



Extraordinary U

The Heterodox Academy Model of Statement Neutrality
in College and University Speech on Contested Social Issues

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“When a contested social issue arises that does not directly concern the academic mission of our college or university, institutional leadership will not issue a position statement on that issue. On rare occasions when a public issue arises that directly affects the mission of this college or university, institutional leaders may issue statements that articulate the significance of that issue to our campus community.”

Introduction

“To perform its mission in the society, a university must sustain an extraordinary environment of freedom of inquiry and maintain an independence from political fashions, passions, and pressures.” ~ University of Chicago Kalven Report, 1967

Colleges and universities are extraordinary places. Arguably unique among social institutions, universities exist for a shared pursuit of truth and knowledge. That pursuit requires open inquiry and debate—especially on controversial topics. Tough questions belong at universities. So do unpopular opinions, inconvenient theories, and unsettling data. On an ideal campus, scholars and students who disagree don’t just co-exist, they engage in an extraordinary way that enriches learning and understanding for everyone.

But this ideal must be protected. If the university *itself* starts taking positions on the controversial questions that are being studied and debated on campus, it undermines the whole community. Like a referee who puts on a jersey to play, a university leader who picks a side can ruin the game for everyone.

In recent years, when a controversy over a hot-button social or political issue arises, many college and university leaders make statements of support, opposition, solidarity, or concern. But such statements may actually *prevent* a college or university from fulfilling its special purpose: as a place where individuals can argue for or against a wide range of views, and where just one voice of unpopular dissent can make everyone smarter and wiser.

As the University of Chicago’s *Kalven Report* advised, “The instrument of dissent and criticism is the individual faculty member or the individual student. The university is the home and sponsor of critics; it is not itself the critic.” When higher education institutions are neutral on social and political issues, their scholars and students can be anything but.

Today, the idea of institutional neutrality is experiencing a revival. While the *Kalven Report* remains enlightening and inspiring, it was written for one particular institution, at one moment in time. The HxA Model of Statement Neutrality, while springing from a shared premise—that the purpose of the university is to seek the truth—avoids certain unwieldy or unclear features of that report. The HxA Model also develops the positive speech aspects of neutrality in important ways.

Our hope is that the HxA Model of Statement Neutrality might be read alongside the famous *Kalven Report*, providing another point of guidance for campus leaders who aspire to make their universities extraordinary.

About This Brief

This resource is prepared by Heterodox Academy (HxA), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that promotes open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement in higher education. Not every HxA member endorses neutrality in college or university statements, and some may prefer different formulations than the one presented here. Still, we hope this resource proves useful to institutions considering adopting a policy of statement neutrality. [Visit our website](#) for more information about the larger topic of institutional neutrality. Feedback on this version is welcome at questions@heterodoxacademy.org.

The Habit of “Weighing In”

Colleges and universities have social prestige. So it is understandable that various interest groups—students, faculty, or administrators—hope to enlist that prestige to advance their favored causes. Campus leaders may also feel pressure to “get out in front” of an issue by making a statement. However, if university leaders bend to these pressures, they chill debate, incentivize lobbying from other groups, and undercut the source of their institution’s prestige—which is founded on deep scholarship and rigorous teaching, not short-term advocacy.

In an academic community, no one scholar, student, or group gets the authoritative “last word” on a social or political topic—not even the university president. Yet many university leaders have developed a habit of issuing pronouncements as their *first* word on current events. In what has become a widely shared cultural script, this weighing-in typically takes the form of a message to the community, featuring:

- an expression of support or solidarity with those who may be suffering or anxious;
- an institutional “stand” of some kind, whether specific or vague;
- a vague allusion to the ideals and values of the institution; and
- information about support services that are available to concerned community members.

Such messages are meant to signal awareness, responsiveness, and empathy, and to build goodwill with stakeholders. But while “weighing in” may seem appealing in a given moment, institutional leaders must consider the long-term costs.

The Costs of Institutional Statements

When an institution of higher education takes a stand on a social controversy, undesirable and unintended consequences can follow:

- Chilling or punishing students and professors who disagree with the “official position” of the institution;
- Discouraging curiosity and open-minded exploration of this topic, because there’s already a “right answer”;
- Displacing scholarly discourse with simplistic position statements;
- Inviting blunt interventions and broad restrictions;
- Incentivizing lobbying from other groups who believe just as strongly that the university should endorse their preferred cause;
- Wasting time, money, and attention to produce statements that are unrelated to the institution’s main mission; and
- Undermining prestige and public trust, as the college or university becomes perceived as a political actor rather than a shared resource for pluralistic democracy.

A Higher Path for Higher Education

There is a better way. When a social or political controversy captures public attention, a college or university has a unique opportunity to elevate and improve public debate. Its scholars can articulate and defend their expert opinions. Its campus can host thoughtful discussions. Its students, faculty, and staff can freely formulate and express novel views that enrich the range of possibilities to be considered.

Rather than issuing stylized value statements in the manner of a political spin doctor or corporate public-relations team, an academic institution can respond to controversy *as an academic institution*: with depth, nuance, expertise, diversity, and a commitment to ongoing discussion in pursuit of truth and understanding.

The HxA Model of Statement Neutrality

Summary Policy Statement

“When a contested social issue arises that does not directly concern the academic mission of our college or university, institutional leadership will not issue a position statement on that issue. On rare occasions when a public issue arises that directly affects the mission of this college or university, institutional leaders may issue statements that articulate the significance of that issue to our campus community.”

1. Colleges and universities should foster rich, vigorous, and wide-ranging inquiry and expression about contested topics. As institutions, they should encourage individual professors and students to engage freely and deeply on contested political and social questions (within the content-neutral bounds of professional roles and disciplinary norms).

2. Colleges and universities should clearly, firmly, and consistently reject any calls to sanction faculty, staff, or students based on their speech about contested topics. The institution should have standard language that it uses regardless of the content of the controversy, reiterating that individuals at the institution have the right to debate contested topics, and that no individual's views represent those of the institution as a whole.

3. When a contested social or political issue arises, colleges and universities should assess whether the issue directly, significantly, and specifically affects the academic mission of the institution. Such an analysis requires good faith effort by campus leaders. A commitment to neutrality thus allows for, indeed calls forth, the practice of principled leadership by university leaders.

4. When an issue or event *does not* directly affect the university's academic mission, university leaders *should not* express institutional opinions about it. This discipline helps the institution avoid enshrining “orthodox” opinions; chilling debate and discussion; or contradicting academic norms about how to approach complex topics.

5. On occasion, events or issues may arise which do directly affect the mission. On such occasions, university leaders may well issue statements in defense of their mission. When an institution commits itself to neutrality, it also commits to promoting and defending that ideal. College and university leaders should use their platforms to explain, defend, and advocate for that ideal, especially when inside or outside actors threaten it.

6. These policies should apply to the university, all official units of the university, and the leaders thereof, but not to voluntary associations on campus. Neutrality makes room for the expressive rights of groups, and federations of groups. Of course, such groups cannot be allowed to present themselves, unchallenged, as speaking for the university as a whole.

7. Because academic missions vary, the application of the principles of neutrality will vary across different colleges and universities. A college or university may reasonably interpret these principles and apply these principles differently, depending on the unique mission it has established. This will apply to both sides of these principles: when the institution should not speak, and when it should.

8. Empathy is allowed. Sometimes a news event or controversy will impact the institutional community, but drawing politically contested policy conclusions will be inappropriate. In these cases, colleges and universities should still feel free to express concern and empathy, and share available resources and practical updates, as long as this practice does not amount to political/social opinion-signaling by other means.

9. Adoption requires implementation. Colleges and universities should publicize their commitment to statement neutrality. To encourage the uptake of these principles by campus constituencies, college and university leaders should state this policy of neutrality, and its rationale, to all community members on a regular basis. Crucially, leaders should assign responsibility for collecting complaints about violations of the policy; conduct an annual review of statements issued, resulting in a public report; and create a policy for handling violations.

10. Principles are not enough. Culture matters too. Adopting neutrality means setting your university community on an extraordinary course, a course of scholarly contestation and never-ending deliberation and discovery. For free discussions on social controversies to be fruitful, the cultural ground on campus must be prepared in advance. For example, orientation programs should include programming on constructive dialogue, where students learn about obstacles, cognitive and otherwise, to free thinking. The aim is to build a campus culture where disagreement is seen not as a call to arms, but as an opportunity to learn and grow, together.

Comparing the HxA Model and the *Kalven Report*

The University of Chicago *Kalven Report* has rightly earned a place as the touchstone formulation of institutional neutrality. The HxA Model shares the core idea of *Kalven* that the truth-seeking role of the university requires that the university should make space for the widest possible range of scholarly exploration and investigation. Having university leaders refrain from making institutional statements is often central to this goal. Yet the HxA Model expands upon, and differs from, the *Kalven Report* in important respects:

- While the *Kalven* model focuses on not-speaking, the HxA Model emphasizes that neutrality generates permissions, and sometimes positive obligations, for leaders to *speak*.
- The HxA Model highlights the need for principled leadership on the part of university officials, who must decide when and how best to speak out on matters concerning their university's academic mission.
- The HxA Model focuses narrowly on institutional statements. We here set aside for another occasion the question of how HxA's commitment to open inquiry and viewpoint diversity direct the college or university's actions in its corporate capacity (e.g. investment decisions, calls for scholar boycotts).
- While all colleges and universities share the University of Chicago's foundational commitment to the acquisition and transmission of knowledge, context matters too. The HxA Model calls on college and university leaders to apply the principle of neutrality in light of their institution's unique history and mission.
- The HxA Model specifies how it applies to institutional sub-units.
- In contrast to *Kalven*, the HxA Model emphasizes that it is not only *individuals* at universities who need freedom to think and speak. Neutrality should be adopted to support the free expression voluntary groups (e.g. student or faculty advocacy groups, or alliances of such groups).
- The HxA Model acknowledges the possible role of empathy in communications from university leaders.
- The HxA Model recognizes that adopting neutrality requires other policy and programmatic changes: the cultural ground on campus must be prepared for the more rigorous and contentious forms of campus debate that a policy of statement neutrality will allow.

Applying the HxA Model

KEY QUESTION FOR LEADERSHIP:

“Is this social issue directly, significantly, and specifically related to my college or university’s academic mission?”

IF YES:

College or university leaders should speak out for the institution, and diverse individuals and voluntary groups on the campus should be free to speak out for themselves.

Examples:

- Legislators require universities to submit lists of communists on the faculty
- Congress proposes a tax on university endowments
- Congress restricts student visas
- State government debates a new, mandatory curriculum
- Supreme Court takes up a case on college admissions
- Media singles out professor for scrutiny because of scholarly statements or beliefs

IF NO:

Individuals and groups at the institution should be free to speak out for themselves, but college or university leaders should take no position on behalf of the institution.

(Institutional leaders or units can always convey sympathy and publicize available support systems for students most affected, as long as selective empathy is not used as position-taking by other means.)

Examples:

- Student or guest speaker on campus makes offensive remarks
- A Black man is killed by police while in custody
- Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*
- New U.S. President is elected
- Hamas attacks Israeli civilians
- Israel invades Gaza, with civilian casualties

(The application of this statement-prohibition for leaders may vary by factors such as the college or university's location, religious mission, specific history, etc.).

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Does statement neutrality apply to all types of colleges and universities?

Many public and private institutions have a stated mission that places primary importance on the discovery and dissemination of knowledge. That mission commits them to remaining exceptionally open to inquiry and challenge, about even the deepest and broadest of questions.

Other colleges and universities, while pursuing knowledge and open to intellectual exchange, pursue knowledge within a particular intellectual, political/social, racial, gendered, or religious tradition. They deliberately choose what philosophers call a “thicker” set of shared norms and beliefs, perhaps gaining more unity in exchange for less openness. If such institutions adopt statement neutrality, they may name a wider range of specific exceptions.

For example, the principled leader of a faith-based college who refrains from issuing position statements about most social issues may elect to issue a statement on an issue that is fundamental to that institution’s mission. In openly stating their reasons for speaking, such leaders offer clarity to the members of their communities, as well as to outsiders: *We have a distinct tradition here, and we have the integrity to name it for you.*

Still other institutions aspire to social goals that are quite broad, such as “social justice” or “democracy” or the “general welfare” of a particular state. Those who govern these institutions need to consider: are these social values better served by taking institutional positions on specific issues, or by scholarship and open debate about them across campus?

2. Are sub-units bound by statement neutrality?

If the college or university does not take a position on a social controversy, may the dean of medical school, or the majority of the English department? No. While statement neutrality at the top level is the vital first step, a culture of free inquiry and expression can also be chilled by statements from other official campus units.

Indeed, position statements by institutional sub-units can be especially pernicious, since they affect closer communities. At the limit, partisan position-taking by departments, centers, or programs may alienate students and other members of the community who see the issue differently and wish to explore the topic free from bias. A commitment to

neutrality requires that institutional sub-units at the college or university refrain from taking positions on social controversies.

3. How should my institution enact and enforce a statement neutrality policy?

Colleges and universities adopt goals, principles, commitments, and policies all the time; their real priorities show in implementation, monitoring, and enforcement. From the very moment of adoption, any policy of statement neutrality should be paired with a specific plan for promulgating the policy, communicating about it regularly, collecting data about its implementation (including complaints), and notifying or even sanctioning leaders or units who do not follow it.

4. Are individual professors, students, and staff supposed to remain “neutral” on contested issues?

No. To the contrary, more restraint by institutional leaders can serve to *encourage* professors and students to apply their academic and personal energies to questions of public importance. As the *Kalven Report* put it, “The neutrality of the university... has its complement in the fullest freedom for its faculty and students as individuals to participate in political action and social protest. It finds its complement, too, in the obligation of the university to provide a forum for the most searching and candid discussion of public issues.” Principled leaders must defend the speech-rights of faculty members and students alike.

5. Are colleges and universities supposed to “ignore” major political and social issues?

No. Leaders should feel free to acknowledge issues of intense debate on campus and the wider society, deploying financial resources and attention in their direction. Indeed, higher education institutions are often at their best when they use scholarly resources—teaching, public discussions and debates—to *elevate* discussions on hot-button issues.

6. Does the HxA Model of Statement Neutrality require a policy of “institutional neutrality” in financial investments?

Not necessarily. The HxA Model of Statement Neutrality addresses the topic of “Institutional neutrality” only in the domain of official statements from college and university leaders. We believe that HxA’s commitment to open inquiry and viewpoint diversity generate principles that might guide campus leaders regarding investment policies, and other matters universities act in their “corporate capacity.” Exploring such questions is beyond the remit of this HxA report.

7. What about moral clarity? Aren’t there tragedies and atrocities that demand condemnation by college and university leaders?

A college or university can be a platform for resounding moral condemnations, in many forms and formats, from all kinds of concerned scholars, staff, and students. A consistent policy of statement neutrality does not imply indifference to tragedies, attacks, and outrages around the world. Instead, it prevents colleges and universities from imposing a single “official” response unless there is a significant connection to the institution’s academic mission.

8. Are we asking colleges and universities to be deceptive, hiding their true positions for the sake of public trust?

One benefit of free speech is knowing where others really stand. So there is informational value to official statements. Losing that signal is a disadvantage that must be weighed against the advantages of statement neutrality. Official statements, however, can imply a “campus consensus” on questions that are in fact actively contested, making such statements deceptive in their own way.

9. What’s to stop a college or university from claiming “neutrality” during a difficult controversy, only to behave in a non-neutral manner later?

Advocates of statement neutrality must remain skeptical and watchful, and senior leaders (including trustees) must set up mechanisms for monitoring, reporting, fielding complaints, and taking corrective action for violations of institutional neutrality policies. Like Odysseus, campus leaders must bind themselves to the mast of neutrality—and appoint a few deckhands to keep watch.

10. If we expect professors and students to tolerate speech they disagree with, why not empower campus leaders to issue official statements? Is this an example of fragility?

Adopting a policy of statement neutrality is intended to promote *more* expression, and more unconventional and challenging expression, in an academic community. It is a response to institutional statements being distortive in their effects, not offensive in their content.

11. Should college and university leaders feel free to share their *personal views*?

Some institutional leaders commit to neutrality, but issue position statements they describe as “personal.” In most cases, this is a distinction without a difference. Campus presidents don’t lose their personal speech rights when they assume the mantle of leadership, but neither can they easily drop that mantle when they choose to speak—especially on social controversies.

12. Should institutional leaders feel free to issue two-part statements, defending values while affirming rights?

Some institutions respond to offensive ideas with a two-part reply that affirms free-expression norms while criticizing the particular message as being vaguely “against our values.” Such statements don’t escape the dangers outlined above. ‘You have a formal right to violate our cherished informal values’ is a strange way to encourage dissent from the majority.

13. Should college and university leaders speak out against bad-faith provocateurs who don’t enrich the academic conversation?

Generally, no. Even if “bad faith” were self-evident, academic norms live in a larger campus culture. Campus battles over “provocateurs” are often a sign that campus culture has already gone wrong. Campus leaders must constantly tend the cultural soil of their campus in the first place, preparing the ground so that the benefits of open inquiry and constructive disagreement can be experienced by all.

14. Can leaders officially acknowledge tragedies?

It's entirely possible to acknowledge a crisis, painful situation, controversy, or conflict without taking a position on it. College or university leaders can share information about resources available, and how, when the time is right, the university will provide opportunities to study and discuss the issue.

15. Should universities make statements acknowledging that a particular population is experiencing fear, mourning, or anxiety as a result of recent events or controversies?

Colleges and universities should feel free to express concern and empathy, and share available resources and practical updates, as long as this practice does not amount to political/social opinion-signaling by other means. The more distant the incident, the less directly relevant to the institution, the fewer community members directly affected, and the more elaborate the statement, the greater the risk that expressing support will be interpreted as taking a side in a controversy. When there has been an obvious tragedy, a college or university community can mourn like any other, but leaders should still allow *individuals* to debate the political, social, or public policy lessons of the event.

APPENDIX 1

Commitments to Statement Neutrality: Excerpts

University of Chicago (*Kalven Report*)

"To perform its mission in the society, a university must sustain an extraordinary environment of freedom of inquiry and maintain an independence from political fashions, passions, and pressures. A university, if it is to be true to its faith in intellectual inquiry, must embrace, be hospitable to, and encourage the widest diversity of views within its own community. It is a community but only for the limited, albeit great, purposes of teaching and research. It is not a club, it is not a trade association, it is not a lobby.

"From time to time instances will arise in which the society, or segments of it, threaten the very mission of the university and its values of free inquiry. In such a crisis, it becomes the obligation of the university as an institution to oppose such measures and actively to defend its interests and its values. There is another context in which questions as to the appropriate role of the university may possibly arise, situations involving university ownership of property, its receipt of funds, its awarding of honors, its membership in other organizations...

"These extraordinary instances apart, there emerges, as we see it, a heavy presumption against the university taking collective action or expressing opinions on the political and social issues of the day, or modifying its corporate activities to foster social or political values, however compelling and appealing they may be. ...

"Our basic conviction is that a great university can perform greatly for the betterment of society. It should not, therefore, permit itself to be diverted from its mission into playing the role of a second-rate political force or influence." ([Full document](#))

University of Wyoming

"...while University leaders will make decisions about matters that further UW's educational mission, they do not, on principle, commit the University in ways that are outside of its core academic purpose. This adherence to impartiality reaffirms the intellectual freedom of all at UW to seek and receive information without restriction and enjoy unfettered access to all expression of ideas through which any side of a question, cause, or movement may be explored." ([Full document](#))

Claremont McKenna College

“Making partisan choices or statements is a fundamental individual right. Citizens are not constrained in voicing opinions or exercising rights to free speech and assembly. Free expression and the rigorous engagement of diverse viewpoints are the bedrock of higher learning. But when colleges and universities take sides, they corrupt the necessary conditions for learning and the role of higher education in supporting democratic principles. Therefore, in order to sustain an environment conducive to the generation and application of knowledge and to safeguard the role of free expression, the President and Vice Presidents of Claremont McKenna College shall not express partisan positions on behalf of the College.” ([Full document](#))

The Ohio State University

“...as an institution, issuing broad public statements on one issue calls into question silence in regard to others. Selecting some tragedies or events and not others can further harm members of our community who are acutely impacted by particular issues by placing the university in the untenable position of determining which issues to speak to while excluding others, which is inconsistent with our Shared Values and does not properly project the care, empathy and value the university has for every member of its community. Further, broad public statements may at best be read as empty words and at worst may position the university politically so as to create an overall environment that, by the university not maintaining its neutrality, stifles academic freedom and freedom of speech and expression. As such, the university will continue to reserve mass distributed, institutional statements for the rarest of circumstances.” ([Full document](#))

University of Texas at Austin

“Does the university ever issue institutional statements that touch on controversial issues? The default position is to not issue statements. Occasionally, the university or its units will want to issue institutional statements on public events such as natural disasters or tragedies, or even on matters of public policy, when authorized.

“Can I advocate for the issuing of a statement? If academic leaders believe an exception is warranted, they should contact the VP, chief marketing & communications officer, who will consult with the president, VP for legal affairs, and other relevant stakeholders to determine whether the situation warrants an institutional statement. When considering an institutional statement, the university typically weighs the following factors (as well as other factors, depending on the situation):

- Does the issue affect our community in unique ways beyond the general impact it has on society? ...
- Does a UT statement add anything to the conversation that isn't already out there? ...
- What precedent does a statement create for future events? ...
- Does a UT statement chill the speech of others within our community? Institutional statements carry significant weight, and issuing a statement means the university is taking a position. We believe our prospective and current students, faculty, and staff cover the full spectrum of beliefs and values. Therefore, the perception that the university adheres to a set view on an issue can contribute to an atmosphere where people with opposing views feel reluctant to speak out. This runs counter to the university's goals of fostering the free exchange of ideas." ([Full document](#))

Signers of the 2023 "Princeton Principles," convened by the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions

"Taking stances on matters extraneous to the operations of the university, including on moral, political, and constitutional or legal questions on which our society is divided, effectively establishes an orthodox view. This divides the campus into 'insiders' and 'outsiders,' hindering further exploration of important issues. In sum: if an academic institution is *not required* to adopt a position in order to fulfill its mission of intellectual freedom or operational capacity, it is *required not* to adopt a position." ([Full document](#))

APPENDIX 2

Selected Institutional Statements: Excerpts

1. University of Chicago Expresses Position on Immigration Policy

“Unnecessary restrictions on the flow of talented scholars and students into the United States damage the University’s capacity to fulfill its highest aspirations in research, education, and impact. This has been an important part of the University’s stance since its inception, and in the past decade we have actively sought to increase the presence on campus of those from around the world. We are committed to articulating the importance of this matter to policy makers, and we are committed to the direct support of those in our own community who may be affected by changes in current immigration policy.”

[Full statement](#) (1/29/17)

2. University of Chicago Declines to Take a Position on Israel-Palestine

“We have received a number of inquiries and objections regarding a statement by the incoming Undergraduate Student Government on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“The subject of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is painful for many, and one that is intensely personal for many members of our community. The University of Chicago does not have an institutional position on international conflicts, in keeping with our longstanding practice against taking positions on social or political issues outside the University’s core mission. This position was developed in accord with the enduring principles articulated in the *Kalven Report*. As outlined in that report, the University’s position preserves the freedom of faculty and students to argue for or against any issue of social or political controversy and thus requires “a heavy presumption against” collective political action by the University itself.

“One important corollary to freedom of expression on campus is that no individual faculty member speaks for the University as a whole.”

[Full statement](#) (6/1/21)

3. After Hamas Attacks, University of Chicago Acknowledges Distress and Explains Available Supports

“The attack, ongoing conflict, and loss of life in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank have brought deep concern and sorrow to the University of Chicago community. Our Office of International Affairs (OIA) has extended support to students affiliated with the region who may be directly affected. We recognize that the loss of life, casualties, and escalating conflict bring pain and distress for those in our community, especially those with family members or other loved ones in the region. ...

“Students can also contact OIA at 773.702.7752 or international-affairs@uchicago.edu if they need any information or assistance. Students can walk into the Student Wellness Center (840 East 59th Street) during open hours (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday) to meet with the clinician on call in Counseling; or they can call 773.702.3625 and speak with a clinician after hours. Visit the [Student Wellness website](#) to learn more about mental health services and for information on how to schedule a counseling appointment. Assistance for faculty and staff is available through Perspectives at 800.456.6327.

“Please contact our offices if you need support or assistance during this difficult time.”

[Full statement](#) (10/9/23)

4. Dartmouth College President Acknowledges Impact of Attacks, Offers Support and Learning Opportunities

“Like many of you, I watched with growing horror the Hamas attack on Israel this weekend, the escalating violence, and the devastating loss of life, especially among civilians. Adding to my deep sorrow over the overwhelming human tragedy playing out in Israel and Gaza are the ways in which the war affects Dartmouth's global community and many of our colleagues, peers, and friends. Dartmouth alums live in the region, scholars work there, and students, staff, and faculty have deep roots in the areas now in danger. I want to extend my concern to each of you at this time.

“We have been working over the weekend and into this week to make sure our community members with ties to the region—both in the U.S. and abroad—are as safe and supported as possible.

"In every conflict, one of the most important roles a university can play is to help us understand it, and to make a space for dialogue and community. As Dean Elizabeth F. Smith and Senior Vice President Shontay Delalue indicated in their message below, shared yesterday with the campus community, Dartmouth faculty and staff experts have organized a series of discussions that can help bring us together and shed light on the situation. These discussions will be held today and Thursday at 5 p.m. and livestreamed for those who cannot attend.

"I encourage you to join these forums... and others that we will plan over time. As we navigate these difficult times, please care for one another and take advantage of the support Dartmouth has to offer, as an institution and a community."

[Full statement](#) (10/10/23)

5. Arizona State University Offers Resources After Attacks and Retaliation

"The recent terrorist attacks by Hamas against the people of Israel and the subsequent retaliatory strikes have understandably caused distress and concern across the globe and in the Arizona State University community.

"The university has reached out to all students from the affected areas to offer support and help. ASU has resources available for members of our community who need support, including those who have family or loved ones in the conflict area. Students can receive help [here](#) or [here](#) and faculty and staff can seek help [here](#).

"The university is committed to a safe and inclusive environment for everyone. Our dedicated staff, security personnel and counselors are available to assist and provide any necessary support.

"It is also important to foster open dialogue and understanding during such challenging times. ASU is a place where diverse opinions and perspectives are valued, and we encourage respectful conversations that promote mutual understanding and empathy."

[Full statement](#) (10/10/23)

6. Stanford University Reaffirms Commitment to Neutrality

“Stanford University as an institution does not take positions on geopolitical issues and news events. This is grounded in a principled belief that the appropriate role of university administrators in relation to geopolitical events is not to take positions or issue statements, but to create an environment in which faculty and students are free to develop and exchange ideas free from institutional orthodoxy. As a general matter, Stanford is unambiguously opposed to all forms of racial, ethnic, or religious hatred. The university encourages respectful discourse and communication across differences, and works to support students of all backgrounds, nationalities, and religions in successfully pursuing their studies and the broader experience of campus life and engagement.”

[Full statement](#) (10/9/23)