Virtual Case Study Competition

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Our Team

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Presentation Overview

1. Situation

2. Issue

3. Campus Context and Policy

4. Limitations to Policy Development

5. Educational Initiatives

6. Crisis Management Plan

7. Assessment

8. Conclusion

Situation

- A Student Organization is looking to host a controversial speaker at the Student Union.
- There were many disruptions and outbursts at the event, which eventually resulted in violence breaking out at the event.
- Police officers were involved and had to disperse the students, however no one was injured.
- The Vice President of Student Affairs is looking for solutions to the dilemmas being faced by the ever changing student body.

Issue

There are a few key issues that need to be addressed and balanced with one another

- Campus Safety and Security Issues

- Freedom of Speech for Students

- Lack of Civil Discourse and learning from one another

Campus Context

University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia

Institution Type: Public

Population: 37,606

Student Demographics:
- American Indian/ Alaskan Native : <1%
- Native American/ Pacific Islander: <1%
- Asian: 9%
- White: 71%
- Black: 7%
- Two or More Races: 4%
- Hispanic: 5%
- International: 2%
- Not Reported: 1%

Current Policies

1. Only publicly accessible areas can be used by members of the university community unless a request is made to the Assistant Dean of Students Office outlining:
   a. The requested location
   b. Date and time of the event
   c. Expected attendance
   d. Brief description of event

2. Expressive activities cannot:
   a. Attract a larger crowd than the location can safely contain
   b. Significantly disrupt university activities
   c. Obstruct entrances or exits to buildings
   d. Obstruct vehicular or pedestrian traffic;
   e. Represent a threat to public safety, according to the discretion of University Police;
   f. Include camping or the use of temporary shelters (e.g., tents) as such activities are prohibited on University property;
   g. Affix items to any permanent structure (fences, the Arch, trees, etc.); or
   h. Light any material on fire provided that hand held candles may be utilized with special permission of the Associate Dean of Students; other open flame devices and bonfires are strictly prohibited.

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Limitations

With the regulations of state and federal Laws, there are a few different limitations that institutions need to face:

- Doe v. University of Michigan (1989)
  - "Statutes punishing speech or conduct solely on the grounds that they are unseemly or offensive are unconstitutionally overbroad"

- UWM Post v. Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin (1991)
  - "The suppression of speech, even where the speech's content appears to have little value and great costs, amounts to governmental thought control"

- Bair v. Shippensburg University (2003)
  - "Regulations that prohibit speech on the basis of listener reaction alone are unconstitutional"

Educational Initiatives

Some educational initiatives that could be adopted to prevent recurrence include:

- Workshops, role-playing events, seminar discussion panels, tabling, and handouts
  - Variety of topics including but not limited to
    - Civil Disobedience and rights of protesters
    - Free Speech
    - The Art of Debating
      - Involving at least one occurence of students taking on a position they personally disagree with (Whether in-person or through a position paper)
    - Managing difficult conversations and listening to dissenting views

- These events can be done numerous times throughout the semester
  - During orientation for incoming and transfer students
  - At student leadership training for organizations
  - Within residence halls as part of programming
  - During first year experience courses or as extra credit for classes
  - Can also be done virtually as webinars for commuter or online students

Educational Initiatives – Collaborators

Collaborators on these initiatives can be composed of a mix of on-campus resources, community partners, and external organizations. Some examples are:

- Campus Debate Team
- Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution Department
- Multicultural Programs and Services Department
- Local chapters of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
- Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE)
- Campus or local police departments
- Faculty and staff
- Student leaders and volunteers

It is always important to review, disseminate, and potentially implement best practices from community partner meetings, organizational meetings, cross-trainings, and conferences.

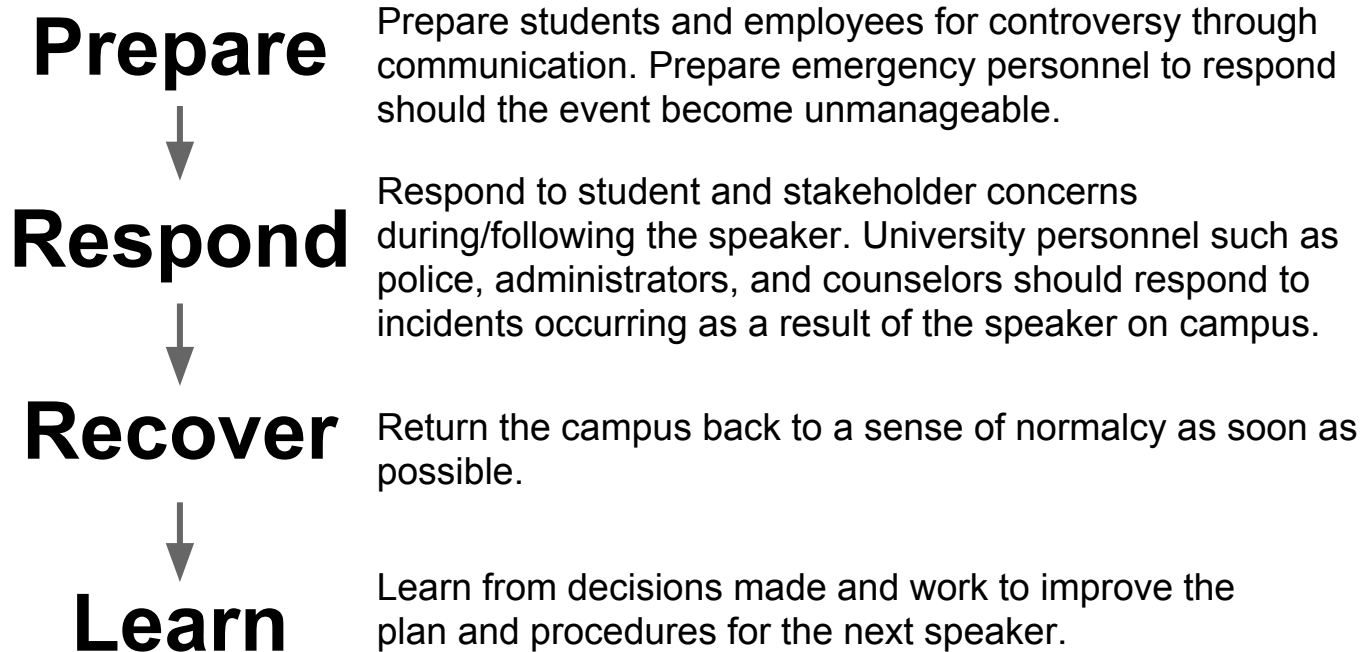# Educational Initiatives – Learning Objectives

With these initiatives in place, the goals are for students to:

- Successfully define and understand civil disobedience

- Explain rights of protesters

- Understand the importance of free speech on college campuses

- Engage in a debate and be able to see things from a differing perspective

- Exhibit emotional intelligence when interacting with those that hold dissenting views

- Spread awareness based on what they have encountered and learned, serving as ambassadors for these initiatives

Crisis Management

The college or university must be able to respond to a potential crisis situation resulting from a controversial speaker. The institution should outline specific policies and procedures regarding communication and the role of university personnel.

Crisis Management Plan

Prepare

Prepare students and employees for controversy through communication. Prepare emergency personnel to respond should the event become unmanageable.

Respond

Respond to student and stakeholder concerns during/following the speaker. University personnel such as police, administrators, and counselors should respond to incidents occurring as a result of the speaker on campus.

Recover

Return the campus back to a sense of normalcy as soon as possible.

Learn

Learn from decisions made and work to improve the plan and procedures for the next speaker.

From Campus Crisis Management by Zdziarski, Dunkel and Rollo

Prepare and Respond

Prepare:
- Communicate the presence of the controversial speaker on campus and communicate resources available students for support to students and stakeholders.
- Staff the event with emergency personnel appropriately.
- Prepare to provide resources for populations specifically affected by the speaker's point of view.

Respond:
- Provide resources during the event such as counselors and related services to support students.
- Enforce the student code of conduct and institution policies.
- Provide police and security proportionate to the size of the event.

Recover and Learn

Recover:
- Communicate to students and stakeholders opportunities to express their opinion on the speaker in a constructive manner.
- Present initiatives to respond to issues that arose as a result of the controversial speaker.
- Reinforce positive behavior such as civil debate and peaceful protest.

Learn:
- Listen to student and stakeholder concerns regarding the event.
- Evaluate the safety of the event.
- Revise management plan based on information received from students and stakeholders.

Assessment

After completing one of these heated events, it would be important to follow up with these groups to ensure that improvements are made:

- Examining through surveys the reception of the event by sending out email from all those who swiped into the event.
- Debrief with Police and Security to talk about any incidents and ways to improve safety protocol at events.
- Have a follow up event to discuss with students in an open forum to allow students to talk about their thoughts and perspectives.
- Communicate with the Moderator ways in which respectful and peaceful dialogue can be maintained at events.
- Do an analysis of each event at the end of the semester to see what was done well and what could be improved.

Conclusion

From this case study, there was a lot to dissect:

- There is an issue of allowing freedom of speech and being able to have civil dialogues

- With tensions rising in particular issues, safety and physical violence become a concern for students now of days.

- Currently there is a lack of Civil Discourse and learning from one another through difficult conversations.

Conclusion

There are three areas in which we hope to move forward with in order to address this situation:

- Educational Initiatives
- Crisis Management Plan
  - Prepare
  - Respond
  - Recover
  - Learn
- Tying into the aspect of Learning is evaluating with **Assessment** as the final aspect of the plan.

By doing this will address the concerns of this issue and hopefully rectify the situation.

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