

# Engaging

## Today's Student Activists

### Four Moments for Targeted Guidance and Support

When faced with a period of unrest, institutions must strike a delicate balance between keeping the campus safe while also teaching students to be responsible activists. Today's students are often interested in learning how to be more effective advocates for change on their campuses and in their communities, but they may not be prepared for the possible risks and repercussions.

Engaging students early allows institutions to build stronger relationships with activists and gain a better understanding of their motivations. It allows leaders to craft a student-centered response that honors activists' goals while also managing risk to those involved and the broader institution.

# 1

Students are **casually browsing**; exploring specific issues and their general interest in activism

Changing demographics mean that today's students are more diverse, care deeply about a wider range of issues, and want to drive change on campus. These students are more interested than ever before in demonstrating both in-person and online.

Institutions can provide **general education** about activism

#### Recommended Touchpoints

- ▶ Leadership workshops
- ▶ Advocacy center programming
- ▶ Student organization meetings

#### What should be covered?

Institutional governance processes, existing opportunities to be involved with university decision making, fundamentals of activism, and organizing skills



# 2

Students are **preparing**; they are engaged in a cause or planning to be active soon

Student activists may lack guidance from administrators when they plan an event or course of action, making it challenging to ensure the safety of those involved and understand how their efforts may influence university decision making processes.

Institutions can approach students with **customized interventions**

#### Recommended Audiences

- ▶ Event organizers
- ▶ Protesters and counter-protesters

#### What should be covered?

Students' rights and responsibilities, available university resources, event logistics, and de-escalation tactics



# 3

Students are **activating and mobilizing** online or on campus

While it is ideal to reach students before they mobilize, activists might need just-in-time information to understand their rights and responsibilities, and what to expect from the institution's response.

Institutions can reach students with **just-in-time guidance**

#### Recommended Resources

- ▶ Websites and online resources
- ▶ Brochures, handouts, and on-the-go printed resources

#### What should be covered?

Campus policies and protocols, emergency contact information, quick tips for effective activism



# 4

Students are **reflecting and recovering** from their involvement

Students invest significant time, energy, and passion into activism, which can have adverse effects on personal health or academic performance. However, activism can also be a valuable experience for students as they learn new skills and are inspired to future action.

Institutions can provide **follow-up engagement** to support activists as they recover

#### Recommended Resources

- ▶ On-call counselors
- ▶ Facilitated small group dialogues
- ▶ Dedicated community reflection spaces

#### What should be covered?

Self-care techniques, recovery strategies, reflecting on new skills and future goals

