



New Presidents Intensive 2025

Balancing Inclusion, Free Speech and Academic Freedom

July 29, 2025

Please Add Your Institution to Your Screen Name

Zoom Meeting ID: 841-573-482 You are viewing Meeting Host's screen View Options

Speaker View

Participants (2)

- TP Test Participant (Me) Mute Rename
- Meeting Host (Host)

Rename

Enter a new screen name:

Jane Doe - Institution

OK Cancel

Meeting Host

Test Participant

Mute Stop Video Invite Participants 2 Share Chat Record Leave Meeting

Raise Hand yes no go slower go faster more

Mute Me Reclaim Host

Update your name and add your institution

Open Participants menu

New Presidents Intensive Curriculum



VIRTUAL INTRODUCTION | 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

IN-PERSON SESSION | EAB HEADQUARTERS | WASHINGTON, DC

Monday, June 23, 2025

12:00 pm–7:00 pm ET

Reckoning with Relevance
Dynamic Strategy
Differentiating the Student Value Proposition
Institutional Self-Assessment

Tuesday, June 24, 2025

8:00 am–3:00 pm ET

Exploring the Impact of Federal Policy Shifts and Beyond
Implications of AI for Higher Ed and the Future of Work
Special Presidential Panel
The President as Fundraiser-In-Chief
Shared Governance 2.0

VIRTUAL SESSIONS | TUESDAYS | 1:00 – 3:00 PM ET

July 1, 2025

Blueprint for Growth

July 8, 2025

Rethinking Student
Success

July 15, 2025

Critical Considerations
for Achieving Financial
Sustainability and
Resilience

July 22, 2025

The New World of
College Athletics

July 29, 2025

Balancing Inclusivity,
Free Speech, and
Academic Freedom

Special Guest President



Jonathan Alger, J.D.

American University
(President-Emeritus, James
Madison University)





External Factors Reshaping Higher Education

Serving as a University President Increasingly More Difficult

100

Thousands of college students at over 100 Universities **protest related to Israel-Hamas conflict**

63

President and Chancellor Job Postings on Inside Higher Ed Career Page right now.

Israel-Hamas Conflict



Intensifying Mental Health Challenges

Culture Wars on Campus



Alternative Credentials



Cost-Consciousness

Growing Number of Presidential Resignations



Decreased Public Funding



Enrollment Decline

Student Debt

Negative Echo Chamber

Migration Laws

Free Speech





The Zone Has Been Flooded

The Trump Administration Attempts Four Years of Change Within 100 Days

As of 6.2.25...

Presidential Orders

150+

Executive Orders signed

Legal Challenges

200+

Lawsuits filed

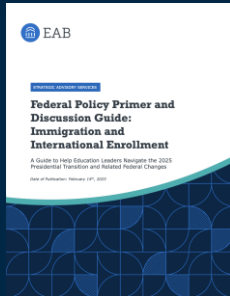
Early Consequences of Executive Branch Actions

- \$5.3bn in federal grants and contracts revoked/frozen
- 112+ institutions notified of Title VI investigations
- 1700+ student visas revoked (though some restored)
- 121K+ federal workers fired or laid off

“It’s been overwhelming sensory overload.”

Representative Jamie Raskin, (D-MD)

Four Policy Primers Available Today



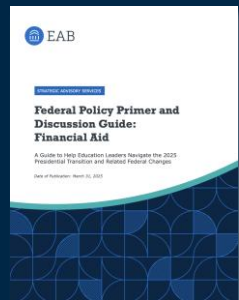
Immigration and
International
Enrollment



DEI and
Civil Rights



Research Enterprise
Landscape



Funding and
Financial Aid

Key Features of EAB's Federal Policy Primers

- ✓ **Digestible summaries** of key changes
- ✓ **Recommended actions** for each set of issues
- ✓ **Discussion guides** for leadership teams and boards

Find all related resources in our **Federal Policy Navigation Resource Center**



Forcing Early Change Through High Stakes Poker

Funding Threats Require Schools to Be "All-In" or Fold

Expansive Legal Interpretations

Threat of Catastrophic Consequences

Action Before Adjudication

Rapid Industry Change

	<i>Expansive Legal Interpretations</i>	<i>Threat of Catastrophic Consequences</i>	<i>Action Before Adjudication</i>	<i>Rapid Industry Change</i>
DEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dear Colleague Letter asserts that "SFFA" ruling means all race-based practices are illegal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of all federal funding if in violation of Title VI Contracts and grants audited and potentially revoked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 52 universities under Title VI investigation 	<p>270+ campuses changed DEI-related programs across 38 states</p> 
Anti-Semitism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demands assume that academic leadership is creating a hostile environment, violating Title VI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of all federal funding if in violation of Title VI Contracts and grants audited and potentially revoked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority of \$1.3B in funding for Columbia frozen or placed on hold 60 institutions notified of Title VI investigations 	<p>Demands met</p> <p>Columbia agrees to pay \$221M in fines to federal government</p> 



Five Common Failure Paths

A Roadmap for Improving Campus Flashpoint Preparedness and Response

5 Failure Paths FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

FAILURE PATH 1



Status-quo risk identification practices overlook potential campus flashpoints.

FAILURE PATH 2



Information about potential flashpoints is decentralized so institutions miss early opportunities to intervene.

FAILURE PATH 3



Leadership teams assume that existing relationships are sufficient for managing the institutional response strategy.

FAILURE PATH 4



Institutions are unsure if, when, and who should respond to current or potential flashpoints.

FAILURE PATH 5



Institutions address the immediate flashpoint incident, but not the broader context on campus.

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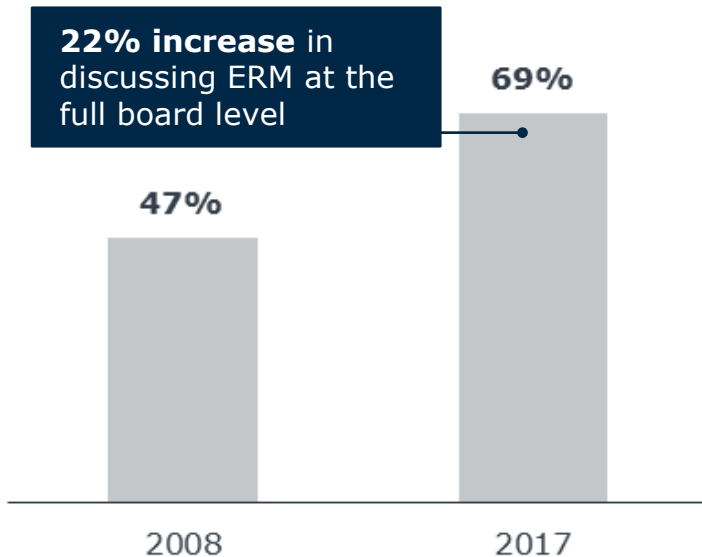
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The New Normal

Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Is Sweeping Higher Ed

ERM is a Growing Priority for University Leaders...



1 in 4

Institutions report discussing ERM at **every board meeting**

...And Reflected in Hiring Needs Across Higher Ed



113%

Increase in job postings for risk-titled roles



64%

Increase in job postings that include risk skills

Chief Risk Officer

Sample Job Responsibilities

- Manage enterprise risk management program and report on risk to Board
- Identify emerging reputational risks
- Develop and implement comprehensive risk treatment plans

1) Job postings data, Sept. 2016 – Aug. 2018

Risk Identification Practices Overlook Flashpoints



Climate-Related Risks Are a Continuing Blind Spot

Flashpoints Are an Unfamiliar Risk Terrain

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

*Vice President for Student Life
Private University*

54%

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

Top Five Areas of Reputational Risk

- 1 **Campus Climate**
- 2 **Sexual Assault and Title IX**
- 3 Academic Programs
- 4 **Student Behaviors**
- 5 Higher Ed’s Business Model



Integrate Flashpoints in Campus Risk Assessment

Prepare for Reputational Risks by Proactively Identifying Flashpoints

Flashpoints Challenge Status Quo Risk Registers

Common Pitfall



Narrow Content Focus

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



Recommended Action

Update Your Risk Register

Include climate flashpoints and reputational risks as distinct risks



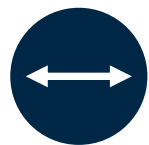
Limited Grading Framework

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



Upgrade Your Risk Grading Framework

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



Range of Risk Altitudes

Attempts at being comprehensive yield unwieldy 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

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Collect and Coordinate Information Sharing

Four To-Dos to Expand Your Data Points



Monitor Pulse

Use social listening data to monitor campus pulse

Ex: **Earlham College** created a [social media dashboard](#) to connect community during



Track Virtual Events

Create mechanisms to track virtual events on campus

Ex: **Georgia Tech** providing virtual support for student groups to [register events online](#)



Elevate Risks

Designate staff for reporting upwards

Ex: **Cornell University** frontline staff share concerning activity with Dean of Students; DoS elevates critical information to senior leaders



Debrief Regularly

Share key intel at cabinet meetings

Senior leaders are routinely briefed about potential risks



Strengthen Awareness of Potential Flashpoints

Risk Briefings Ensure Leadership Awareness and Promote Early Action

1



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

2



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

4



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

3



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

Key Benefits

- ✓ Provides regular forum for evolving discussions with leadership
- ✓ Fosters earlier cabinet collaboration around risk mitigation tactics
- ✓ Keeps risks related to climate flashpoints top-of-mind across the year
- ✓ Enables longitudinal analysis of emerging areas of concern

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Create a Dedicated Rapid Response Team

Set a Specific Charter and Flexible Structure to Enable Agile Responses

How to Assemble a Rapid Response Team for Flashpoints



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



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

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Should We Respond?

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

Presidents Split on Speaking Out About Political Issues

Inside Higher Ed, 2018 Presidents Survey



55%

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



54%

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

“

Aspiration Shared by Many...

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

*Mark Yudof
Former College President*

...But Difficult in Execution

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

*Anonymous
Former College President*






Clarify When the Institution Will Respond

Set Expectations Before a Flashpoint Arises, On or Off Campus



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

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



Routinely update framework to be relevant to current campus, national, and global climate

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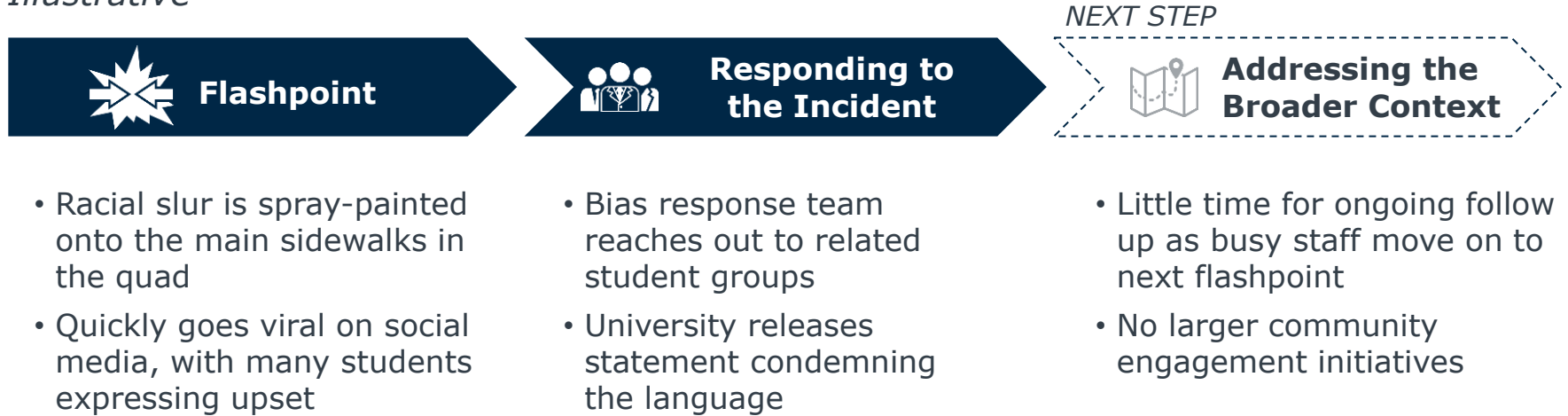
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Incident-Only Response Is No Longer Enough

Institutions Face More Pressure to Address the Broader Context

Responses Often Miss Critical Component

Illustrative



Addressing the Broader Context Is No Easy Task

- ✗ 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

Proactively Address Emerging Areas of Concern Using Varied Approaches



Speak Out

President wrote an [open letter](#) to campus community **condemning racial injustice** happening across the country and historically on U.S. college campuses.

Colgate University



Facilitate Discussions

Tufts University's report offers **ten recommendations to increase student voting and to improve campus conditions for political learning, discourse, and agency** during election seasons and beyond.

INSTITUTE FOR
DEMOCRACY &
HIGHER EDUCATION



Track and Report

Cornell developed an **online tracking system** that reports the status of [institutional initiatives](#) on campus climate and diversity.



Cornell University



Solicit Solutions

Crowdsource ideas for university initiatives like George Washington University's Building Renaming Framework



What's Next?



How EAB Can Support You Moving Forward

1

1:1 Debrief with Your Facilitator

Your facilitator will reach out to schedule a one-on-one meeting with you to recap the intensive and your school's EAB portfolio.

2

Resource Center

In follow-up, we will share with you a landing page that will have all the slides and recordings from each session.

3

EAB.com Access

You should have access to eab.com for our research and resources throughout your first year as President.

4

Reunion Sessions Coming Soon

There will be three additional reunion sessions being scheduled across the year that will cover relevant topics for your first year in the role.