

# Addressing Campus Climate Flashpoints

A Briefing for Institutional Leaders



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Student Affairs Forum

### No Shortage of Climate Flashpoints



### Institutions Continue to Face an Endless Stream of Incidents



INSIDE

Wyoming University Slogan About Cowboys Triggers Race, Gender Debate

*Vex* Female NYU Professor Accused of Sexually Harassing Male Student



Michigan Professor Refuses to Write Recommendation Letter Because of BDS

AP UNC Boards Meet in Aftermath of Confederate Statue Toppling A Black Smith College Student Was Eating Her Lunch When an Employee Called the Police



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

Racist Slur in Text Roils Georgia Southern



Harvard Official Apologizes for 'Discriminatory' Comments in Viral Video



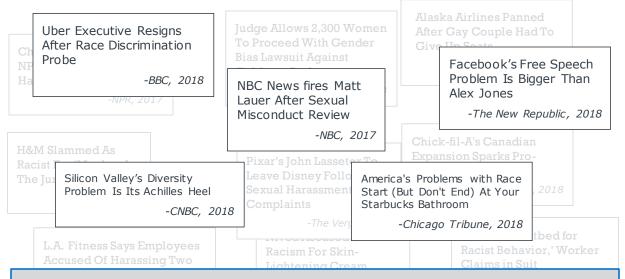
After calling Barbara Bush an 'amazing racist,' a professor taunts critics: 'I will never be fired'

### 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.

### Higher Ed Is Not In a Vacuum

### Public and Private Sectors Are Also Experiencing Climate Flashpoints



"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

### A New Gold Standard Is Emerging

### Rapid and Thorough Responses Are The New Standard

### **Case in Brief: Climate Flashpoint at Starbucks**

Timeline of Key Events, 2018

April 12		April 17		Summer
Store manager calls police on two African American patrons, causing a viral and immediate uproar		Starbucks announces mandatory anti-bias training for 175,000+ employees		Starbucks launches online anti-bias training modules for all employees
<b>April 14</b> CEO issues forma across media plat promises further		forms and	<b>May 29</b> All 8,000+ US close for a ful for anti-bias t	l afternoon

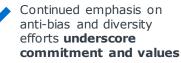
### What Starbucks Got Right



Swift apology from senior leadership took full accountability for the incident



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



### A Higher Bar for Doing Right

Overlapping Issues and Changing Norms Heighten Students' Expectations

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

# 1 in 2

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

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### Three Implications for Flashpoint Management on Campus



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** 

### "We Know the Stakes Are High"



### 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 \_\_\_\_\_ Analysis of stakeholder the immediate aftermath

### HUFFPOST

November 19, 2011 UC Davis Police Pepper-Spray Seated Students In Occupy Dispute

reactions soon follows

### The New York Times

November 22, 2011 Pepper Spray's Fallout, From Crowd Control to Mocking Images

\_\_\_\_ Crises resurface long after the initial incident

### 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

Of parents recalled Baylor's 87% failure to respond to a pattern of sexual assault two vears 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

Fiv	e 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.		



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



## Regularly Update Your Institution's Risk Register



Campus Risk Assessment Practices Should Integrate Flashpoints

### Flashpoints Challenge Status Quo Risk Registers

Common Pitfall



#### **Narrow Content Focus**

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

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#### Limited Grading Framework

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

### Recommended Action

### Update Your Risk Register

Include climate flashpoints and reputational risks as distinct risks

### 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

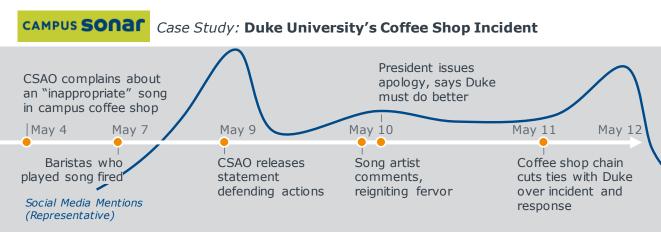
Prioritize the risks most likely to impact your institution, not unit-level incident-specific risks

#### Recommendation #1

### Static Risk Register Is Not Enough



Rapid Evolution of Flashpoints Requires Ongoing Risk Identification Online



### 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 <ul> <li>#firemoneta</li> <li>#firecoffey</li> <li>#DismantleDukePlantation</li> </ul>

Failure Path #2

### **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 vesterday's incident."

### **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

"I'm sure someone else noticed and

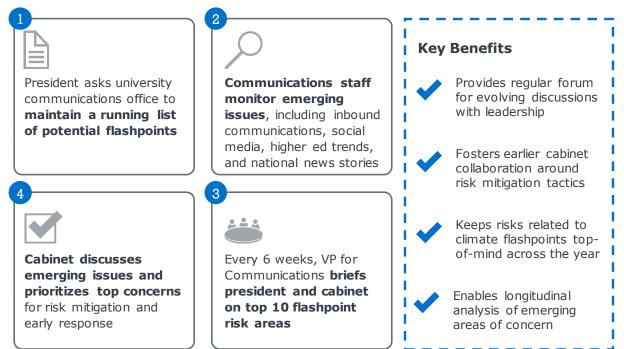
informed who needs to know."

### Mechanize Upward Risk Updates



Strengthen Awareness of Potential Flashpoints for Senior Leaders

Proactive Risk Briefings Ensure Ongoing Awareness and Promote Early Action<sup>1</sup>



1) Public Research University

#### Recommendation #2

### Make It Easy To Address Common Risks Early

Strengthen Campus Prep With Coordinated Information Sharing

### How it Works<sup>1</sup>

### 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

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



### The Perils of the Status Quo

Two Common Approaches Do Not Promote Quick and Consistent Responses

#### **APPROACH #1**

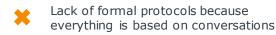
### **Relationship-Based Response**

"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

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Assumption that primary actors will remain constant year over year





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

### **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

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





### **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

### 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



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

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



### University of Maine System's Stoplight Framework<sup>1</sup> Simplifies Decision Making for Institutional Statements

		Category	Sample Issues	Process
$\bigcirc$	<b>GREEN ZONE</b> Mission Critical	Directly impacts the institution and community	Institutional finances; student and employee health and safety	Chancellor and presidents can freely issue a statement
	<b>YELLOW ZONE</b> <i>Mission Indirect</i>	Does not directly impact the mission and institution	Immigration policy; labor standards	Time permitting, chancellor and presidents should consult with <i>rapid</i> <i>advisory committee</i>
	<b>RED ZONE</b> 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.

## Incident-Only Response Is No Longer Enough



Institutions Face More Pressure to Address the Broader Context

### **Responses Often Miss Critical Component**

Illustrative



### Addressing the Broader Context Is No Easy Task

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Immediate incident response efforts are all-consuming



Wanting to get it "right" delays a comprehensive response



Difficult to make and communicate progress on systemic issues



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

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"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)



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