



TOOLKIT

Flashpoints Communications Playbook

10 Practices to Help Institutional Leaders
Enhance Communications Around Campus Flashpoints

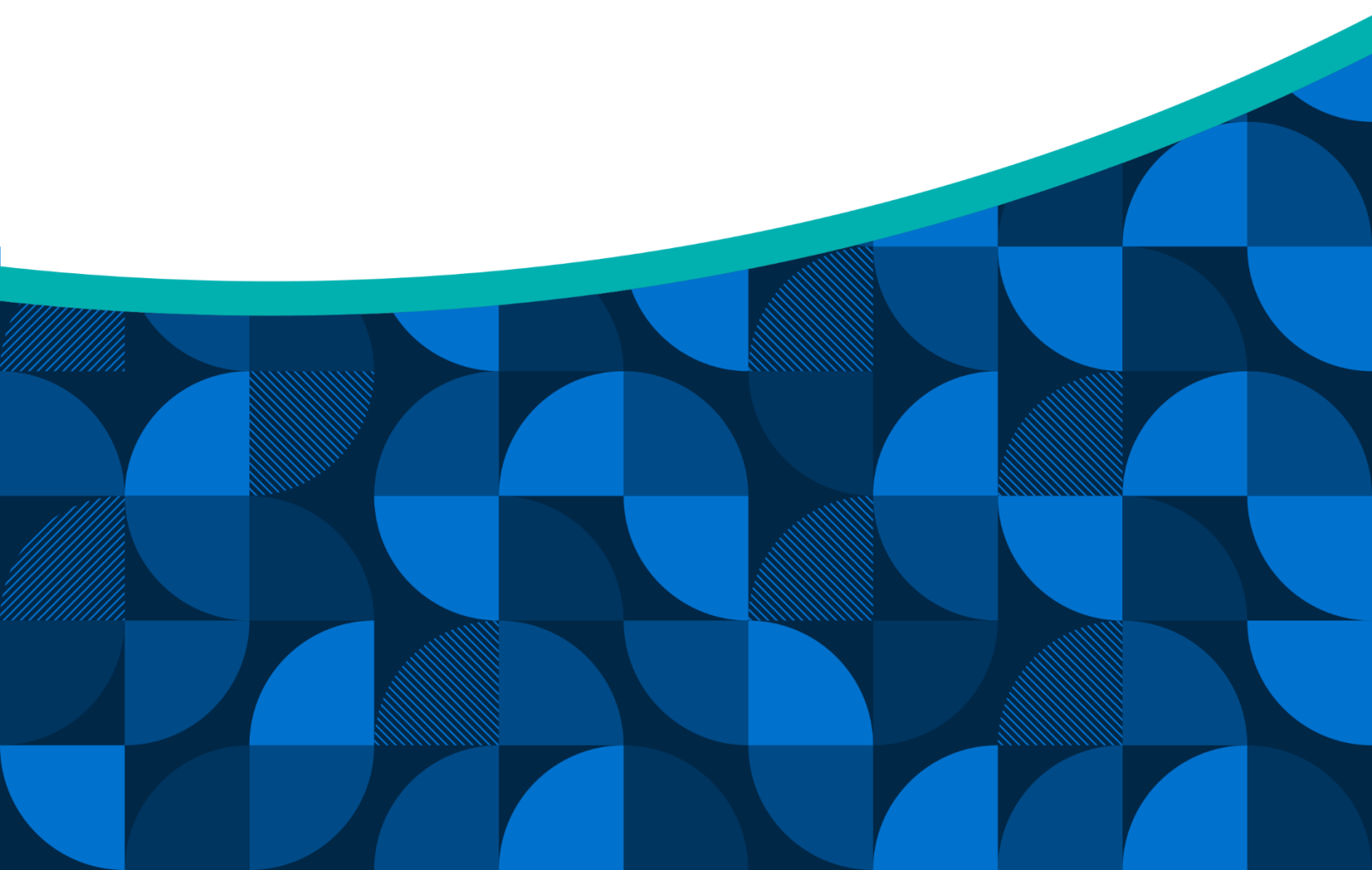


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This toolkit provides ten practices along with tools, templates, and guides to help colleges and universities strengthen external and internal communications before, during, and after a campus flashpoint.

What is a flashpoint?

A “flashpoint” is a **climate-related incident or event that causes disturbances in the community or media, including heightened levels of activism, media and public scrutiny, and reputational damage**. Flashpoint topics can include, but are not limited to, on-campus incidents, alumni controversies, social movements, and widespread political and economic events.

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Strengthen Public-Facing Flashpoint Communications

SECTION

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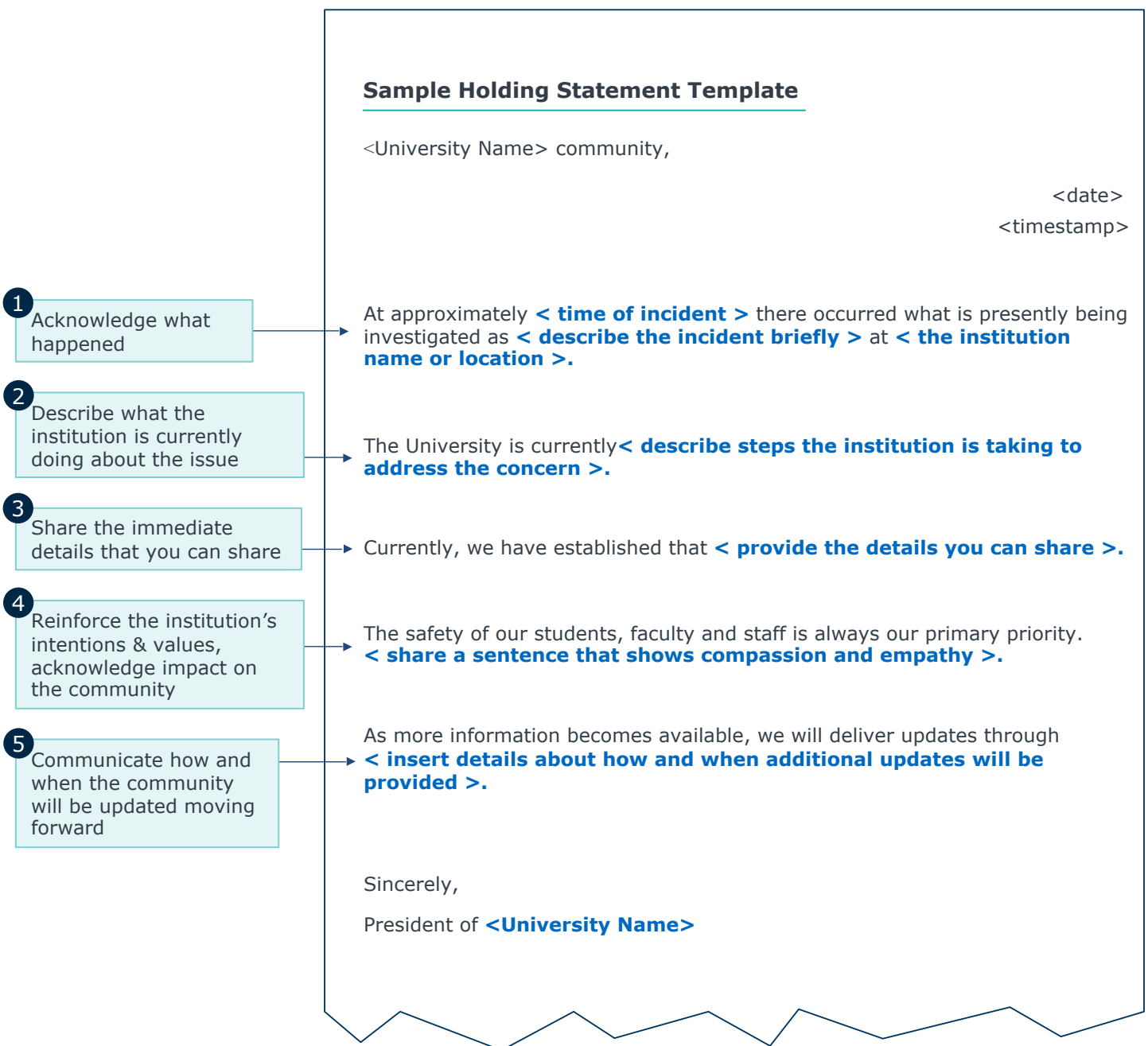
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Using Holding Statements to Direct the Narrative

Depending on the complexity of the situation, it can take days or even weeks to develop a response that fully captures the university’s viewpoint and reaction to a flashpoint. However, when a flashpoint occurs, information spreads fast, especially via social media. Often much of that information is not coming from the institution, is missing key details, and/or may even be incorrect. Issuing a holding statement within an hour of a flashpoint occurring can help mitigate the spread of inaccurate information, providing the institution with time and space to develop a more comprehensive response plan and statement. Below, EAB outlines five key components of effective holding statements.

What is a Holding Statement?

Holding statements are brief statements that enable institutions to issue a swift response to relevant stakeholders around a developing flashpoint. These statements help university leaders direct the narrative around a flashpoint.



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Checklist for Public Statements Addressing Flashpoints

Now more than ever, institutional leaders are feeling pressure to publicly respond to flashpoints at a moment's notice. EAB research demonstrates how flashpoints in higher education are increasing in frequency and intensity, exhausting higher education leaders and leading to what feels like a never-ending crisis communications cycle. In some cases, these flashpoints result in small but costly mistakes that cause the situation to spiral further resulting in PR issues, leadership turnover, and reputational damage.

Costly mistakes are rare in other highly skilled fields with the help of a simple technique: consistently referring to checklist before completing a critical task. Dr. Atul Gawande, surgeon and author of *The Checklist Manifesto*, reduced surgery-related deaths by 47% in only months after requiring a pre-surgery checklist protocol. Learning from Dr. Gawande's research, EAB developed a peer-reviewed checklist that senior institutional leaders can use to defuse tensions and avoid errors when publicly responding to campus flashpoints. Use EAB's flashpoint checklist before releasing your next official statement.

Flashpoint Statement Checklist

- 1. Has a holding statement been released within 1 hour of the incident?
A holding statement will reduce risk of subsequent chaos if released promptly.
- 2. Has the institution's general counsel been consulted?
What liabilities or rights should the university be aware of before taking responsibility?
- 3. Does your statement only include factual information, not speculation?
What basic information can be shared that won't create mistrust if later proven wrong?
- 4. Does your statement align with your institutional values and previous statements?
Does making this statement diverge from your previous pattern of making statements?
- 5. Does your statement speak to the concerns and needs of those directly affected?
What are key stakeholder groups feeling, what questions do they have, and what supportive resources do they need?
- 6. Does your statement reference tangible action(s) taken by the university?
How can the university show they are already working toward a solution?
- 7. Is the chosen messenger(s) appropriate for the severity of this flashpoint?
E.g., President for campus-wide flashpoints, provost for localized issues.
- 8. Are chosen distribution channels a good match for the intended audience?
E.g., time-sensitive statements are posted as pop-ups on university homepages.
- 9. Do your internal communications on this topic pass the "front page" test?
Would you be comfortable with an email being leaked or released via FOIA requests?

3 Tips for Building Your Own High-Quality Checklist

Incorporate Boeing engineers' tips to craft useful checklists for other pain points in your everyday work.



Define a Pause Point

Determine the exact moment when the checklist should be deployed every time



Prioritize Speed

Limit the checklist to 5-9 items and ensure it can be executed in less than 60 seconds



Test and Revise

Revise the checklist each time you use it to ensure it stays useful and relevant

Flashpoint Statement Checklist in Action

How Maple University Used EAB's Checklist to Shape their Statement

University Flashpoint Statement Response

Friday, April 8, 2024; Timestamp: **8:12 pm**

Maple University community,

Today, a community group distributed pamphlets to university community members on our west campus between 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm.

As mentioned in the brief statement released earlier this afternoon, the university leadership team has reviewed the community group's pamphlet and would like to correct any misconceptions and share resources for further questions.

First, the university leadership team emphasizes our disappointment that a group is spreading misinformation to strike uncertainty and panic in our community.

Second, the central mission of our university is to provide a safe and quality education for all students. Our faculty are committed to our university standards as outlined in our strategic plan.

Below, please find clarifications of the misinformation presented in the pamphlet:

1. The statements made about these faculty are inaccurate and the detailed Student Affairs program list can be found [here](#).
2. The Office of Student Affairs' programs reflect [guidelines](#) set forth by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). Programs are also based on student needs as affirmed by the University's Strategic Plan, and we encourage reviewing the Provost's [annual program audit](#) based on this plan.
3. Maple University does not discriminate against students based on their race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. Our adopted programs are developed by leading experts in student well-being. Please find their statement on providing student services to a diverse student body [here](#).

Program standards, objectives, and content are reviewed during the CAS program review process. This process takes place every five years, and when the Provost flags an issue during the annual program audit. Members of the campus community can express their concerns by following the university's [content challenge process policy](#).

Maple University welcomes opposing viewpoints. Differing perspectives enriches our learning environment and provides an opportunity to better understand each other – a practice that we strive to embrace across our community.

Sincerely,
Maple University President

Other steps taken before releasing the statement:

- Legal counsel was consulted
- The team discussed alignment with previous statements

Holding statement released promptly and current statement references tangible action(s)

Statement speaks to the concerns of those impacted by the misleading information

Statement passes the "front page" test by ensuring all sentences and references can be clearly understood if reported out of context

Statement includes factual information and not speculation

Statement references specific action(s) for students and parents if concerns continue

Statement aligns to core values of the university and addresses stakeholder concerns

Message Maps Template

Message maps provide an organized repository of information available to support university leaders' messaging to students, staff, faculty, and the public following a flashpoint. As university leaders develop holding statements and flashpoint response statements, using message maps ensures that these statements are centered around the top three key messages leaders want to convey to relevant stakeholders in the moment.

Review the sample message map below and use the blank template, on the following page, to plan future flashpoint response messages.

Key Details

Scenario: Student was harmed during a protest on campus

Stakeholder: Students, parents, media

Concern: How is the university going to respond to this incident? How can we keep other students safe?

Key Message 1

Safety is the top priority for our students, faculty, staff, and community.

Supporting Points

1. We immediately investigated the situation and brought the harmed student to the nearest emergency room. The student is stable and recovering.
2. We have systems in place for this of situation (e.g., free speech policies, disciplinary policies, de-escalation procedures).
3. We have identified the assailant and we are providing additional information to police and counseling support to students as needed.

Key Message 2

Law enforcement is responding appropriately.

Supporting Points

1. Authorities are investigating the assault.
2. Law enforcement officers are coordinating with university leaders and students at the scene to learn more.
3. We will share more information as it becomes available.

Key Message 3

Campus community members should take three actions to support the university.

Supporting Points

1. Stay home; avoid the protest if you are not involved.
2. Turn to reliable sources for additional information, [name some sources].
3. Help stop the spread of unverified rumors by directing people to [insert source] for updates on the situation

Message Maps Template (cont.)

Use the template below to plan future flashpoint response messages and develop key talking points.

Key Details

Scenario: _____

Stakeholder: _____

Concern: _____

Key Message 1 	Supporting Points 1. 2. 3.
Key Message 2 	Supporting Points 1. 2. 3.
Key Message 3 	Supporting Points 1. 2. 3.

Create Easy-to-Find Public FAQ

Flashpoints generate a lot of questions and concerns among a variety of stakeholders including, students, faculty, parents and families, donors, and members of the surrounding community. Often campus leaders find themselves answering the same questions repeatedly.

EAB recommends creating an easy-to-find public flashpoint FAQ so that key stakeholders can get answers to their top questions and concerns as well as learn more about how the institution is responding. This practice gives leaders a place to direct inbound inquires and reinforces efforts to spread correct information about a flashpoint. Below is an example from The University of Texas at Austin with a few FAQ best practices highlighted.

UT NEWS

May 03, 2024

Frequently Asked Questions About Recent Protests

Please see below for questions and answers regarding recent campus protest activity and the University's response.

Statements from the University since April 24:

Wednesday, April 24
[UT Division of Student Affairs Statement](#)
[President Hartzell Message: Today's Events](#)

Thursday, April 25
[President Hartzell Message: Balancing Speech, Safety and Our Mission](#)

Monday, April 29
[University Statement Regarding Today's Ongoing Events on Campus](#) (afternoon)
[University Statement Regarding Today's Protest Events](#) (evening)

Tuesday, April 30
[University Statement Regarding Arrests from Monday's Protests and Confiscation of Weapons](#)

What makes the recent protests on April 24 and April 29 different from others held throughout the year?

Most protests on the UT Austin campus, including those held since October related to events in the Middle East, have complied with Institutional Rules that exist to keep the entire campus community safe and protect our operational integrity. On April 24, those planning the event expressly stated their event was intended to disrupt our operations and to "follow in the footsteps" of protesters at other universities where those protesters successfully accomplished that same goal. Their promotion of their intended event included planned activities and conduct in violation of our policies and rules. Also, on both April 24 and April 29, as they indicated they intended to do, protestors violated numerous Institutional Rules and policies — most notably, setting up encampments on the South Lawn. In addition, protestors deliberately provoked officers, stated their intent to not comply, and physically and verbally harassed our staff. Officers were headbutted, spit on, and verbally assaulted by protestors. Some protestors attempted to startle a DPS horse, and others threw horse excrement at officers. Police car tires were slashed.

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Source: University of Texas at Austin, [FAQ About Recent Protests](#), May 3, 2024; EAB interviews and analyses

eab.com

Has a clear date of when this was last updated or uploaded

Links to all recent university-issued statements on the flashpoint

Contextualizes the incident and reasoning behind university action thus far

Easy-to-Find Public FAQ (cont.)

Excerpt¹ of FAQ Published in Response to Recent Campus Protests

Which Institutional Rules have been violated?

The following violations of Institutional Rules and policies were associated with the April 24 and April 29 protests:

- Erecting tents (HOP 8-1050)
- Attempting to establish an encampment (HOP 8-1050)
- Unauthorized use of amplified sound (Sec. 13-801)
- Unauthorized use of tables on the South Lawn (Sec. 13-600)
- Use of face coverings to conceal identity (Sec. 13-105)
- Failure to identify (Sec. 11-402)
- Failure to comply with directives related to the above referenced (Sec. 11-402)
- Shoving staff (HOP 8-1010)
- Items brought that could be used as weapons (e.g., guns, shields, objects intended for throwing, mallets) (Sec. 11-402)
- Failure to follow city, state and federal laws (e.g., criminal trespass, disorderly conduct, destruction of government property, assault on public servant, obstructing a roadway)

Links to **relevant university policies**

Is peaceful protest allowed at UT Austin?

FAQs are **reflective of stakeholders' top-of-mind concerns**

What makes the recent protests on April 24 and April 29 different from others held throughout the year?

Why were people arrested?

Why was the Texas Department of Public Safety brought onto campus to support UTPD?

Were there any warnings to protestors before they began to act?

Leading up to the April 24 protest, organizers expressed an intent to “follow in the footsteps” of demonstrations occurring at Columbia University, Rutgers-New Brunswick, Yale and elsewhere.

Why was the Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC) suspended?

The Dean of Students (DoS) suspended PSC for violating and openly advocating for others to violate Institutional Rules and policies, as well as failing to comply with the DoS attempts to intervene and adhere to direction from law enforcement.

Are all the protesters affiliated with UT Austin?

Of the 79 people arrested on April 29, 45 had no affiliation with UT Austin. Of the 55 people arrested on April 24, 26 had no affiliation with UT Austin.

At what point did officers decide to make an arrest?

MEDIA CONTACT
University Communications
Email: UTMedia@utexas.edu
Phone: (512) 471-3151

Includes **information about who to contact with further questions**

1) This example includes excerpts from The University of Texas at Austin's recently published FAQ. To see the full FAQ as well as examples of other institutions' FAQs, visit page 25 in the appendix.

Source: University of Texas at Austin, [FAQ About Recent Protests](#), May 3, 2024; EAB interviews and analyses




Clarify When and How the Institution Will Respond

Setting clear expectations about when and how an institution will respond to flashpoints, in advance of a particular incident or event, ensures a more consistent flashpoint response and reduces time spent on the decision to make a statement or not when navigating an active flashpoint.

For example, the University of Maine System uses a stoplight framework to simplify decision-making about when and how senior leaders should respond to controversial issues that directly, indirectly, or do not relate to the institutions’ missions and operations. This straightforward response framework helps students, alumni, and other key stakeholders understand when to expect a senior-level response.



Stoplight Policy Framework¹ Guides Chancellor and Presidents and Simplifies Decision Making for Institutional Statements

	Category	Sample Issues	Process
	GREEN ZONE <i>Mission Critical</i>	Directly impacts the institution and community	Institutional finances; student and employee health and safety Chancellor and presidents can freely issue a statement
	YELLOW ZONE <i>Mission Indirect</i>	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 <i>Mission Unrelated</i>	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) University of Maine’s full policy text for this framework can be found in Appendix A.

Source: [University of Maine System Free Speech Policy](#); EAB interviews and analyses



Enhance Internal Coordination and Communication Around Flashpoints

SECTION

2

- Practice #6: Proactive Risk Briefings for Cabinets
- Practice #7: Dedicated Flashpoint Response Team
- Practice #8: Crisis Communications Plan Self-Audit
- Practice #9: Flashpoint FAQ Template for Internal Stakeholders
- Practice #10: Controversial Events Template

Carve Out Dedicated Time for Regular Risk Briefings

Strengthen Awareness of Potential Flashpoints Among Senior Leaders

EAB recommends institutions develop mechanisms that make it easy for stakeholders to discuss and elevate risks before they escalate to full-blown flashpoints. Early and consistent risk elevation allows for ongoing assessment of potential risks and coordinated early action to address emerging flashpoints.

Proactive risk briefings ensure senior leaders are well-versed in climate-related risk areas before they escalate to full-blown flashpoints, as seen in the below case study from a public research university. EAB suggests that cabinets regularly dedicate time on their meeting agendas, usually every four to six weeks, to discuss flashpoint risk areas and highlight any emerging issues of concern. During periods of heightened campus activism and/or during contentious election years, institutions may need to conduct these briefings more frequently.

Proactive Risk Briefings Ensure Ongoing Awareness and Promote Early Action

Public Research University



Build a Dedicated Flashpoint Response Team

Set a Specific Charter and Flexible Structure to Enable Agile Responses

Effectively addressing flashpoints is an institution-wide challenge that requires thoughtful preparation and discussion long before a flashpoint ever takes place. Campus leaders must develop a dedicated response team to handle to these types of events on campus. The specific scope, membership, and processes for your team will likely depend on your institution's unique culture, existing teams and taskforces, as well as the interests and skills of key campus leaders.

Follow the three steps below to build a flashpoint response team on your campus.

How to Assemble a Response Team



STEP 1

Determine Scope

Clarify Responsibilities

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



STEP 2

Identify Membership

Delineate Tiers

- Tier 1: Core members who are always activated in flashpoint situations
- Tier 2: Unit-level designees and/or subject matter experts who are activated as needed



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

Crisis Communications Plan Self-Audit

Institutions who use a crisis communications plan report being able to react to emerging incidents rapidly and with more consistency. After reading 25+ university crisis communications plans from public, private, and two-year institutions, EAB researchers identified six key elements that enhance institutional responses. Use the checklist below to audit your current crisis communication plan and/or aid you in developing a new one.

Key Elements of A Crisis Communications Plan

Establish Plan Goals and Guiding Principles

- Define the goals of crisis communication at your institution, such as student safety and preserving the institution's reputation
- Establish the institution's defining values or "north stars" so that communicators can reference them when responding to a crisis

Outline What Qualifies as a Crisis and Create Crisis Categories

- Define what constitutes an "issue" versus a "crisis or flashpoint"
- Establish qualifiers for notification to senior leadership or convening of crisis team
- Organize flashpoints into categories for easier management, such as but not limited to: "staff misconduct," "civil unrest or student activism", and "employee grievances/lawsuits"

Establish Internal Crisis Response Team and Define Roles

- Describe members of the flashpoint response team and the chain of reporting. This is often shown through a chart or other diagram.
- Establish a spokesperson role, which can vary based on the nature of the crisis
- Select a point person or leader of the flashpoint response.

Name Potential Stakeholder Groups and Differentiate Responses to These Groups

- List out potential stakeholders, such as students, staff, legislators, parents, alumni.
- Include guidance on how to respond to crises that affect specific stakeholder groups, such as who should be the spokesperson, which media outlets to contact, and messaging tone/content

Describe the Issue Management Process

- Highlight an outline of the basic issue management process, starting from notification and convening of the crisis management team and finishing with the debrief session

Provide Basic Guidance on Communications

- List best practices for crisis communication (each crisis will still require nuanced messaging)
- Common best practices include: responding with a holding statement within 24 hours, including only factual information, expressing empathy, and using the institution's values as a guide. See page 5 for additional crisis statement guidance.

Helping Frontline Staff Handle Difficult Questions

Answering questions about a flashpoint from external audiences, such as parents or alumni, can be difficult for university personnel who are not actively involved in the institution's response. To help frontline staff better answer challenging questions, EAB recommends developing an internal FAQ with key information and talking points. This approach is beneficial because it equips staff with easily accessible information, provides ready-to-use scripting, and briefly summarizes institutional next steps. The FAQs can also be tailored and updated for different groups, such as fundraisers, admissions counselors, or frontline administrative staff.

Below you can see sample categories that you might include in a flashpoint FAQ for internal stakeholders, such as an overview of the issue, the university's response strategy, top of mind concerns for different audiences, and information about who to contact for additional information and updates.

Flashpoint FAQ Template for Internal Stakeholders

Date Released/Updated

Overview

Short summary of current events on campus

Understanding the Issue

Brief explanation about:

- *What students are asking for or demonstrating about and why*
- *Why this protest or issue is top of mind for students*
- *What is already happening at the institution that might address students' concerns*

Articulating the University's Response

Brief explanation of the institution's response strategy so far

Longer-Term Initiatives

Brief explanation of what the institution expects to do moving forward

Addressing Top-of-Mind Concerns

Sample difficult questions and answers (focus on specific questions)

Contact Information

Who should university administrators/staff contact for more information?

Who should external constituencies contact for more information?

Benefits of a Cheat Sheet

- ✓ Equips staff with just-in-time, easily accessible information
- ✓ Provides ready-to-use scripting for tense interactions
- ✓ Helps direct stakeholders to institutional next steps
- ✓ Format is easily tailored and updated for key campus groups, such as:
 - Admissions recruiters
 - Frontline administrative staff
 - Alumni relations and development staff
 - University volunteers

Flashpoint FAQ Template (cont.)

Use the template below to build internal FAQs around a flashpoint that shares key information and develops talking points for frontline staff.

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?

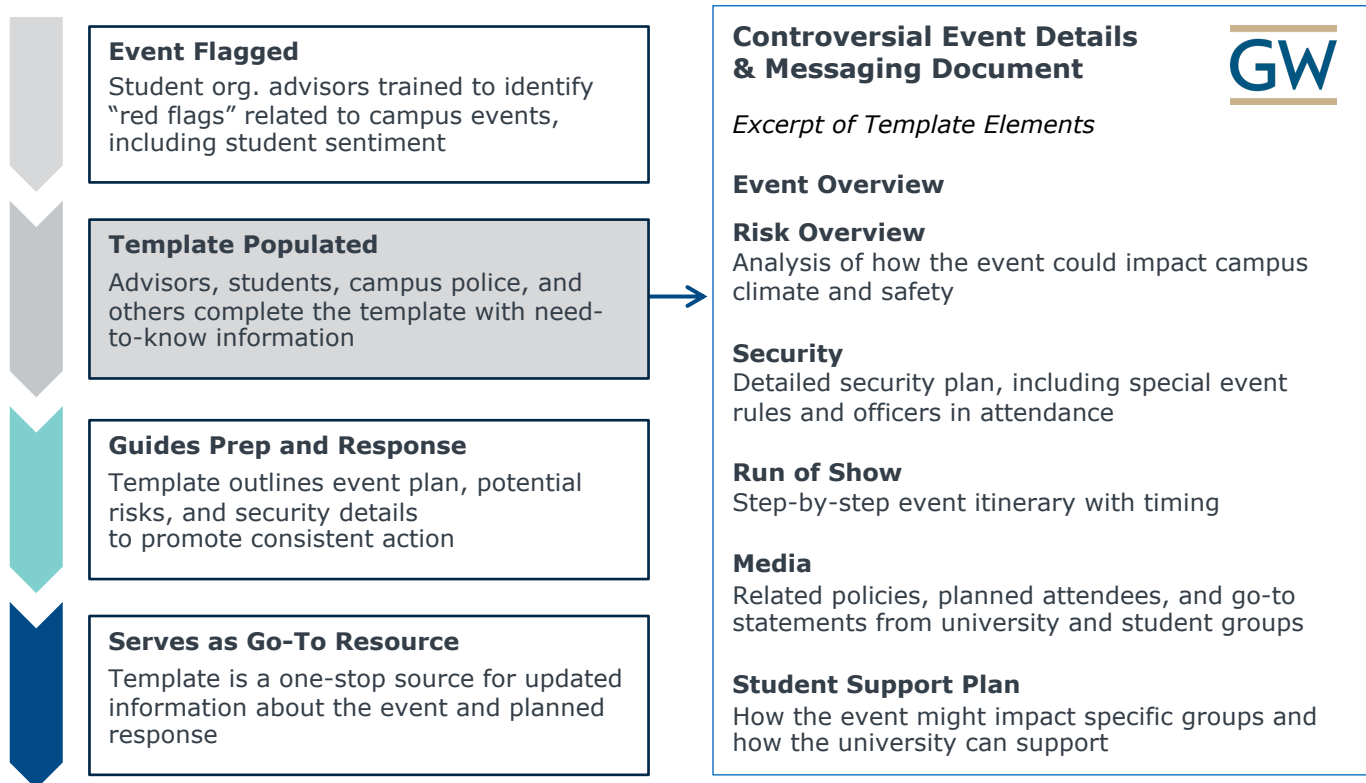
Make It Easy to Address Common Risks Early

Strengthen Campus Prep with Coordinated Information Sharing

An increasingly common flashpoint is when potentially controversial speakers are invited to campus. Responding to controversial speakers and events is a task that requires cross-campus collaboration, as illustrated by the example below from George Washington University (GWU). As frontline staff flag potentially controversial events, they generate a shared document that outlines key information about the event and how the institution will respond. This process promotes advance planning and consistent information sharing, allowing the institution to streamline preparation and response efforts.

George Washington University’s Controversial Events Template¹

How It Works



1) View the full template from George Washington University in the Appendix.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.



Appendix

SECTION

3

- A: Examples of External FAQs
- B: University of Maine’s Full Free Speech Policy Text
- C: George Washington University’s Controversial Event Template

Sample External FAQs: Columbia University

Columbia University's Event Policy and Campus Resources FAQ, Spring 2024.

Event Policy and Campus Resources FAQ

Since October 7, 2023, the atmosphere on Columbia's campus has been highly charged. Many community members—including Arab, Israeli, Jewish, Muslim, and Palestinian students—have told University leadership that they feel unsafe on campus during this period of heightened protest activity. Maintaining safety on our campuses is one of the University's fundamental concerns. After consultations with the Executive Committee of the University Senate, a new [Interim University Policy for Safe Demonstrations](#) is now in place in conjunction with the current [events policy](#). The goal of this interim policy is to preserve freedom of speech while ensuring that Columbia can continue to fulfill its mission as a center of research and learning for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. To ensure everyone has the facts and information on our policies and available resources, we are posting this FAQ.

What are Columbia's university event policies?

University departments, offices, groups, and student organizations and non-affiliates requesting to reserve campus facilities are expected to follow University Event Policies, which are publicly available [here](#). Event policies are intended to make all official group gatherings as safe as possible, and to minimize any disruption of ongoing instruction, research, and other activities taking place on campus.

What is the role of advisers to student organizations?

Undergraduate student groups are managed by governing boards, which are subject to some oversight from Undergraduate Student Life. Student groups must abide by a variety of policies, including those unrelated to events, to be officially recognized. These policies include discussions between student organization representatives and their official advisers at their respective schools. For undergraduates, the advisers work at USL. Advisers establish protocols for working with student organizations; they require that organization leaders participate in training, and expect them to follow procedures, including their obligation to provide the University advance notice of proposed events.

Are event policies new? Did Columbia change the policies this year, and why?

Most of these rules have existed for years alongside many other policies held by the administration and applicable to student groups. In the days after October 7, 2023, the Columbia University Event Management and University Life Offices updated and codified University event policies to make them as clear as possible. As of February 19, 2024, after consultations with the Executive Committee of the University Senate, a new [Interim University Policy for Safe Demonstrations](#) is now in place in conjunction with the current [events policy](#).

Why do you require groups to provide advance notice for protests and vigils?

Maintaining safety on our campuses remains one of the University's fundamental concerns. Our advance-notice requirements for special events are critical to let us prepare for them. Above all, that means ensuring that we have sufficient personnel available and present to keep events safe—an increasing challenge as we face demand at levels rarely seen for resources to keep campus safe. Our policies are not intended to inhibit freedom of expression. They ensure our campus remains a space where debate and protest are encouraged and protected.

Why did the University temporarily suspend SJP and JVP?

At various points in recent weeks, advisers have warned all groups that failure to work with their advisers under our processes, especially on advance notice requirements, would have consequences. The administration acted only when SJP and JVP proceeded, despite clear warning, to hold a walkout on November 9, 2023, without complying with the requirements for advance notice and consultation. With other peer organizations from both aisles showing a willingness to work with us under our processes in the expectation of equal treatment of all, the choice presented was to enforce the policies against the groups that were unwilling to work with us or concede there are no processes for anyone. In this highly charged environment, we considered the no-processes-for-anyone option unacceptable.

Sample External FAQs: Columbia University (cont.)

Columbia University's Event Policy and Campus Resources FAQ, Spring 2024.

Is Columbia unfairly applying these rules only to groups that oppose Israel's actions?

Nothing could be further from the truth. These requirements apply to all student organizations and are enforced equally as they pertain to all groups. They apply irrespective of the views being expressed.

Groups on *both* sides of the Israel-Hamas war have worked with their advisers to provide notice and satisfy other requirements, and their activities are going forward, as evidenced by events on both sides after the temporary suspension of SJP and JVP.

We are enforcing processes for hosting events on campus necessary for us to ensure that debate and protest take place fairly and safely. Applying the requirements uniformly to all groups, regardless of the views they express, is the only even-handed way for us to guarantee that all voices and viewpoints can be heard.

Is the suspension of SJP and JVP permanent?

The suspension is temporary and intended to get the non-complying groups back to working with their official advisers. When they resume working with advisers, as our policy requires they do, the suspension will be lifted.

How is Columbia supporting students, faculty, and staff amid the crisis in Israel and Gaza?

These are challenging and stressful days for the many members of our community who are personally affected by the crisis in Israel and Gaza. To all the students, faculty, and staff who are struggling, we are committed to doing everything possible to support you and preserving campus as a safe and welcoming place. We have created a [webpage](#) of resources that can be helpful in navigating these challenging times, as well as policies and procedures regarding conduct and behavior.

What is Columbia doing to address antisemitism on campus, and what is Columbia's reaction to calls for genocide against Jews?

President Shafik has repeatedly said that we will not tolerate antisemitic actions and are moving forcefully against antisemitic threats, images, and other violations as they are reported, and we will continue to provide additional resources to protect our campuses. But we also need to address the root causes. That's why President Shafik announced the formation of a Task Force on Antisemitism to enhance our ability to address this ancient, but terribly resilient, form of hatred. In the coming months, the task force will identify practical ways to enhance support for all members of the Columbia, Barnard, and Teachers College communities, particularly our Jewish students. Longer term, it will recommend changes related to academic and extracurricular offerings and administrative policies. More information on the Task Force is available [here](#).

The University has an obligation to assure members of its community that they can continue in their academic pursuits without fear for their personal security or other serious intrusions on their ability to teach and to study. Columbia supports free speech and expression, but our rules of conduct do not allow or condone language that promotes or supports violence in any manner. Calls for genocide against the Jewish community or any other group are abhorrent, inconsistent with our values and against our rules. Incitement to violence against members of our community will not be tolerated.

What is Columbia doing to enhance safety and security on campus?

Columbia's Public Safety team is available at any time of day, every day. We have increased the presence of public safety officers across all of our campuses. Public safety resources, including the on-demand evening shuttle, safety escort program, and emergency lines, are available [here](#).

Sample External FAQs: Columbia University (cont.)

Columbia University's Event Policy and Campus Resources FAQ, Spring 2024.

How is Columbia supporting students and faculty who are the targets of doxing?

To streamline support for the members of our community who are the targets of doxing, Columbia and Barnard together have established a Doxing Resource Group composed of key offices across both campuses that are focused on the issue. This group serves as a centralized point of contact for issues related to doxing, harassment, and online security. More information on the resource group is available [here](#), and resources to assist those who have been targeted or doxed are available [here](#).

What policies govern when a protest or demonstration takes place on campus?

After consultations with the Executive Committee of the University Senate, a new [Interim University Policy for Safe Demonstrations](#) is now in place in conjunction with the current [events policy](#). The goal of this interim policy is to preserve freedom of speech while ensuring that Columbia can continue to fulfill its mission as a center of research and learning for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students.

Are there any limitations on free speech?

The University recognizes two kinds of limitations on freedom of expression:

1. Content-neutral time, place, and manner restrictions. These are necessary because they enable free speech, freedom of the press, and academic freedom. Just as all members of the University community have the right to speak, study, research, teach, and express their own views, so must the University ensure that community members allow others to do the same. The freedom to demonstrate cannot come at the expense of others' freedom to counter-demonstrate, teach, or engage in academic pursuits requiring uninterrupted attention.
2. Restrictions on expression that constitutes a genuine threat of harassment, that unjustifiably invades an individual's privacy, or that defames an individual. These forms of expression do not advance the University's truth-seeking mission and impair the ability of individuals to participate in that mission. The University has an obligation to assure members of its community that they can continue in their academic pursuits without fear for their personal security or other serious intrusions on their ability to teach and study.

Violations of time, place, and manner restrictions may be addressed through policies including the University Event Policy and Student Group Event Policy and Procedure. Expression that constitutes harassment or other forms of discrimination, invasion of privacy, or defamation may be addressed through EOAA or Human Resources policies and procedures or under the University's Standards and Discipline.

Has Columbia taken any disciplinary action against students in connection with campus events since October 7?

Yes. Since October 7, 2023, the University has initiated action against students in connection with related campus events through the various student disciplinary channels described below. The University will provide totals for each category at the end of the term.

- The Rules of University Conduct govern the conduct of individual community members at demonstrations that take place on campus or at a University sponsored event.
- The Interim Policy for Safe Demonstrations proscribes the process for registering a demonstration, including the time and place for demonstrations on campus. The policy also provides a process for adjudicating policy violations and for a series of sanctions for individuals who are found in violation of the policy.
- The University's Standards and Discipline Policy sets forth the standards of academic and behavioral conduct that individual Columbia students are expected to uphold and the process (Dean's Discipline) by which the University addresses violations of these standards. Allegations of discrimination and harassment involving student respondents are addressed under this policy.
- The University is working on expanding the information provided in this chart to provide a more fulsome understanding of the nature of the alleged violations and the outcome of disciplinary actions, with particular focus on our anti-discrimination efforts.

Sample External FAQs: University of Texas at Austin

University of Texas at Austin's FAQ About Recent Protests, May 3, 2024.

Frequently Asked Questions About Recent Protests

Please see below for questions and answers regarding recent campus protest activity and the University's response.

Statements from the University since April 24:

Wednesday, April 24

[UT Division of Student Affairs Statement](#)
[President Hartzell Message: Today's Events](#)

Thursday, April 25

[President Hartzell Message: Balancing Speech, Safety and Our Mission](#)

Monday, April 29

[University Statement Regarding Today's Ongoing Events on Campus](#) (afternoon)
[University Statement Regarding Today's Protest Events](#) (evening)

Tuesday, April 30

[University Statement Regarding Arrests from Monday's Protests and Confiscation of Weapons](#)

Is peaceful protest allowed at UT Austin?

UT Austin actively supports free speech and peaceful protests, which happen regularly on campus surrounding various issues. Since October 2023, community members have hosted more than a dozen pro-Palestinian free speech events and protests that have been largely without incident. Protests, however, must comply with Institutional Rules and policies about time, place and manner, one of which is that no one may create or attempt to create an encampment. When a protest violates Institutional Rules, protesters are told to disperse.

What makes the recent protests on April 24 and April 29 different from others held throughout the year?

Most protests on the UT Austin campus, including those held since October related to events in the Middle East, have complied with Institutional Rules that exist to keep the entire campus community safe and protect our operational integrity. On April 24, those planning the event expressly stated their event was intended to disrupt our operations and to "follow in the footsteps" of protesters at other universities where those protesters successfully accomplished that same goal. Their promotion of their intended event included planned activities and conduct in violation of our policies and rules. Also, on both April 24 and April 29, as they indicated they intended to do, protestors violated numerous Institutional Rules and policies — most notably, setting up encampments on the South Lawn. In addition, protesters deliberately provoked officers, stated their intent to not comply, and physically and verbally harassed our staff. Officers were headbutted, spit on, and verbally assaulted by protesters. Some protesters attempted to startle a DPS horse, and others threw horse excrement at officers. Police car tires were slashed.

Sample External FAQs: University of Texas at Austin (cont.)

University of Texas at Austin's FAQ About Recent Protests, May 3, 2024.

Which Institutional Rules have been violated?

The following violations of Institutional Rules and policies were associated with the April 24 and April 29 protests:

- Erecting tents ([HOP 8-1050](#))
- Attempting to establish an encampment ([HOP 8-1050](#))
- Unauthorized use of amplified sound ([Sec. 13-801](#))
- Unauthorized use of tables on the South Lawn ([Sec. 13-600](#))
- Use of face coverings to conceal identity ([Sec. 13-105](#))
- Failure to identify ([Sec. 11-402](#))
- Failure to comply with directives related to the above referenced ([Sec. 11-402](#))
- Shoving staff ([HOP 8-1010](#))
- Items brought that could be used as weapons (e.g., guns, shields, objects intended for throwing, mallets) ([Sec. 11-402](#))
- Failure to follow city, state and federal laws (e.g., criminal trespass, disorderly conduct, destruction of government property, assault on public servant, obstructing a roadway)

Why were people arrested?

Arrests can be made when protesters repeatedly violate Institutional Rules and refuse to comply with University directives. When an individual refuses to comply, they are criminally trespassing.

During the protests on April 24 and April 29, protesters were arrested for trespassing after they were told several times by UT staff and law enforcement to disperse from the protest site. UT has consistently said that encampments are not allowed, and the City of Austin also prohibits public camping. When protesters set up encampments in violation of policy and then refuse to take those encampments down and disperse, law enforcement can make arrests for criminal trespassing.

Why was the Texas Department of Public Safety brought onto campus to support UTPD?

The University requested assistance from DPS because, prior to the April 24 protest, the protesters indicated that they wanted to mimic what has happened at Columbia University and other universities. Based on the size of the groups that have protested elsewhere, the University expected a group too large for the UT Police Department to respond to on its own, if that were to become necessary.

Were there any warnings to protestors before they began to act?

Leading up to the April 24 protest, organizers expressed an intent to "follow in the footsteps" of demonstrations occurring at Columbia University, Rutgers-New Brunswick, Yale and elsewhere. The event called for actions that violated our Institutional Rules and policies and was part of a national campaign by a group not affiliated with UT Austin. That group, Students for Justice in Palestine, is explicitly seeking to disrupt university operations nationwide and create campus encampments. A UT-affiliated student group, the Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC), was also involved in planning the protest. The Dean of Students' Office (DoS) reached out to the PSC several times in the weeks leading up to the April 24 protest, and, after agreeing to a meeting, PSC members chose to no-show. DoS also sent a letter informing PSC that the event could not proceed as planned because of its stated intent to disrupt and therefore break Institutional Rules. The DoS offered support for an event within University rules.

On April 23, University staff provided a notice to the student group that their event could not proceed as planned. The group did not respond to indicate that they would adjust their plans to be within the rules. Instead, they showed up on campus on April 24 and immediately began to proceed with conduct (e.g., amplified sound) that demonstrated their intent to ignore Institutional Rules. At that point, University staff directed the group multiple times that they needed to disperse. Instead of complying, several in attendance ignored the directive and some stated they would not comply. At that point, University staff sought assistance from UTPD and other law enforcement.

On April 29, protesters set up encampments, and University staff told them several times that they had to disperse because their encampments violated Institutional Rules. Law enforcement became involved when protesters refused to remove encampment materials and leave the premises.

Sample External FAQs: University of Texas at Austin (cont.)

University of Texas at Austin's FAQ About Recent Protests, May 3, 2024.

Why was the Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC) suspended?

The Dean of Students (DoS) suspended PSC for violating and openly advocating for others to violate Institutional Rules and policies, as well as failing to comply with the DoS attempts to intervene and adhere to direction from law enforcement.

Are all the protesters affiliated with UT Austin?

Of the 79 people arrested on April 29, 45 had no affiliation with UT Austin. Of the 55 people arrested on April 24, 26 had no affiliation with UT Austin.

At what point did officers decide to make an arrest?

Protesters participating in demonstrations that violate Institutional Rules and policies — such as demonstrations that include encampments — have been given numerous chances to comply with our Institutional Rules to disperse without arrest. Those who refused those numerous chances have been subject to arrest for trespassing. Officers have made every attempt to arrest protesters peacefully. If protesters followed the University's time, place and manner provisions for protest, then they would not be directed to disperse and would be able to engage in their expressive activities on campus.

Were any weapons found during the protests?

To date, from protesters, weapons have been confiscated in the form of guns, buckets of large rocks, bricks, steel-enforced wood planks, mallets, and chains. Guns, specifically, were confiscated by Austin Police Department officers, and these weapons were not in a holster. UTPD is currently reviewing the evidence to determine if additional arrests should be made or further charges filed for individuals bringing guns on campus without a license (Texas Penal Code, Section 46.03).

Why did some officers use pepper spray and flash bangs?

During the protest on April 29, protestors prevented law enforcement from doing their jobs. The protestors repeatedly encroached on and attempted to push back barriers formed by police officers to protect public safety, refused to move out of the street, and were blocking official law enforcement vehicles that were attempting to leave campus with protestors who were arrested, which is a violation of the Texas Penal Code, Section 42.03.

What consequences do arrested students face from UT Austin?

It is first important to distinguish the campus conduct process from the legal process. Separate from any discipline a student might face from the criminal justice system, a student arrested for criminal trespassing or other rules violations is also subject to student conduct action based on University rules. The administrative process is designed as an educational intervention, supporting due process and evidence-based sanctions/activities, and providing accountability. The criminal justice system process can run parallel with any student conduct action. Further explanation about our student conduct process can be found [here](#). The University historically does not initiate the student conduct process with students just before or during final exams, to avoid having an impact on academic performance. We want to be proportionate in our response, and it takes time to gather facts and conduct investigations. Based on both factors, no conduct actions have been issued related to events of the past week.

MEDIA CONTACT

University Communications

Email: UTMedia@utexas.edu

Phone: (512) 471-3151

Sample External FAQs: Virginia Tech University

Virginia Tech University's FAQ Regarding GLC Protests, May 9, 2024.

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding GLC Protests

Please see questions and answers below regarding recent campus protest activity and Virginia Tech's response.

- [A message from President Tim Sands](#) - April 29, 2024
- [Updated response to Graduate Life Center protest](#) - April 29, 2024
- [Remarks from President Tim Sands to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors](#) - Nov. 6, 2023
- [A statement from President Tim Sands](#) - Oct. 11, 2023

Is peaceful protest allowed at Virginia Tech?

Virginia Tech [strongly supports free speech](#), even when the content of that speech may be disagreeable to some. Peaceful protests happen regularly on campus. Since October, student groups have hosted numerous pro-Palestinian events and protests. While committed to freedom of expression, the university has a duty to minimize disruption to its mission and promote safety for those in our community. This generally is accomplished by requiring that these events are registered and reviewed in compliance with University Policy 5000.

What policy did the protest on the Graduate Life Center Lawn violate?

Shortly after an encampment was established on April 26, the university communicated to the participants that to comply with Policy 5000, all organized events must be registered and space reserved. Space may not be occupied overnight and temporary structures such as tents may not be erected without an approved exception to policy.

How does a group make sure that they are compliant with the policy?

The policy is clear about the requirement to seek approval to hold an event. University officials regularly work with groups on event logistics, safely and minimizing disruption to the university mission.

Why did police arrest participants on April 28-29?

For a period of approximately three days, protestors continued to violate the policy and indicated in words and action that they intended to continue to occupy the lawn of the Graduate Life Center. Given these actions, the university recognized that the situation had the increasing potential to become unsafe. Those concerns increased when the police shared information regarding a confrontation between protestors and a student with a different viewpoint.

Did protesters have an opportunity to avoid arrest?

Protestors were advised by university officials and police multiple times to disperse voluntarily from the Graduate Life Center lawn over a period of several hours. The first three communications were directed to those who appeared to be acting as the leaders or organizers. The fourth and fifth announcements were directed to the whole group by loudspeaker. Those who chose not to comply were then individually approached by police, again asked to leave and advised that anyone who failed to comply would be charged with trespassing, in accordance with Virginia law.

What law enforcement agencies assisted with any response?

The Virginia Tech Police, acting at the request of the university, led the police response and received assistance from several neighboring law enforcement agencies and the Virginia State Police. All arrests were conducted by the Virginia Tech Police Department.

Sample External FAQs: Virginia Tech University (cont.)

Virginia Tech University's FAQ Regarding GLC Protests, May 9, 2024.

How many people were arrested?

Virginia Tech Police reported that 82 individuals, including 53 current Virginia Tech students, were arrested in connection to this event. All were charged with trespassing, a misdemeanor in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

What consequences do arrested students face from Virginia Tech?

Per university policy, any student who is arrested is also subject to the student code of conduct. This is separate from the criminal justice system.

Has President Sands met with the student protestors?

President Sands regularly engages in discussions with groups of students and has recently met with several students who are leaders of the student organizations that led the protest on the GLC lawn. Since Oct. 7 of last year, he met with representatives of the Students for Peace and Justice in Palestine, the Muslim Student Association, the Middle Eastern and North African Student Association, and Hillel at Virginia Tech. He continues to reach out to students interested in engaging in civil discourse.

University of Maine System Full Free Speech Policy Text

GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

Section 212 Free Speech, Academic Freedom, and Civility

Effective: 11/21/67

Last Revised: 1/23/74; 3/27/17.

Responsible Office: General Counsel

Policy Statement:

The University of Maine System is an organization of public institutions of higher education committed to excellence in teaching, research, and public service. Together, the students, faculty, and staff form our statewide University community. The quality of life on and about the System's member universities is vitally enhanced by preserving the rights and freedoms described in this policy.

The Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System affirms its commitment to the rights of free speech, free inquiry, and academic freedom. To protect these rights, all members of the University community should act toward each other with civility, mutual respect, integrity, and reason.

Free speech, free inquiry and academic freedom, and civility are interrelated and interdependent rights and values that will be protected together at University of Maine System institutions according to the following policies.

FREE SPEECH

The Board of Trustees is committed to protecting the rights all University community members share to free speech, which includes free expression and assembly, as enshrined in the U.S. and Maine State Constitutions. There shall be no restriction at any System institutions on these fundamental rights, although the University may prohibit speech that violates the law, defames specific individuals, genuinely threatens or harasses others, or violates privacy or confidentiality requirements or interests.

The University may also reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of the exercise of these rights to preserve order for the System's universities to function as institutions of higher learning.

Free speech requires tolerance for diversity of opinion and respect for an individual's right to express his or her beliefs, however unpopular they may be, without social or legal prohibition or fear of sanction. Tolerating and respecting another's views, however, does not mean those views are immune from critical scrutiny.

Indeed, it is the university's responsibility to foster an environment where all are free to critically evaluate the ideas presented to them, and to accept critical evaluation of their own ideas.

Finally, although the University System greatly values civility and expects community members to share in the responsibility for maintaining a climate of mutual respect, demands for civility and mutual respect will not be used to justify restricting the discussion or expression of ideas or speech that may be disagreeable or even offensive to some members of the University community. Free speech is not absolute, and one person's claim to exercise his or her right to free speech may not be used to deny another person's right to free speech.

University of Maine System Full Free Speech Policy Text (cont.)

FREE INQUIRY AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The Board of Trustees affirms that a fundamental purpose of public higher education is free inquiry—the unfettered and relentless pursuit and dissemination of truth—and that within the academy, free inquiry is indistinguishable from one's freedom to inquire, present, discuss, and evaluate all matters relevant to the pursuit of truth without constraint, or fear of constraint, in the performance of one's teaching, research, publishing or service obligations.

Academic freedom is the freedom to present and discuss all relevant matters in and beyond the classroom, to explore all avenues of scholarship, research and creative expression, and to speak or write without any censorship, threat, restraint, or discipline by the University with regard to the pursuit of truth in the performance of one's teaching, research, publishing or service obligation.

System faculty and staff have the right to comment as employees on matters related to their professional duties, and the functioning of the University, subject to the need for courteous, professional and dignified interaction between all individuals and the parties' shared expectation that all members of the campus community will work to develop and maintain professional relationships that reflect courtesy and mutual respect, recognizing an employee's responsibility to refrain from interfering with the normal operations of the University and the ability to carry out its mission.

Employees as citizens are entitled to the rights of citizenship in their private roles as citizens, including to comment on matters of public concern outside of their employment. System employees have a responsibility and an obligation to indicate when expressing personal opinions that they are not institutional representatives unless specifically authorized as such.

CIVILITY AND MUTUAL RESPECT

Free speech and expression and academic freedom have an important corollary: the responsibility all University community members share for maintaining an environment in which their actions are guided by mutual respect, integrity, and reason. These responsibilities are expressed in our constitutional freedoms: The U.S. Constitution's right of the people peaceably to assemble, and the Maine State Constitution's right of citizens to freely speak, write and publish, being responsible for the abuse of these liberties. Although members of the University community are free to criticize and contest views expressed by others on campus – indeed, a guiding premise of free inquiry is that truth is more likely to be discovered if the opportunity exists for the free exchange of opposing opinions – no member of the University community may obstruct or otherwise interfere with another's freedom of speech, even if he or she disagrees with, opposes, or even loathes the other's views.

ENFORCEMENT

Each System university's administration is responsible for consistently enforcing this policy according to System-wide policies and standards, and for protecting individual rights through adequate and timely review of alleged violations. This policy shall not be construed or applied to restrict academic freedom within the University, nor to restrict constitutionally protected speech.

References

U.S. Constitution, Amendment 1

Maine State Constitution, Article 1, Section 4

2015-2017 Agreement between UMS and AFUM, Article 2

University of Chicago Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression

University of Maine System Full Free Speech Policy Text (cont.)

GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

Section 214 Institutional Authority on Political Matters

Effective: 3/19/18 Last

Revised:

Responsible Office: General Counsel

Policy Statement:

The University of Maine System is a public institution and instrumentality of the State of Maine, consisting of the University of Maine, including its regional campus the University of Maine at Machias; the University of Maine at Augusta, including its campus in Bangor and University College centers around the state; the University of Maine at Farmington; the University of Maine at Fort Kent; the University of Maine at Presque Isle; and the University of Southern Maine, including its campuses in Gorham and Lewiston-Auburn. UMS's public mission is to advance higher education in Maine through teaching, research, and public service; the System and its campuses receive significant state and federal taxpayer support to do so in ways that best serve all Maine citizens.

This policy is subject to Board Policy 212, *Free Speech, Academic Freedom, and Civility*, so as to best respect all UMS community members' constitutionally protected free speech rights, individual rights as citizens, and faculty academic freedom. The Board recognizes its faculty as subject matter experts in their areas of teaching and research and encourages them to responsibly disseminate their research and knowledge. This policy does not restrict any UMS faculty, staff, or student from speaking on political matters, including testifying before or speaking with legislators or policy makers, about the subjects of their teaching or research expertise or personal experience, provided they do not represent that they speak for their campus or the System unless specifically authorized to do so.

UMS and its constituent universities fully embrace the First Amendment rights of all citizens, including all students and employees, to hold and express political, social, or religious views of any kind. Because UMS is funded in significant part by all Maine taxpayers and student tuition revenue sourced from federal financial aid programs, and because UMS must also maintain its federal 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, the System and its universities, and individuals speaking or acting on their behalf, must at all times remain impartial as to such viewpoints except as provided elsewhere in this or other System policies.

UMS Legislative Advocacy

The UMS Charter authorizes and directs the UMS Chancellor to develop and implement an effective statewide legislative program for the System. All UMS legislative advocacy without exception will therefore be managed through the Chancellor's office, specifically the Office of Community and Government Relations. System legislative advocacy, including university-specific advocacy, may only be pursued by individuals authorized by UMS for that purpose.

For the purposes of this policy, "UMS (or System) legislative advocacy" includes interaction with the State Legislature, including individual legislators or legislative committees and their staff, the Governor's office and staff, or any other public official or the general public when the purpose of the interaction or communication is to advocate for a specific UMS institutional position or outcome.

University of Maine System Full Free Speech Policy Text (cont.)

UMS Legislative Advocacy (cont.)

Institutional interactions with the United States government's Executive Branch and agencies, Congress and congressional staff, and the various federal regulatory bodies having legal jurisdiction over each System university's operation and activities are subject to this policy as well, except in cases where a specific campus or System office has primary responsibility for a function closely tied to the functional responsibility of the governmental office at issue (e.g., Department of Education Title IV officials and campus financial aid offices; Department of Education Office of Civil Rights and System General Counsel, etc.). Further, this policy does not restrict any UMS faculty, employee, department, division, or office from providing information, research, survey data, or policy advice to a local, state, or federal government official or office when required to do so by grant, contract, or legal mandate (e.g., the University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies (CCIDS), which, by federal law, is required to advise, educate, and disseminate information to state and federal policymakers about individuals with developmental disabilities, or any similarly-purposed office or activities).

Restrictions on Partisan Political Activity

UMS and its universities cannot participate or intervene in any partisan political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office, which, for the purposes of this section, is referred to as "partisan political activity."

If System and university employees wish to become actively involved in partisan political activities, they must do so on their own time, without using System or University funds or resources of any kind, and in such a way as to not interfere with or impair performing their regular System/university duties. When exercising their rights to participate in the political process as individuals or as otherwise permitted by this Policy, System/university employees should emphasize that their comments or actions are their own, and not those of the System or university unless they have been specifically authorized to speak or act on behalf of a System institution. This disclaimer is especially important if an employee, when speaking or acting as a private citizen or as otherwise permitted by this Policy, is using his or her title or affiliation with the System or a university for identification purposes or to establish his/her competence in a particular field.

Employees Seeking Elective Office

[See Board Policy 403 \(https://www.maine.edu/board-of-trustees/policy-manual/section-403/\)](https://www.maine.edu/board-of-trustees/policy-manual/section-403/)

University of Maine System Full Free Speech Policy Text (cont.)

Chancellor and Presidential Authority to Make Institutional Statements

Because public statements made and actions taken by the UMS Chancellor and System University Presidents may be ascribed to or perceived as the institutional position of UMS and/or its universities, respectively, this section applies only to the Chancellor and Presidents, who:

Have authority to speak or issue statements, or designate official spokespersons to speak or issue statements, on behalf of their institutions on issues core to the System/university mission (green/mission critical issues)

Should review in advance with the rapid response advisory team described below, when time permits, issues related to but not directly mission central (yellow/mission indirectly related issues); and

Are not authorized to speak, including through official spokespersons, on issues beyond or only tangentially related to core institutional mission (red/mission unrelated issues).

Issues are not static in relevance, but may vary in public or political salience over time; the Board will review and update the mission issue examples below for relevance at least every three years. Issues may shift from one concentric circle to another, or overlap, depending on context. The Chancellor and System University Presidents must at all times strive to maintain impartiality on political, social, or religious matters, subject to their duties to advance the missions of their institutions and the System as a whole.

Issues that involve legislative matters or advocacy must be coordinated as provided in "UMS Legislative Advocacy" above.

A standing rapid response advisory committee of six members, including two Trustees, two Presidents, and two senior UMS staff (one of whom should be the System General Counsel or his/her legal designee) should be available to review, when time permits, the reasonableness of making statements on issues brought forth by the Chancellor/Presidents that appear to fall in the yellow zone.

GREEN/Mission Critical

Academic administration, curriculum, institutional finances and planning, health and safety of students and employees, and general issues critical to the financial or functional stability and wellbeing of the institution and its students, e.g., Pell grant funding, guns on campus, defunding TRIO programs, marijuana dispensaries near campus.

YELLOW/Mission Indirectly Related

Issues important or relevant to society at large that may impact an institution or its students or employees, but not in such a way as to undermine the institution's educational mission or prevent the institution from carrying it out, e.g., climate change, labor standards, immigration policy.

RED/ Mission Unrelated

Issues of local, state or national import, but not relevant to educational mission or institutional financial or functional stability, e.g., abortion policy, tax reform, global trade policy.

The Board retains the right at all times to issue statements, including through the Chair or Chancellor, on behalf of the University of Maine System that cover all System universities.

Event Details and Messaging Document Template

Event Details

- Event name
- Hosting Organization/Department
- Event Date
- Event Time
- Event Location
- Venue Capacity
- Event website/Facebook page

Event Overview

Brief description of event and purpose

Risk Overview

Brief overview of concerns associated with event. Some questions to consider:

- Is there a potential for protest?
- Is there triggering content?
- Have there been concerns expressed by community members?
- What is the current 'vibe' regarding this event on campus social media channels and word of mouth (are students angry, indifferent, etc.)? What have you heard? What have the student organizers heard?
- Are there concerns related to crowd control?
- Are there concerns about attendees (public or student)?
- Are there concerns related to student mental wellness?

On-Site Staff/Organization Contacts

Include staff advisor and student organization contacts (including president, event planner, and press contact, if applicable)

Access and Ticketing:

Describe how access to the event will be managed (a ticketing system is generally recommended to provide a more accurate idea of how many will be in attendance):

- If tickets are required to attend – how are tickets being distributed, who can acquire tickets, how will tickets be checked at the door, how many tickets have been sold?
- If tickets are not required – how will entry be managed, how many attendees are anticipated?
- Line control/ID-check plan (if student ID only)

Event Details and Messaging Document Template (cont.)

Security

Detail security plan.

- How many officers (and what type of officers – Campus PD or other)
- Any posted rules/policies for event (no bags, no signs, etc.)
- Will officers be doing bag checks?
- What conversations have already occurred/will occur with Campus PD to prepare for the event?
- Is the speaker or performer bringing their own security?

Run of Show

Provide a time-based run-of-show, beginning with set up and including times for doors opening and doors closing.

Media

Provide information related to media attendance and related policies for the event, including what media are permitted to do and if there will be a separate space/check-in for media.

Student Organization Statement Regarding Event

Work with the hosting organization to craft a statement regarding the event – this should be their standard language they use to promote the event and/or address concerns, if applicable.

University Statement About Event

[confirm with media relations team]

Media Attending

List media attending

Other Relevant Details

Include if applicable. This could include information related to speaker hospitality, non-student guests in attendance, involvement/potential involvement of other student organizations, or a summary of administrative conversations that have occurred.

Student Support Plan

- What is the plan for student support following the event?
- Is there a need for CAPS staff at the event?
- Have CARE reports been submitted, if necessary?
- Which populations/organizations of students might be impacted by the event?

Project Contributors

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Legal Caveat

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EAB has prepared this report for the exclusive use of its partners. Each partner acknowledges and agrees that this report and the information contained herein (collectively, the "Report") are confidential and proprietary to EAB. By accepting delivery of this Report, each partner agrees to abide by the terms as stated herein, including the following:

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