefing for Institutional Leaders

**Murphy Donohue**
*Senior Analyst*

mdonohue@eab.com

**Liz Brown**
*Senior Consultant*

ebrown@eab.com

Student Affairs Forum

# No Shortage of Climate Flashpoints

## Institutions Continue to Face an Endless Stream of Incidents

**REUTERS** — *Wyoming University Slogan About Cowboys Triggers Race, Gender Debate*

**Vox** — *Female NYU Professor Accused of Sexually Harassing Male Student*

**JPOST** — *Michigan Professor Refuses to Write Recommendation Letter Because of BDS*

**AP** — *UNC Boards Meet in Aftermath of Confederate Statue Toppling*

**The Boston Globe** — *A Black Smith College Student Was Eating Her Lunch When an Employee Called the Police*

**CNBC** — *University of Louisville removes Papa John's name from football stadium*

**INSIDE HIGHER ED** — *Racist Slur in Text Roils Georgia Southern*

**C** — *Harvard Official Apologizes for 'Discriminatory' Comments in Viral Video*

**twp** — *After calling Barbara Bush an 'amazing racist,' a professor taunts critics: 'I will never be fired'*

### What is a Flashpoint?

A climate-related incident or event that causes disturbance in the community or media, including heightened levels of activism, media and public scrutiny, and reputational damage.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

## Public and Private Sectors Are Also Experiencing Climate Flashpoints

Uber Executive Resigns After Race Discrimination Probe
*-BBC, 2018*

Ch
NPR
Ha
*-NPR, 2017*

Judge Allows 2,300 Women To Proceed With Gender Bias Lawsuit Against

Alaska Airlines Panned After Gay Couple Had To Give Up Seats

NBC News fires Matt Lauer After Sexual Misconduct Review
*-NBC, 2017*

Facebook's Free Speech Problem Is Bigger Than Alex Jones
*-The New Republic, 2018*

H&M Slammed As Racist
The Ju

Chick-fil-A's Canadian Expansion Sparks Pro-

Silicon Valley's Diversity Problem Is Its Achilles Heel
*-CNBC, 2018*

Pixar's John Lasseter To Leave Disney Follo Sexual Harassment Complaints
*-The Verg*

America's Problems with Race Start (But Don't End) At Your Starbucks Bathroom
*-Chicago Tribune, 2018*

L.A. Fitness Says Employees Accused Of Harassing Two

Nivea Accused Racism For Skin-Lightening Cream

tbed for Racist Behavior,' Worker Claims in Suit

"The challenges we are seeing on campus–the #MeToo movement, conflicting views on free and inclusive speech, lack of diversity in our staff–are the same ones that everyone watches play out in Silicon Valley, Washington, and everywhere else. **Students are judging us against them. This comparison raises the bar on what constitutes an adequate response."**

*President, Public University*

Rapid and Thorough Responses Are The New Standard

## Case in Brief: Climate Flashpoint at Starbucks

*Timeline of Key Events, 2018*

**April 12**
Store manager calls police on two African American patrons, causing a viral and immediate uproar

**April 14**
CEO issues formal apology across media platforms and promises further action

**April 17**
Starbucks announces mandatory anti-bias training for 175,000+ employees

**May 29**
All 8,000+ US stores close for a full afternoon for anti-bias training

**Summer**
Starbucks launches online anti-bias training modules for all employees

## What Starbucks Got Right

✔ **Swift apology** from senior leadership took full accountability for the incident

✔ Transparent follow-up actions resolved the incident and **addressed underlying concerns**

✔ Continued emphasis on anti-bias and diversity efforts **underscore commitment and values**

# A Higher Bar for Doing Right

## Overlapping Issues and Changing Norms Heighten Students' Expectations

**The Purpose-Driven Generation: What Millennials and Gen Z Want**

**Three Implications for Flashpoint Management on Campus**

### 1 in 2

Customers will pay more for a product or brand known for its social value or community commitment

→ Today's students want institutions with missions and actions that are **consistent with their values**

### 72%

Of Gen Z'ers want to see their employers supporting racial equality

→ Today's students are **socially aware;** they want their institution to make ongoing progress on systemic issues

### 39%

Of millennials feel that businesses' top priority should be to improve society

→ Institutions are expected to go beyond traditional boundaries **to address concerns in society at-large**

Source: Alaina Love, 'Are You Ready to Lead the Purpose-Driven Generation,' *SmartBrief,* Aug. 25, 2018; 2018 Deloitte Millennial Survey; 'The Sustainability Imperative,' Nielsen, Oct. 10, 2015; EAB interviews and analysis.

## Near and Long-Term Impacts Affect Institutions and Individuals

**Media Coverage Can Continue for Years...**

*University of California, Davis's 2011 Pepper Spray Incident*

Factual reporting occurs in the immediate aftermath →  Analysis of stakeholder reactions soon follows →  Crises resurface long after the initial incident

**HUFFPOST**

November 19, 2011

*UC Davis Police Pepper-Spray Seated Students In Occupy Dispute*

The New York Times

November 22, 2011

*Pepper Spray's Fallout, From Crowd Control to Mocking Images*

The Washington Post

August 9, 2016

*UC Davis Chancellor Resigns After Pepper-Spray Scandal*

**..And Can Have an Extended Impact on Campus**

*Sizing the Reputational Impact of Baylor University's 2015 Sexual Assault Case*

**87%** Of parents recalled Baylor's failure to respond to a pattern of sexual assault **two years after the incident**

**4.4%** Estimated **drop in yield at Baylor** as a result of media coverage

# How to Navigate Common Failure Paths

Five Insights to Improve Preparation and Response for Climate Flashpoints

| Five Common Failure Paths | Recommendations from EAB |
|---|---|
| **1** Current risk identification practices overlook potential flashpoints. | Regularly integrate flashpoints in your risk register and leverage online risk monitoring strategies to promote early action. |
| **2** Decentralized information about potential flashpoints means institutions lose opportunities to intervene early. | Create mechanisms to consistently elevate and discuss potential flashpoints. |
| **3** Existing relationships are sufficient for responding to campus flashpoints. | Develop a dedicated team to structure and coordinate the campus response. |
| **4** It is unclear when institutions should respond to flashpoints. | Set clear expectations on when and how you will respond to flashpoints, on and off campus. |
| **5** Institutions address the immediate incident, but not the broader context. | Establish sustainable structures to address the broader context of campus flashpoints. |

# Risk Identification Practices Overlook Flashpoints

## Climate-Related Risks Are a Continuing Blind Spot

### Flashpoints Are an Unfamiliar Risk Terrain

"Our campus has a well-oiled process for assessing and managing financial, operational, and compliance risks. **But we are not there yet with respect to campus climate**, in part because of who is and is not involved in risk discussions. We need to do a better in order to prepare for the next climate crisis."

*Vice President for Student Life*
*Private University*

# 54%

Of institutions believe they do not have the ability to withstand a major reputational risk event

### Top Five Areas of Reputational Risk
*United Educators, 2017*

**1** **Campus Climate**

**2** **Sexual Assault and Title IX**

**3** Academic Programs

**4** **Student Behaviors**

**5** Higher Ed's Business Model

Source: Lorelle Espinosa, Hollie Chessman, and Lindsay Wayt, "Racial Climate on Campus: A Survey of College Presidents," *Higher Education Today*, March 2016; United Educators, ERM and Reputation Risk: More Talk Than Action?, 2017; EAB interviews and analysis.

# Regularly Update Your Institution's Risk Register

## Campus Risk Assessment Practices Should Integrate Flashpoints

### Flashpoints Challenge Status Quo Risk Registers

*Common Pitfall*

*Recommended Action*

**Narrow Content Focus**

Registers emphasize only financial, operational, and compliance risks, overlooking flashpoints

**Update Your Risk Register**

Include climate flashpoints and reputational risks as distinct risks

**Limited Grading Framework**

Registers assess only likelihood and impact of potential risks, downplaying reputational impacts

**Upgrade Your Risk Grading Framework**

Assess velocity and preparedness to account for the rapidly evolving nature of climate flashpoints

**Range of Risk Altitudes**

Attempts at being comprehensive yield unwieldly lists of institutional, divisional, and unit risks

**Prioritize Institutional Risks**

Prioritize the risks most likely to impact your institution, not unit-level incident-specific risks

Source: EAB Business Affairs Forum, Addressing Persistent and Emerging Campus Risks; EAB interviews and analysis.

# Static Risk Register Is Not Enough

## Rapid Evolution of Flashpoints Requires Ongoing Risk Identification Online

**CAMPUS SONAR** *Case Study:* **Duke University's Coffee Shop Incident**

CSAO complains about an "inappropriate" song in campus coffee shop

President issues apology, says Duke must do better

| May 4 | May 7 | May 9 | May 10 | May 11 | May 12 |

Baristas who played song fired

CSAO releases statement defending actions

Song artist comments, reigniting fervor

Coffee shop chain cuts ties with Duke over incident and response

*Social Media Mentions (Representative)*

*Key Crisis Metrics*

| VOLUME | VOICE | SENTIMENT |
|---|---|---|
| **2033%** Increase in online mentions in the 10 days following the incident, compared to previous 10-day period | Actions by the coffee shop and rapper changed social conversation volume, trajectory, and sentiment over the course of the crisis | *Trending Hashtags* <br> • #firemoneta <br> • #firecoffey <br> • #DismantleDukePlantation |

# Decentralized Information Hinders Risk Mitigation

## Key Intel Gets Lost Without Established Processes

**Many Offices Have Access to Potentially Important Information**

**...But Uncertainty and Confusion Hinder Consistent Risk Elevation**

**Student Accounts Office**

*"A student group is requesting $10k to bring in a controversial speaker."*

**?** "I'm not sure that this matters... is it worth raising this with someone?"

**Student Center**

*"We have a space request from Turning Point USA."*

**?** "Who should I tell? I'm not sure who handles stuff like this."

**Information Technology**

*"There's a viral email thread about the response to yesterday's incident."*

**?** "I'm sure someone else noticed and informed who needs to know."

**Public Safety Department**

*"We've seen an uptick in groups requesting police escorts for protests."*

**!** Actionable info gets lost without established expectations on when and how to elevate potential risks

# Mechanize Upward Risk Updates

## Strengthen Awareness of Potential Flashpoints for Senior Leaders

**Proactive Risk Briefings Ensure Ongoing Awareness and Promote Early Action[1]**

**1**

President asks university communications office to **maintain a running list of potential flashpoints**

**2**

**Communications staff monitor emerging issues**, including inbound communications, social media, higher ed trends, and national news stories

**4**

**Cabinet discusses emerging issues and prioritizes top concerns** for risk mitigation and early response

**3**

Every 6 weeks, VP for Communications **briefs president and cabinet on top 10 flashpoint risk areas**

### Key Benefits

✔ Provides regular forum for evolving discussions with leadership

✔ Fosters earlier cabinet collaboration around risk mitigation tactics

✔ Keeps risks related to climate flashpoints top-of-mind across the year

✔ Enables longitudinal analysis of emerging areas of concern

1) Public Research University

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

# Make It Easy To Address Common Risks Early

## Strengthen Campus Prep With Coordinated Information Sharing

### How it Works[1]

**Event Flagged**
Student org. advisors trained to identify "red flags" related to campus events, including student sentiment

**Template Populated**
Advisors, students, campus police, and others complete the template with need-to-know information

**Guides Prep and Response**
Template outlines event plan, potential risks, and security details to promote consistent action

**Serves as Go-To Resource**
Template is a one-stop source for updated information about the event and planned response

**Controversial Event Details & Messaging Document**

**GW**

*Excerpt of Template Elements*

**Event Overview**

**Risk Overview**
Analysis of how the event could impact campus climate and safety

**Security**
Detailed security plan, including special event rules and officers in attendance

**Run of Show**
Step-by-step event itinerary with timing

**Media**
Related policies, planned attendees, and go-to statements from university and student groups

**Student Support Plan**
How the event might impact specific groups and how the university can support

1) The George Washington University's full Controversial Events Template is available in the Appendix of the briefing.

# The Perils of the Status Quo

## Two Common Approaches Do Not Promote Quick and Consistent Responses

### APPROACH #1

**Relationship-Based Response**

*"We are a very close cabinet. I can always pick up the phone and call whoever I need for any situation."*

**Preparation Falls by Wayside As People Assume Relationships Will Suffice**

❌ Assumption that primary actors will remain constant year over year

❌ Lack of formal protocols because everything is based on conversations

❌ Belief that strong relationships result in quickly coordinated action

❌ Unrealistic expectation that preparation will happen when there is leftover time

### APPROACH #2

**No New Team Required**

*"We already have so many related teams and task forces…do we really need one more?"*

**Existing Teams Fall Short in Scope, Skill, or Expertise**

Emergency Management Teams are focused on campus safety and tactical response for true emergencies (e.g., natural disasters)

Behavioral Intervention Teams are focused on student behaviors and impact on campus community

Climate Taskforce matches in subject matter expertise, but often lacks senior perspective and tactical expertise

Source : 'College Administrator Data/Turnover Rates: 2016-Present,' *Higher Ed Direct,* Apr. 12, 2018; EAB interviews and analysis.

# Create a Dedicated Flashpoint Strike Force

## Set a Specific Charter and Flexible Structure to Enable Agile Responses

### How to Assemble a Strike Force

STEP 1

**Determine Scope**

*Clarify Responsibilities*

- Communications vs. tactical operations
- Specify how this group interacts with existing teams and departments

STEP 2

**Identify Membership**

*Delineate Tiers*

- <u>Tier 1</u>: Core members who are always activated in climate flashpoints
- <u>Tier 2</u>: Unit-level designees and/or subject matter experts

STEP 3

**Define Roles**

*Assign Ownership for Next Steps*

- Who does what as a crisis unfolds?
- Who has final sign-off authority?
- What terrain is each member responsible for?

### Key Elements

✔ Define specific parameters for when the team is activated – and when they are not

✔ Educate campus and address expectations about team scope and responsibilities

✔ Establish internal and external communication channels to receive and disseminate information

# Should We Respond?

## Lack of Clarity and Varying Perspectives on When and How to Respond

**Presidents Split on Speaking Out About Political Issues**

*Inside Higher Ed, 2018 Presidents Survey*

**55%** Of presidents reported **speaking out more on political issues** in 2017 than they typically do

**54%** Of presidents said they intend to **speak out more about issues beyond those directly affecting their college**

**"**

### Aspiration Shared by Many...

"I believe the president is a moral leader of the university... I know it's difficult, but I'd like them to be more bold about standing up for the values the campus espouses."

*Mark Yudof*
*Former College President*

### ...But Difficult in Execution

"Presidents find themselves having to make such judgment calls all the time and in turn they are judged by the quality of those judgments."

*Anonymous*
*Former College President*

Source: Doug Lederman, "Leading in Turbulent Times: A Survey of Presidents," *Inside Higher* Ed, March 9, 2018; Marjorie Valbrun, "Walking a Tightrope on Controversial Speakers," *Inside Higher Ed*, May 16, 2018; EAB interviews and analysis.

# Clarify When the Institution Will Respond

## Set Expectations Before A Flashpoint Arises, On or Off Campus

*Maine's Public Universities*
UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM

**University of Maine System's Stoplight Framework[1]**
**Simplifies Decision Making for Institutional Statements**

| | Category | Sample Issues | Process |
|---|---|---|---|
| **GREEN ZONE** *Mission Critical* | Directly impacts the institution and community | Institutional finances; student and employee health and safety | Chancellor and presidents can freely issue a statement |
| **YELLOW ZONE** *Mission Indirect* | Does not directly impact the mission and institution | Immigration policy; labor standards | Time permitting, chancellor and presidents should consult with *rapid advisory committee* |
| **RED ZONE** *Mission Unrelated* | Unrelated to the university's mission or financial stability | Political events; state and federal policies not related to the university | Chancellor and presidents should generally avoid making statements on these topics |

1) The University of Maine System's Full Policy is available in the Appendix of the briefing.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

# Incident-Only Response Is No Longer Enough

## Institutions Face More Pressure to Address the Broader Context

**Responses Often Miss Critical Component**

*Illustrative*

*NEXT STEP*

| Flashpoint | Responding to the Incident | Addressing the Broader Context |
|---|---|---|

- Racial slur is spray-painted onto the main sidewalks in the quad

- Quickly goes viral on social media, with many students expressing upset

- Bias response team reaches out to related student groups

- University releases statement condemning the language

- Little time for ongoing follow up as busy staff move on to next flashpoint

- No larger community engagement initiatives

## Addressing the Broader Context Is No Easy Task

✖ Immediate incident response efforts are all-consuming

✖ Difficult to make and communicate progress on systemic issues

✖ Wanting to get it "right" delays a comprehensive response

✖ Higher ed processes and decision making is slow moving

# Address the Broader Context, Not Just the Incident

## Prepare to Proactively Address Emerging Areas of Concern on Campus

### EMORY UNIVERSITY  Building a Lasting Structure to Address Students' Concerns

**Commission for Racial and Social Justice**

- Established in **2015** to address 15 concerns identified by Black students on campus
- Now serves as the model for future initiatives

**Support for Undocumented Students**

- **2016** petition to university demands further support for undocumented students
- Commitment to improving financial support, services, and staff training

**First-Generation and Low-Income Student Initiative**

- **2017** exchange between students and leadership illuminates area of need
- Goals to improve admissions processes, services, and outcomes

"
"Our goal was to build a structure that could accommodate issues from communities across campus. We want to hear directly from students. We want them to see our progress and know the system works. With this structure, our students went from marching in the street to working collaboratively with institutional partners to address these difficult issues."

*Dona Yarbrough, Senior Associate Dean*
*Emory University*

# How EAB Can Help

## Selected Research and Resources to Guide Your Next Steps

**Improving Institutional Preparation and Response** *(Forthcoming, 2019)*

Risk Management Tactics for Climate Flashpoints

How to Use Social Listening for Climate Flashpoints and Crises

Prep Pack: Case Study Compendium and Resources

**Managing Free Speech Issues**

Free Speech Policy Audit and Compendium

How to Educate and Engage Today's Student Activists

Strategies for Responding to Bias-Related Incidents

**Building Stakeholder Awareness on Campus**

Cabinet Briefing: Navigating the New Wave of Student Activism

Student Unrest: What Advancement Leaders Need to Know

Strategic Communication to Mitigate the Enrollment Impact of Campus Climate Crises *(Forthcoming, 2019)*

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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