



Navigating the New Wave of Student Unrest

Resources for Advancement Leaders

Advancement Forum

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Frontline Staff FAQ Template

Purpose of the Tool

Answering questions about campus activism from external stakeholders can be difficult for university personnel who are not immersed in responding to campus activists. To help frontline staff answer difficult questions, use this template to develop a FAQ (or cheat sheet) with key information and talking points. Use the activity on the next page to identify specific internal and external audiences that might benefit from an FAQ.

Six Essential Components to Campus Activism FAQs

1 Overview

Short summary of current events on campus

2 Issue Background

Why is this happening right now?

3 Institution's Response

What has the institution's response and actions been so far? Why?

4 Longer-Term Initiatives

What will the institution do moving forward? Why?

5 Top-of-Mind Concerns

What are this constituency's specific concerns or questions about the event?

6 Contact Information

Who should this constituency contact for more information?

Frontline Staff FAQ Template (cont.)

Purpose of the Tool

You can easily adapt this FAQ template to a wide array of audiences, both internal and external to the university community. Use the below table to brainstorm the internal and external audiences on your campus that have unique concerns or questions about campus activism. Then, you can use this information to quickly customize the FAQ template.

	Audience	What are their unique concerns or questions?
Internal Audiences	Admissions Counselors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How should I talk about campus protests and activism when I'm speaking with prospective students?
	Alumni Relations and Development Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do I say to a group of out-of-state donors when I'm asked a question about our response to a recent event?
External Audiences	Prospective Students and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will the university keep my student safe with so many protests and counter-protests on campus?
	Alumni and Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When I was on campus in the 1960s, I was an activist. When will the university finally listen to students?


Alumni Comment Tracker


Purpose of the Tool


A significant crisis or controversy on campus can draw an influx of attention from external constituencies, including alumni. While receiving such a high volume of interest and feedback can be overwhelming, having an organized approach to cataloging alumni comments can be useful.


Use this worksheet to identify the four essential components for building a tracker and using the data.

Four Essential Components

1  *Basic Information*
First and last name, email address, phone number, and university affiliation (e.g., alumni, friend, parent)

2  *Communication Channel*
When and where the comment was received (e.g., inbound phone call to the president's office, email reply to the alumni newsletter)

3  *Initial Comment*
Nature and specific wording of the comment or inquiry

4  *Response*
How the institution already responded to the comment and who is responsible for further follow up (e.g., prospect manager, parents office)

Key Questions to Answer

What are the major campus communication channels that receive these types of comments from alumni and friends?

What office will "own" the tracker? Who will manage the tracker?

How will you organize and analyze the data into major themes?

How might you use the data?

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tabletop Exercises

Auditing Your Institution's Preparedness

Below are three prompts that can be used as quick tabletop exercises for senior institutional leaders. Discuss these prompts using the questions at the bottom of this page to assess your institution's preparedness for a future outburst of activism on campus.

Managing a Controversial Speaker

A member of the faculty has invited a controversial individual (Condoleezza Rice, Joe Biden, Milo Yiannopoulos...all examples in recent years) to speak on campus as part of a lecture series sponsored by two academic departments. Details about the invitation were circulated online and current students, faculty members, and alumni are in an uproar regarding the invitation. The hosting faculty member is regretting the invitation and contacted the individual to rescind the invite. However, that action attracted the attention of a third-party watchdog group as well as students, faculty, and alumni concerned that the university is curtailing free speech on campus. Two days before the event, a few student affairs administrators hear rumors of protesters (including students and individuals not affiliated with the university) are planning to disrupt the event.

Anticipating Student Demands

Hazel University, just down the road from your institution, has experienced a bias incident that went viral on social media. Students are now camping out on Hazel's main campus in front of the library and presented the president with a list of demands including more diverse faculty members, transparency in the faculty hiring process, increased space and funding for diversity and inclusion efforts on campus, and the addition of more diverse material in the curriculum. Your institution's students have created a Facebook page in support of the Hazel students. On that page, a recent posting is calling for a demonstration to present a list of demands at your institution next week. This posting is now being shared online by students and a handful of faculty members who support the Hazel protesters, and it is also drawing attention from other students and faculty who do not support the Hazel University students.

Responding to a Viral Social Media Post

There has recently been a shooting of a police officer in the local community. A student at your institution tweets out, "I am glad he was shot. He was a PIG and deserved to die. #BLACKLIVESMATTER." Within 30 minutes, the tweet goes viral. The tweet is picked up by local and regional news outlets, and the student has already been received death threats. Students, faculty, and staff start weighing in on the situation on social media and, later, in an op-ed piece in the campus newspaper. Alumni are commenting on social media, saying the student should be punished and they will not donate to the university if it doesn't take action to address the comment. Reporters start calling the university asking whether the student is going to be punished or expelled from the institution. The university's president is now preparing to issue a statement to the media.



Discussion Questions

- Who would be responsible for managing the response?
- Who would need to be involved in the response?
- What would be the initial and follow-up response strategies?
- What proactive measures could your institution could take to expedite or clarify the response?

Recommendations for Further Reading

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practices are
the ones that
work for **you.**SM



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