



TEMIN AND COMPANY

REPUTATION MATTERS

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY

CRISIS WATCHLIST

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Colleges and universities have come under enormous pressure and scrutiny over the past few years due to issues ranging from campus shootings, to violence against women, to divestment, to race relations, to data breaches. And it doesn't appear as if these issues will abate any time soon. In fact, it's likely pressure will continue to mount.

Temin and Company has significant experience with almost every kind of crisis situation in higher education, and we are committed to helping colleges and universities weather the inevitable challenges that come their way.

In order to prepare college and university Presidents, Chancellors, Trustees, and their staffs, we have developed a "College and University Crisis Watchlist" of thirteen of the most volatile issues – both nascent and continuing – on campuses nationwide.

These issues include:

1. CYBERSECURITY

Thirty-five percent of all cybersecurity data breaches occur at colleges and

universities. Last year alone, there were five higher education breaches even larger than the Sony breach. Cyber criminals are using smarter, more sophisticated methods than ever before, and they are targeting higher education institutions at unprecedented levels of frequency and severity.

With their large troves of data – including social security numbers formerly used as ID numbers – stored on relatively open and unsecure networks, colleges, universities and their foundations remain a promising hunting ground for cyber thieves. Institutions will need to evolve rapidly in their crisis planning and response to the ever-changing threats and attacks, and communicate strategically yet transparently to alumni, students, faculty, staff, donors, and the media.

2. STUDENT OCCUPATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

Over the past two years, dozens of college presidents' offices were occupied in student protests, running the gamut from divestment to wage reform to Title IX to racial inequity. This fall, as triggering issues intersect, combine, and recombine, schools should prepare for an even bigger wave of unrest.

Fueled by rising global tensions and mobilized by social media, students are organizing like never before, and they are increasingly embracing a broader, more inclusive model of activism. Moreover, they are aiming their efforts less at the “outside” world than at the world that is closest to them – their own colleges and universities.

Rather than treating acts of civil disobedience as one-off disruptions, the schools that have been most successful at handling such occupations have viewed them as platforms for critical, if uncomfortable and unresolvable, conversations. But each instance is different, and while a school can benefit from the lessons learned by others, each must find its own thoughtful approach. The failure to do so may mean the difference between a peaceful demonstration and a violent one.

3. #BLACKLIVESMATTER AND RACE RELATIONS

In the wake of endless shootings and escalating accusations of police brutality against people of color, Americans are grappling with the deeply divisive issues of race and institutionalized privilege. The discourse is raw, complex, and for many, unnerving. It made its way onto campuses last year, and will surely continue this fall.

From issues of campus security, to racial profiling, to curriculum reform, to unconscious bias, colleges are being asked to examine their own roles in widening social and educational inequalities in the United States. And, as with other social issues, they will be expected to lead the way toward meaningful change.

4. TITLE IX AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual violence is a problem that has increasingly catalyzed the activism of students and drawn the scrutiny of the media and national lawmakers. With more than 150 schools currently under federal investigation for possible violations of Title IX, a new “Dear Colleague” letter released this past April, and the documentary film “The Hunting Ground” scheduled for its global broadcast debut on CNN this fall, the spotlight continues to focus on higher education’s response to sexual assault.

Colleges are continuing to rethink how they prevent, respond to, and adjudicate sexual assault, abuse, and harassment, while legislators around the country are pushing for policy reform. Following a surge of support for redefining consent, California and New York have enacted affirmative consent, or “yes means yes” laws, and other states are expected to soon follow suit.

College leaders will need to continue to navigate a shifting and deeply emotive media, student, and legislative environment.

5. THE GREEK SYSTEM, ALCOHOL, AND ATHLETICS

The role of fraternities and sororities in bringing alcohol on campus and fueling higher incidents of sexual assault has put the Greek system under a new level of scrutiny, with more and more schools openly questioning whether Greek life even has a place in higher education. “In just the spring semester of 2015, 133 fraternity and sorority chapters at 55 U.S. colleges were shut down, suspended, or otherwise punished after alleged offenses including excessive partying, hazing, racism, and sexual assault,” reported *Bloomberg* in June. We should all be prepared for that trend to continue.

Likewise, the discussion has turned to the need to crack down on crimes perpetrated by student-athletes, especially in the area of sexual assault. It has been estimated that one in three college sexual assaults are committed by athletes. The role colleges play in protecting perpetrators, silencing victims, and promoting a culture of impunity is under scrutiny, and everyone from the Big Ten schools to small liberal

arts colleges will need to address this issue with sincerity, wisdom, and courage.

6. BDS/ISRAEL/ANTI-SEMITISM

In a globalized world with deepening international economic, demographic, and academic connections, institutions are grappling with how to manage their relations with some of the most difficult, seemingly intractable conflicts of our time.

The issue of Israel and Palestine is one of the most prominent examples on campus. The global boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement against Israel for their occupation of Palestine has divided the academic community, sparked accusations of anti-Semitism on campus, and ignited a nationwide debate over free speech, hate speech, academic freedom, and the meaning of moral responsibility in higher education. This issue has exploded on some campuses, and has echoed out to their alumni communities. It threatens to go viral in the coming election year, especially as controversy surrounding the Iran nuclear deal continues to intensify.

7. FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT

The fossil fuel divestment campaign has picked up steam in recent months, with more global institutions pledging to purge coal, oil, and/or natural gas investments from their endowment portfolios.

While the majority of college presidents, boards, and Investment Committees say that divestment is nothing more than window dressing, and that it would be better for the environment for their campuses to become carbon neutral physical plants, the fossil-free movement expects this year to top [last year's](#) divestment surge. Higher education institutions should prepare for continuing – and more aggressive – protests from student activists and calls for action from international organizations. The debate surrounding climate change and global warming is contentious, and colleges and universities are firmly in the crosshairs. They will need to be mindful of political as well as pragmatic realities as calls for divestment grow even louder in the year to come.

8. SHOOTINGS

As gun violence multiplies across the United States, every community is at heightened risk. Especially vulnerable

are enclosed spaces with relatively captive audiences – such as movie theaters, schools, and college campuses. Dorms, classrooms, dining halls, and sports facilities are all more dangerous than before. False alarms and skittishness abound, but the possibility of an active shooter is a reality all campuses must consider.

Every campus, and every institution of higher education needs an emergency plan, lockdown drills, an alert security force, and well-tended relationships with local police and FBI. We recommend, as well, a series of tailored tabletop exercises to stress test emergency preparedness.

9. ENDOWMENT TRANSPARENCY AND DIVESTMENT AS POLITICAL STATEMENT

Going beyond fossil fuels, as the call for socially responsible investing in higher education continues to grow, colleges and universities face mounting pressure from student groups to divest from a wide range of controversial industries.

While the campaign has centered for the last few years on the fossil fuel industry and companies doing business with Israel, there is pressure being put to bear on institutions to divest their holdings in private prisons and in corporations that profit through practices

that [displace people](#). Almost every investment is becoming fair game as divestment becomes a political tool.

To that end, students are escalating demands for the transparency of university endowment portfolios, from direct investments to the investments of third-party managed portfolios.

With more than \$400 billion in combined assets at stake, students are using sit-ins, op-eds, and increasingly, lawsuits, to demand control over their university investments. How the inevitable stand-offs between activists and university boards – charged with fiduciary responsibility for the continued growth of their endowment portfolios – play out will be seen over the coming year.

10. LABOR, WAGES, AND STAFF

As some of the country's top employers, colleges and universities are being drawn into the national debate over labor rights and economic inequality.

Movements to raise the minimum wage, close the gender gap, and unionize workers have galvanized student activists, catalyzed protests, and renewed workers' organizations around the country. Employees and student groups at colleges and universities have joined the fray, staging strikes and other nonviolent actions to push for increased

wages, benefits, and better working conditions for college staff, faculty, and student-employees.

Adjunct faculty, who now make up a majority of higher education instructors nationwide, are being recruited to join labor unions and are staging coordinated demonstrations and walkouts. It appears that the public is sympathetic to these efforts, and colleges and universities will need to tread strategically in response.

11. TRANSGENDER AND NON-GENDER CONFORMING STUDENTS

Transgender issues continue to be highly controversial, fueled by recent celebrity news and expanding media coverage of the challenges transgender people face in their personal and professional lives. Colleges and universities need to be prepared to address a number of issues that will arise, both practical and political.

Proposed changes to accommodate the needs of transgender students – including housing, bathrooms, and health services – will be deeply divisive, and schools may experience considerable pushback from students, parents, and alumni as new policies are considered. Moreover, at a moment when the transgender community is experiencing an historic level of visibility

and acceptance, college leaders will be asked to think beyond structural and organizational change to consider the responsibility of higher education in shaping a more inclusive society.

12. TUITION COSTS AND FINANCIAL AID

The rising cost of college, or what President Obama described as a “crisis in terms of college affordability and student debt,” has become a rallying cry for activists and an increasingly important issue for politicians. With several policy proposals already competing on the campaign trail, the \$1.2 trillion outstanding student loan debt is expected to be a hot button issue in the upcoming national elections.

Colleges should prepare for renewed pushback on rising tuition costs, even louder calls for policy reform, or even free education. And there is a growing demand for schools to reduce cost barriers and increase opportunities for low-income students. At the same time, certain segments of the public are becoming increasingly skeptical of the value of a college degree altogether. Making the case for the value of a college degree is an evergreen issue facing both liberal arts colleges and universities alike.

13. PRIVACY, VIRALITY, AND FERPA

For colleges and universities, everything, yet nothing, seems to be private.

On one hand, a new “Dear Colleague” draft letter from the Department of Education, just out on August 18th, addresses the importance of privacy of student records, health records, and mental health records, as mandated by FERPA, and informed by HIPAA. The letter emphasizes the criticality of privacy and informed consent agreements, especially in trauma-related mental health treatment.

On the other hand, ubiquitous video and audio recorders on mobile devices mean that every meeting, even private administrative proceedings and conversations, can be captured electronically and shared broadly over social media, bringing the public into the most private of discussions. Student newspaper articles can also go viral, or straight to *The New York Times*, and services like Yik Yak allow students to say almost anything they want, with no stops, even if it is not true.

Yet, because of FERPA and legitimate student privacy concerns, colleges and universities often cannot respond to false allegations made against them. This creates a highly uneven playing field, where institutions of higher

education are prohibited from countering the allegations made against them by students and other groups that have no such prohibition.

This is a reputational challenge that appears to be ongoing, and will have to be navigated carefully by every institution in the coming year, on a case-by-case basis.

About Temin and Company

Temin and Company Incorporated creates, enhances, and saves reputations.

Temin and Company also markets by leveraging the expertise, ideas and insight of its clients to produce differentiated intellectual capital and content.

The firm helps corporations, professional services firms, and other institutions define and strengthen their public image – and their bottom line – through strategic marketing; branding; media relations; thought leadership; social media; speaker, media and leadership coaching; financial communications; and crisis and reputation management.

Strategists, coaches, writers, and social media experts are available “25/8” to assure that every crisis is addressed, and every opportunity leveraged.

Clients include the CEOs and Boards of some of the world’s largest and most well-known corporations, financial institutions, portfolio companies, pharma and biotech companies, law firms, consulting firms, publishing houses, venture capital and private equity firms, authors, politicians, and colleges and universities.