

# Navigating Conflicts

A Guide for Campus Leaders  
and Public Safety Personnel

Divided Community Project,  
The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law









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This project was supported, in whole or in part, by federal award number 15JCOPS-23-GK-03990-PPSE awarded to The Ohio State University by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. The opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) or contributor(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. References to specific individuals, agencies, companies, products, or services should not be considered an endorsement by the author(s), contributors, or the U.S. Department of Justice. Rather, the references are illustrations to supplement discussion of the issues.

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Recommended citation:

Divided Community Project. 2024. *Navigating Conflicts: A Guide for Campus Leaders and Public Safety Personnel*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.





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# Letter from the Component Head of CRS

As campus communities work to navigate conflicts, the Community Relations Service (CRS) is pleased to join with the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) to present this important resource. CRS is committed to helping academic communities create safe, inclusive, and respectful spaces for all.

For 60 years, CRS has been helping communities address tensions and allegations of discrimination based on race, color and national origin, and striving to prevent and respond to hate incidents. As “America’s Peacemaker,” CRS is on the ground in our nation’s cities, towns, and neighborhoods. Our expertise in conflict resolution and community building is especially vital in academic settings, where students, faculty, and staff with differing perspectives and backgrounds come together. We are proud to support campus communities as they work to navigate conflicts that arise, and to provide guidance during times of heightened protest.

Understanding that campus protests often reflect broader societal issues and tensions, CRS collaborates with campus administrators, student leaders, and local law enforcement to develop strategies that prioritize safety, respect for free expression, and the maintenance of order. We know from experience that it takes dialogue to build the kind of trust that can bring partners together—so that they can develop sustainable solutions that honor the diverse needs of their communities. Because our programs are built around this model, they can be especially helpful in helping college and university campuses deal with conflict.

We hope you find this guide useful. CRS is dedicated to helping college campuses navigate conflicts peacefully and effectively, so that our academic communities can be safe, inclusive, and respectful places for everyone.



Justin Lock  
Chief of Staff Performing the Duties of the Director  
Community Relations Service



# Acknowledgments

This guide was developed in partnership with the Divided Community Project (DCP), housed at The Ohio State University (OSU) Moritz College of Law. This project was supported, in whole or in part, by federal award number 15JCOPS-23-GK-03990-PPSE awarded to The Ohio State University by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Additional support for DCP was provided by OSU's Mershon Center for International Security Studies, the JAMS Foundation, and the AAA-ICDR Foundation. This guide builds upon previous DCP publications: *Key Considerations for College and University Leaders: Preparing the Campus at a Time of National Polarization* (2020), *Key Considerations for College and University Leaders When Conflicts and Divisive Incidents Arise* (2020) and the first, second, and third editions of *Leading a Divided Campus* (2024). You can learn more about DCP at <https://go.osu.edu/dcp>.

The Divided Community Project is grateful to Moritz's Program on Dispute Resolution and the College of Law for their enthusiastic support and to the law enforcement leaders, social scientists, and experts in conflict resolution and campus communications who contributed to the concepts in this guide.





# Introduction

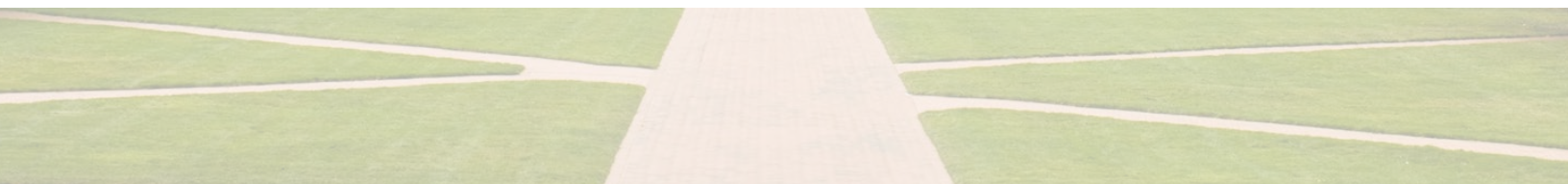
The 2023–2024 academic year was a challenging one for academic, administrative, and law enforcement leaders charged with keeping our college and university campuses safe. Demonstrations on campuses occurred at a level not seen in decades. Campus administrators were called upon to protect freedom of speech and expression while also protecting the people and places entrusted to their care. Campus law enforcement and public safety personnel were tasked with protecting access to public spaces, separating protesters and counterprotesters to avert violence, or both. As leaders responded to conflict, their actions (and the results of those actions) were witnessed and analyzed in real time across countless traditional and social media platforms.

This guide is published not as an analysis of past conflict on campus or an assessment of leadership response but as a framework to help campus leaders and public safety professionals conceptualize conflict and inform decision-making when it does occur.

Importantly, this work does not view conflict in an antagonistic way. Civil discourse is a driving force in societal change and is necessary for communities to progress. The American experience is built on this concept, and college and university campuses have long been at the vanguard of change. Whether in response to political disagreement or frustration with societal institutions, students often seek to push change through demonstration and protest. It is the role of campus leaders to understand the dynamics of these movements and to respond in a way that prioritizes safety and civility for students and for those charged with ensuring that peace and order are maintained. *Navigating Conflicts: A Guide for Campus Leaders and Public Safety Personnel* is one resource that can help leaders meet this obligation.

When conflict intensifies, campus leaders face the need to enhance existing approaches. To build a framework for this enhancement, the guide emphasizes ways campus leaders can do more in four important areas: (1) awareness; (2) communication, including content, trusted messengers, and transmission; (3) support for students and others in the campus community; and (4) coordination, including planning, between campus leaders and law enforcement leaders.

This guide dedicates a chapter to each of these concepts drawing from the experiences of campus leaders past and present to highlight the importance of the ideas and strategies that can be employed. Each chapter wraps up with a brief checklist summarizing key concepts. The final chapter is a Toolkit for Rapid Response to Campus Conflict. Readers will find the key concept checklists from the preceding chapters as well as a simulation scenario and accompanying facilitator’s instructions intended for use as a tabletop exercise. This toolkit can also be used as a standalone resource when time is short. The checklists are designed to be referenced quickly, and the simulation will help leaders to think proactively and critically about conflict and tension.





# 1. Awareness – Knowing Your Campus

By enhancing and expediting awareness, campus leaders develop an understanding of tensions that are present on campus and of those factors that are likely to add to or take away from these tensions. Successful campus leaders know the importance of this awareness, and they regularly take the pulse of their campuses at times both of low and of high tension. In times of higher conflict, campus leaders need a more systematic approach to taking the campus pulse. This intensified approach to awareness helps leaders respond more quickly to students' immediate needs, plan for the likely directions of the expanding conflict, and develop trusting relationships with influential persons for each constituent group. An effective assessment system also builds the foundation for the communications strategy, program development, and incident management planning discussed in chapters 2 through 4.

A documented and practiced assessment protocol allows for information to be gathered, analyzed, transmitted to the right leaders, and acted upon in a way that prioritizes accuracy, thoroughness, empathy, and speed. The framework includes the following:

- Asking a staff group to assess likely conflict scenarios, affected constituent groups, and those influential with them.
- Assigning multiple staff members (from student, academic, government, communications, and alumni affairs, and more) to conduct each of the following tasks:
  - Listen to concerns of each constituent group, perhaps selecting staff who will be trusted by each group, developing responses to identify individual needs, and developing relationships with those whose voice would be trusted by each group during a conflict.
  - Synthesize what the listeners transmit and send the synthesis of each group's concerns, needs, and influencers to those staff and faculty members who need the information in order to respond constructively to the intense conflict.
  - Act on the information through enhanced communications, programming, and coordination.
  - Communicate back to listeners any needs and timeframes to update their listening tasks.





## Why it matters

An assessment protocol enhances the chances that campus leaders will act in the face of heightened conflict in a timely and constructive fashion.

The listeners themselves might be able to respond immediately to individual needs and concerns. They may learn of individual students who are grieving, anxious, fearful, angry, or determined to make a difference immediately. These listeners—particularly those in student affairs—might be able to secure support resources immediately. The same might be true for listeners who learn about a misunderstanding among key constituents in the broader community. These staff—especially those in government or alumni affairs—might immediately convey accurate information.

The systematic approach helps leaders to communicate quickly about a divisive matter, thus building trust, reducing anxiety, reinforcing pertinent campus values, and heading off false narratives. The leader can use the synthesis so that the first statements hit the right tone, extend an appropriate amount of empathy for those affected, assure all involved that campus leaders are at work to keep them safe, help students understand one another, and build trust that the leader understands the severity of the situation and speaks and acts in a ways that exhibits a holistic understanding of the issue at hand. In addition, the listening process can build relationships with those influential with each group, such that these trusted individuals will allow their voices to join with campus leaders in speaking to constituents.

Awareness can help campus leaders identify the programmatic and support services that students and others within their communities might need in response to conflict. Given the systematic approach, some of the new programs could be announced early in the conflict—if not in the initial communications—to support students, take advantage of a learning opportunity, and enhance safety. For example, one dean sent a note to faculty explaining how students had praised a professor who had expressed in class an understanding that the conflicts occurring in society at large might deeply affect some students and offered to talk outside of class to any students who would find that helpful.

An awareness protocol also facilitates early warning that conflict is growing, such that these campus and law enforcement leaders can make an informed projection regarding what might happen. Based on that projection, they could jointly make contingent plans. One campus has a group trained to evaluate such information and then create a plan and engages in a tabletop simulation to test their readiness to implement the plan in a crisis.



## The assessment protocol

The assessment protocol is a formalized way of establishing how necessary information gets in the hands of decision-makers in a timely and accurate way for potential conflict scenarios. The protocol can also help identify a group of influential persons who will assist in distributing messages in ways that will be trusted. To establish a protocol, leaders must first identify for each scenario four important groups: (1) key constituents and those influential with them, (2) listeners, (3) synthesizers, and (4) consumers.

**Key constituents** are those in the community who are likely to be most affected by the conflict. These groups may need to hear specific messaging, receive additional support, or be given opportunities to have their voices heard. A high level of awareness allows leaders to identify key constituents who are not directly linked to the source of conflict, but who nevertheless experience its effects. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service (CRS) demonstrated a high level of awareness supported by their years of working with constituent groups across the country. CRS began working not only with Muslim and Arab communities experiencing backlash from the attacks but also with South Asian and Sikh communities who were targeted solely because they had been mistaken for Muslims.

Campus administrators and public safety leaders are not alone in their desire to maintain safety on campus. Designated **listeners** from among the staff and faculty are often in the best position to gather information. For example, listeners for student groups might come from among those who work closely with students and student organizations, particularly those students and organizations likely to be most affected by sources of conflict. Listeners for alumni might be alumni affairs personnel. Listeners do not work covertly; they simply provide perspectives on campus climate that may not be obvious to those at higher levels of administration. The following Checklist for Listeners was developed by the Divided Community Project at The Ohio State University, Moritz College of Law to assist campuses seeking to develop an assessment protocol.



## #CampusBridge

### Checklist for listeners\*

After a divisive event, campus leadership may want to seek assistance in listening to students and others, reaching out to help them, and gauging reactions. This checklist may be useful to those helping with this assessment. Through an empathic and compassionate conversation, please listen for and report back on the topics listed below. Please take with you a list of campus and community resources that might be helpful to students or follow up with them afterward with these resources.

#### Listen for and make observations about:

For those who personally experienced an incident or conflict:

- Reactions, including feelings
- Intensity of their feelings
- Whether they feel safe
- Whether they feel comfortable continuing to participate in university/college activities
- Any support that we can provide
- What they are seeking
- Comments regarding others who have been affected
- What they wish other community members would understand about the situation
- How they want to be involved, if at all, in developing the university's/college's response to the situation

For those who share an identity group with those who are personally experiencing an incident or conflict:

- The same issues as above, plus: What, if any, ways they connect the current situation to something that happened historically on this campus or elsewhere


For those who are trusted by each portion of the campus:

- What are they hearing in terms of students' emotions, support sought, personal and academic plans, requests for support from the college/university
- What they think will happen next
- Whether they agree with at least some of what the university/college leaders express and will make statements, either publicly or to friends, that reflect that agreement
- If they are willing to speak out also or be quoted by the president on topics of agreement or open to joining with the president in speaking out

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\* DCP, *Checklist for Listeners*.





The role of a **synthesizer** is to quickly develop and transmit a report that accurately summarizes pertinent campus and off-campus dynamics. The basis for the synthesizer's report is the information collected by listeners. This task requires someone with knowledge of the campus, experience in conflict response, and sensitivity to how such a report is used in the decision-making process. The synthesizer might be a trained mediator or former campus administrator. As a routine practice, some leaders might empower a group of people to serve this role if timing allows.

**Decision-makers** will be the consumers of the synthesis and information assessment that was collected and organized. This will include key campus leaders and those whose responsibility it is to carry out the decisions made. For example, a college president may decide (based on the assessment) that it is important to release a statement on ongoing international hostilities. The president may engage public relations professionals, a board of trustees, and the provost in crafting and delivering the statement. All these parties would be consumers in this circumstance. Consumers may even decide that the assessment itself, or at least parts of it, is appropriate to include in the message. The next chapter expounds upon these ideas by exploring how campus leaders can communicate with their communities during times of conflict.

## Checklist 1. Awareness

- **Identify** key constituents in the community that are likely to be affected by the source of conflict and who may need to hear specific messaging, receive additional support, or be given opportunities to have their voices heard.
- **Engage listeners** from among those who work closely with students and student organizations, government and alumni affairs, faculty and staff affairs, and others who can transmit information to the identified synthesizer of the information quickly and accurately, as well as cultivate trusted relationships with affected groups.
- **Designate a synthesizer** with the skill set to analyze and summarize the information provided by listeners, and with an in-depth understanding of campus dynamics.
- **Distribute the summary** to key decision-makers and those whose responsibility it is to carry out the decisions made.
- **Renew the listening process** in anticipation of changing campus dynamics, augment identification of the groups listed in the section on the assessment protocol, and re-ignite it in a rapidly developing situation as needed.



## 2. Communication – Sending the Right Message


Communication to the campus and broader community is essential in the face of conflict. When tensions are high, campus stakeholders will intuitively look to campus leaders to communicate with urgency and consistency. Maintaining awareness of the campus climate and staying informed about off-campus events that might affect those on campus help inform a leader's communication strategy. When leaders communicate, what they communicate, how they communicate and what means they use to transmit the communication are all important factors in determining how their message will be received by the intended recipients.

### Why it matters

A well-crafted message from a trusted source can calm anxieties, display empathy, promote understanding, reinforce norms of humane treatment, and defuse false narratives. When facing uncertainty, people take comfort in hearing that someone they trust understands their concerns and has their well-being in mind. At a time when one in five students fears for their personal safety because of their views on violence in the Middle East, and many others express concerns that those views will lead to academic discrimination and loss of professional opportunities,<sup>1</sup> a message from campus leadership can be encouraging—even if that message does not take a stand in the underlying conflict.

Campus leaders may also choose to communicate in a way that takes a stand against those things that go against institutional values. In the case of hate speech, not providing a strong and timely condemnation could be seen as legitimizing or normalizing the speech, which research has indicated increases the chances of violence.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Pape, *Understanding Campus Fears*, 6; Weissman, "Jewish, Muslim Students Fear."
  2. Argo et al., *Building U.S. Resilience*, 9, 12.



A potential standard for judging when to condemn an incident or speech perceived by some to be hateful or motivated by bias might be found in a November 2023 “Dear Colleague” letter from the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR):

“Harassing conduct can be **verbal or physical** and need not be directed at a particular individual. OCR interprets Title VI to mean that the following type of harassment creates a hostile environment: **unwelcome conduct based on shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics** that, based on the totality of circumstances, is **subjectively and objectively offensive** and is so severe or pervasive that it **limits or denies a person’s ability to participate in or benefit from the recipient’s education program or activity**. Schools must take immediate and effective action to respond to harassment that creates a hostile environment.”<sup>3</sup>

The standard presented—subjectively and objectively offensive plus so severe or pervasive that it adversely affects students’ ability to participate in or benefit from their educational program—represents a mandatory floor for engagement by leaders at those colleges and universities that are public or receive federal funding and are thus bound by Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964. And it represents a useful framework for other institutions facing similar conflicts.

Even if the speech or behaviors were protected by the First Amendment, that does not obviate the need to respond—in a manner consistent with the First Amendment—if these standards are met. According to a later “Dear Colleague” letter from OCR, speaking out may be a way for a university or college to respond to “promptly and effectively [take] steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, eliminate its effects, and prevent it from recurring.”<sup>4</sup>


## When to communicate

Communication between campus leadership and their constituencies should be an ongoing and iterative process that involves a well-researched and well-exercised communication plan. A communication plan developed in advance of conflict allows leaders to make important decisions quickly and confidently when conflict emerges.<sup>5</sup> When conflict does arise, either on or off campus, in a way that significantly affects students, the question of if and when to comment is a complicated one.

Communicating quickly can demonstrate to students and others that leaders understand the sense of urgency around a matter and can inform stakeholders of important facts before false narratives take hold. Some leaders hesitate to issue any statement when students disagree with one another over a conflict in the wider society. They fear that a statement will spur further

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3. Office for Civil Rights, *Discrimination, Including Harassment* (emphasis added).
  4. Office for Civil Rights, *Protecting Students from Discrimination, Such As Harassment*.
  5. Pal et al., *Strategic Communications for Law Enforcement Executives*, 43, 47.





controversy focused on every word expressed or not. Still other leaders believe that it is worse to say nothing because silence in the face of controversy communicates that they are indifferent to their students.


## What to communicate

Just as important as when to communicate is what to communicate. One strategy for communicating thoughtfully around conflict is the use of a messaging template designed specifically for communicating quickly and clearly when tension is high. Such a template should be customizable to the situation and the institution.

Consider the following questions as a first step for crafting a messaging template:

- What has happened (keeping in mind details of interest to the campus)?
- What is the harm caused (reflecting the students whose feelings were most affected and helping other students understand their feelings)?
- What campus values are implicated or violated?
- What tone is appropriate (changing from the usual formal tone to a more personal tone can communicate that this is not “business as usual”)?
- Who has been consulted (the awareness protocol can help to show that leadership is listening to people with similar values or viewpoints)?
- What decisions have been made?
- What is being done to keep students safe and comfortable in attending class and campus activities?
- What agency does the receiver of the message have?
- What values will govern future decisions about this matter?
- Who will be consulted as decisions are made?
- What can be done to address the greater conflict beyond this one incident (recognizing that a demand may indicate a deeper underlying interest)?

The decision on whether to weigh in on off-campus conflicts that divide campus communities bears special consideration. Campus leaders are responsive to students, parents, faculty, staff, trustees, alumni, donors, and the greater community to which they belong. Committing the institution to a political position is sure to be applauded by some and denounced by others. Students react with more anger if campus leaders weigh in on other such off-campus issues and then refuse to take a position on the current one; a consistent response to such requests may be better received.



Another issue may be whether to reflect student demands in the leaders' statement. It may be worth mentioning demands if the statement can explain the response in a way that most students understand that situation. Otherwise, a useful approach can be to mention the interests and concerns rather than the demands.

Another issue might be what to do when legally protected speech by activists is in fact disturbing or frightening to members of the campus community. It sometimes helps for campus leaders to exercise their own right to speak about how that protected speech violates campus values and announce measures to protect and support those negatively affected.

## How to communicate

The section on “When to communicate” discusses the advantages of a quick response, but the reality of what a “quick” response is changes rapidly with advances in communication technology. Emails often go unheeded by students who prefer instantaneous and individualized forms of communication. One-third of young adults (ages 18 to 29) report using the video sharing platform TikTok as a primary news source,<sup>6</sup> and virtually all of us are exposed to social media algorithms that drive content our way—sometimes regardless of accuracy or context. Deliberately divisive messages sent across a variety of platforms are made to appear local and personalized when in fact they are generated by algorithms or artificial intelligence with no connection to the affected campus and community.<sup>7</sup> Ideas for breaking through include releasing to news media photos of unifying events, such as vigils or respectful dialogues among those representing both sides in a conflict.

Another communication strategy is the use of trusted messengers to amplify and support a leader's message. A trusted messenger represents an identity or viewpoint shared by intended message recipients. Listeners, as described in chapter 1 on awareness, may be trusted messengers for segments of the community or they may have a good understanding of who these messengers are.

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6. Matsa, “More Americans Are Getting News on TikTok.”

7. Treyger, Cheravitch, and Cohen, *Russian Disinformation Efforts on Social Media*, 104; Frenkel and Myers, “Antisemitic and Anti-Muslim Hate Speech.”



## Checklist 2. Communication

- **Campus leaders should communicate consistently and with urgency** when conflict arises.
- **Communications taking a stand on perceived hate speech**, or incidents motivated by bias should be consistent with a pre-established standard of behavior that has been developed in consultation with legal authorities and other campus leaders.
- **The decision to weigh in (or to decline to weigh in) on off-campus** conflicts that divide campus communities is one that should be considered carefully.
- **A messaging template can be designed specifically for communicating quickly and clearly** when tension is high.
- **Important messaging on conflict should use a personal, authentic voice** rather than the more formal, passive language of more routine communication.
- **Imagery can send a powerful message**, particularly when written communication seems to get lost in the information fog.
- **Trusted messengers** can amplify and support a leader's message.





## 3. Support – Providing What Students Need

Supporting students during campus conflict includes addressing fears about personal safety, offering emotional support, expanding learning opportunities and opportunities to make a difference, emphasizing campus community values, communicating clear limits, and problem-solving about concerns raised.

### Why it matters

Divisions that deeply affect students call for far more extensive programming to support them than superficial conflicts or even serious individual difficulties might require; that support is key to ensuring that they can still prosper in their studies. Simply stating “here are our counseling and inclusion resources and how to contact campus police” in response to a student’s expression of frustration or fear will be insufficient in the modern campus dynamic.

On the positive side, leaders can take advantage of students’ intense interests in a conflict to help them learn skills and gain understanding. If the conflict is among students, leaders can encourage activities that bring students together across their differences, thereby countering a tendency to isolate by viewpoint or develop a view of those who disagree as the “other.”

Students confronting a divisive situation may want to provide humanitarian assistance, to advocate for a change in policy, to gain attention for a cause, or to help friends who are anxious. If they want to “do something,” taking to the streets may constitute visible, public action to advance their goals, but it may also, in part, reflect frustration that they can do nothing else to help.

Community members may join student protests and demonstrations on campus. The changed dynamics and tools to address such mixed protests are discussed in chapter 4. We note here that some of the campus programmatic ideas, particularly communications about campus community values and the legal limits for demonstrations, might be adapted for the community as a whole.



## Safety

Combating campus community members' fear of being targeted for actual or perceived religion or national origin, including heritage, shared ancestry, or ethnic characteristics, is a high priority for campus leaders. It also *must* be a priority for public universities and colleges and those institutions receiving federal funds.<sup>8</sup> Anxiety—a natural consequence of fear—can be addressed in a variety of ways:


- Early and constant messaging by trusted campus leaders can be reassuring and calming, particularly if followed by on-going updates on any incidents posing a threat.
- Frequent messaging to parents of students, their professors, students' faith leaders, and others they trust about the status of students' safety can inform these persons who care about students. They will then be in a better position to help support students.
- Warning ahead of time of possible scenarios and plans for managing them can reduce anxiety. For example, one university posted a warning and yet reassuring note on the information page for students and others coming to commencement in June 2024. The university told them that there might be minor disruptions that would be approached with tolerance, yet they were well prepared to protect against significant disruptions, protect safety and respond to event-stopping actions.

Realistic fears might be addressed through both campus and law enforcement efforts, or collaboration. Some ideas include the following:

- Provide alternative routes of travel for people not involved with the demonstration to be able to avoid confrontation with demonstrators.
- Guard symbols of a targeted group, such as frequent gathering places for that identity group.
- Temporarily limit access to classroom buildings, dorms, student unions and gyms, and campus events to those with campus identification. It is important that such a policy be enforced consistently, such that students from certain identity groups are not targeted to show identification while others are not.
- Create information sites, such as one which provides campus and neighborhood maps and enables students to join virtual "friend walks" to support safe travel on or near campus.

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8. Office for Civil Rights, *Protecting Students from Discrimination*.

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- Arrange a phone chain, chat group, or closed online site among members of an affinity group. Members can use it to inform one another of threats that might be a reason to stay in rooms and apartments, avoid particular areas, or seek an escort at particular times. The CRS helped to organize a phone chain to provide security to Asian American elders who were frequently targets of hate events in community settings during the hate spike that occurred at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students already familiar with that effort readily incorporated the system through various identity organizations on campuses.
  - Give students an opportunity to help plan an event as an alternative or a more effective and safe way to express their viewpoints.

## Support

When a conflict adversely affects a large number of students, support needs to occur on a broader scale. Depending on students' needs, campus leaders' ideas that could be expanded to reach thousands of students have included the following:

- **Events** that have the capacity to share sadness and comfort to each other across fault lines within the student body and with university leadership, faculty, staff, and faith leaders.
- Encouraging **faculty support** for students.
- Encouraging faculty to **develop their own skills** to facilitate difficult conversations.
- **Structured conversations across differences** to facilitate an empathic and nonjudgmental group process.
- **Students supporting friends.** The DCP worked with a group of law students studying negotiation to create a relatable checklist, set out in the box on page 16, which offers ideas for extending support to friends while avoiding difficult conversations.<sup>9</sup> To help students imagine themselves using the checklist, the DCP also made a five-minute video of a student using this checklist as she went about her day; this video is available for instructional purposes through DCP's director.<sup>10</sup>

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9. DCP, *Extending Support*.

10. To obtain access to the videotapes, email DCP Director Bill Froehlich at [Froehlich.28@osu.edu](mailto:Froehlich.28@osu.edu) or consult the DCP website for another staff member, <https://go.osu.edu/dcp>.





## #CampusBridge

### **Extending support to other students during divisive events: a few ideas\***

Tragic events affect us deeply, yet unevenly. Whether it is a brief interaction in a class or student club meeting or when passing one another in the hallway, you can reach out to support a friend – even when your views differ from theirs.

**Here are some ideas to show support in brief one-on-one talks.**

- *Think before you talk and then talk like a real person.* Remind yourself that the purpose for reaching out is to show support and empathy.
- *Be genuine when connecting with other students.* Let them know you value them as a person. There are no magic words; just be yourself when you reach out to check in. Acknowledge the situation and be supportive. (“I know there’s lots going on. It’s tough watching the news. How are you doing?”)
- *Show that you hear them without judging or entering into an argument.* (“I think I hear not only your sadness and concerns about the thousands of innocent lives lost but also apprehension about what happens next.” “So, with your connections to the region, you are feeling this with even more depth and urgency.”) If they try to persuade you to agree with their position, let them know that you’re focused on being a friend. (“There are some important arguments going on, but mostly I’m wondering how you’re doing in the midst of this mess?”)
- *If they are grieving a personal loss, express empathy.* (“How are you feeling?” “Losing a loved one is unimaginable. I am sorry for your loss. I am here if you want to talk.”) Sometimes you can let them know you care by just sitting with them for a while without saying anything.
- *If they express concern about their safety or well-being,* offer to help locate and make an appointment with safety resources, counselors, those who will help them report, or other professionals on campus. You might ask about their confidence or trust in available resources.
- *Think about ways to conclude the conversation.* Try to end on a positive note. Allow them to preserve self-esteem and leave them with the sense that you value them and want to be supportive in a difficult time. End the conversation after checking in, or, regrettably, if the discussion turns argumentative. (“Let’s stay in touch.” “Thanks for talking. This is a tough time.”)
- *Reaching out matters even if they are not interested.* The other person may not want to talk now, or at all. Respect their answer if they are not interested. (“I understand. If you want to talk later, let me know.”)

*This checklist is designed for a student reaching out to another student. It might be useful for faculty and staff reaching out to support each other as well.*

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\* DCP, *Extending Support to Other Students.*



## Learning opportunities that span differences

Even when students are struggling to listen to opposing views or discuss matters respectfully with one another about the conflict then brewing, this may be a teaching moment for strengthening skills that students could use immediately and that would help them in the long-term; skills courses might address difficult conversations, conflict on social media, facilitating potentially contentious meetings, engaging polarized groups, and holding deliberative dialogue on policy issues. Students may also be interested in more theoretical courses during a conflict, such as constitutional freedoms of expression or civil rights laws on harassment.

Augmenting credit opportunities with non-credit learning opportunities will help to scale up student involvement in learning, as well as bring isolated students into discussions with each other. Illustrations include the following:


- Shortened versions of the credit-bearing courses that could be offered during new student orientation or through residence hall counselors
- Presentations or interactive exercises where campus law enforcement officials discuss and role play their responsibility to balance safety and first amendment rights
- Panel discussions related to the pending conflict that include panelists who express differing views
- “Events marshals” training in conflict areas, an initiative developed by the CRS, in which pairs representing both sides in a conflict learn to use their differences to strengthen their effectiveness in de-escalating potentially violent situations at demonstrations and elsewhere<sup>11</sup>
- De-escalation training and bystander intervention guidance (the Bridging Divides Initiative at Princeton University provides a state-by-state guide to those offering de-escalation and bystander training)<sup>12</sup>
- Use of a free, online course for students who want to learn the basics of conducting productive dialogue on policy issues<sup>13</sup>

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11. CRS, “Event Marshals.”

12. Bridging Divides Initiative, “Elevating De-Escalation and Community Safety Approaches.”

13. Center for Ethics and Human Values, “Free Online Course on the 4Cs.”

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- Inviting student organizations, such as BridgeUSA, to help campus chapter members learn how to promote dialogue across differences and use storytelling to exchange with one another the formative experiences in their lives<sup>14</sup>
  - Offering to teach a short workshop on such topics as facilitating group dialogue, basic mediation techniques, dealing with difficult colleagues, having hard conversations, collaborative problem solving, active listening, de-escalating tense situations, or as one campus's ombuds office does, offering "two-minute tips" (checklists and phrases that might help on a number of these topics)<sup>15</sup>

## Opportunities to make a difference

**Involving students in existing efforts** currently involving only faculty and staff, such as the awareness protocol referenced in chapter 1, the program planning in this chapter, or an app that enhances safety for students.

**Seizing opportunities**, such as students offering to walk concerned students to class or to help clean graffiti or restore damage to a building, are even more meaningful if university administrators or law enforcement join them.

## Community resiliency

**Cultivating** students' pride in the ability to have respectful and peaceful disagreement can be done through congratulatory messages to the campus from leaders who recount recent moments when students did that, even in the face of a campus conflict. Another approach is to articulate or rearticulate university values in new ways, as one college did when it charged a committee of faculty, staff, and students to draft a statement of mission that fit that university, was a shared aspiration, and included engaging a variety of viewpoints and embracing diverse cultures and identities.

## Publicity for laws and rules and problem-solving


Both campus leaders and community law enforcement can publicize the campus rules and legal limits for both students and community members who join students on campus. Involving students in problem-solving or mediation can help them understand what is feasible and how to work with campus leaders. Engaging a trusted mediator or a CRS conciliator, who is experienced in dealing with community-wide conflict, may help students learn a problem-solving approach as the mediator also helps them resolve their differences. These mediators are skilled in taking the initiative to talk with people who might have refused to talk with others. They can expand the resources for staying in touch with various interested groups. They can shuttle among constituencies when those in conflict are unwilling to meet face to face. Mediators are accustomed

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14. Ball, "Far from the Protests."

15. Kenyon, "Self-Help Tools."





to getting to the heart of the problem and turning the conversation to solutions going forward. They can typically decipher who should be involved to achieve resolution. They can often find consensus on how to manage a conflict safely even when people are not ready to resolve the basic conflict.

### Checklist 3. Support

- **Safety.** Create a website dashboard for those who want to keep track of incidents on or near campus; facilitate phone or protected online networks among students who are fearful; organize escorts and buddy systems.
- **Support.** Make suggestions to faculty, staff (including counseling staff), residence hall counselors, student leaders, faith leaders, parents of students, community groups, and the students themselves on how they might reach out to extend support to students and one another; organize vigils when students are mourning and ways to express their anger or concerns.
- **Learning opportunities that span differences.** Expand options that engage students across campus divisions as they learn, including facilitated dialogues—sometimes about issues other than those that are dividing the campus—to model these skills and draw students out of isolation produced by divisions and short courses or workshops on difficult conversations or promoting dialogue during protests. Arrange these so that they can be layered onto a student’s existing course schedule.
- **Opportunities to make a difference.** Based on students’ goals, organize options for preparing humanitarian aid or serving affected communities; participate in campus de-escalation teams; get their viewpoints out through podcasts and other means; and identify community groups offering student opportunities.
- **Community resiliency.** Deepen the assessment teams (chapter 1) so that students see quick responses to their concerns and goals; articulate and model a campus spirit (joint aspirations and values) that resonates as unique to your campus, crosses lines of division, and provides a reason to treat others well, even if they share different views.
- **Publicity for rules and laws.** Enhance publicity (beyond a website) to help students understand what they and other students are permitted to do under the law and student codes, what they are not, and the range of consequences for violations; let them know the range of places to report concerns and opportunities for support if they have been victims (discussed in chapter 4).
- **Problem solving.** Consult with a mediator or CRS conciliator when divisive issues are threatened, with an eye to preparing for or beginning problem-solving conversations with or among those on different sides of the divides and engaging with students who are unwilling to talk with staff in the assessment team (chapter 1).



# 4. Coordination between Campus and Law Enforcement Leadership – Partnerships and Planning

The four components—awareness, communication, support, and coordination—should not be viewed in sequential order but rather matrixed or interwoven. This interdependency is particularly relevant to this chapter on coordination between campus and law enforcement leaders. Though situated fourth in the guide, the important work of planning and building partnerships must begin early, and it does not end. Coordination is essential to developing awareness, communicating effectively, and providing appropriate support. Collaborative planning between campus leadership, campus and community law enforcement leadership, and other partners is critical to a campus community’s ability to prevent conflict from becoming violent and to recover from a divisive event that has damaged the bonds of trust on campus.

This section will address coordination for mass demonstrations. The purpose of this section is to provide a checklist for campus leaders to reference when partnering with law enforcement in anticipation of or response to conflict.


## Why it matters

Mass demonstrations can be difficult to plan for and pose unique challenges for campus leaders. One such challenge is how widespread these events can become. Another is the speed at which these events can escalate.

With planning, campus and public safety leaders can prepare together for multiple types of scenarios, practice engaging with different crowd dynamics, and document courses of action to facilitate effective decision making when tensions run high. Coordinating with partners helps each partner to understand the capabilities and limitations of the other, improves trust and communication, and facilitates information sharing.

## University planning with law enforcement

This guide is not intended as a comprehensive manual for law enforcement and campus public safety departments on responding to mass demonstrations. Many resources exist on these topics, and where possible we reference those in the list that follows. Some may find it useful to use this lists to build an agenda for an initial meeting with partners or to frame operational and strategic plans for sustainable work together. If used in either of these ways, users should consider customizing the list to their campus’s and partnership’s needs.



## Priorities for joint campus–law enforcement planning for mass demonstrations

1. **Plan for likely crowd scenarios including contingencies where case dynamics change quickly.** As soon as it is known that a demonstration is planned on campus, leaders should begin the process of assessment. Important information includes anticipated crowd size, who the organizers are and their goals, location of the demonstration, likeliness and intent of counterprotesters or outside agitators, and the possibility of any high-profile attendees. Information on external factors should be considered as well. These factors might include projected weather conditions, other major events planned in the area, significant traffic or construction work that may affect transportation to the site or the site itself, or political happenings at a national or local level that may quickly influence the emotions and actions of demonstration participants.

### Relevant resource

In 2022, the COPS Office and the National Policing Institute published *21st Century Protest Response: Promoting Democracy and Advancing Community and Officer Safety*.  
<https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-p459>.

2. **Reach out to event organizers and influencers, coordinating with them and sharing information when appropriate.** This is an opportunity to set a collaborative tone in the relationship with event organizers and student leaders. During this engagement campus leaders should express a commitment to safeguarding the lawful exercise of First Amendment rights.<sup>16</sup> Reaching out represents an opportunity to express a commitment to keeping all stakeholders safe, preventing criminal activity, and strongly opposing bias-motivated behavior.

Campus personnel can provide organizers with key contact points for the university and public safety responders, and a cadence of regular check-ins should be encouraged. If applicable, permitting procedures should be explained as well as clear indicators of what behaviors will be permitted and what behaviors will be prohibited. While tactical planning information will not be shared, organizers should be told in general terms, under what circumstances they can expect engagement from law enforcement and under what circumstances that engagement might escalate. If organizers express a goal of civil disobedience resulting in arrest, law enforcement leaders should explain elements of their response that might lessen the potential for escalation and violence.

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16. DCP, *Tools for Building Trust*, 15–16; IACP, *Crowd Management*, 3.





## Relevant resources

The DOJ CRS Event Marshals: Maintaining Safety During Public Events training provides participants with best practices and key information they need to know to perform their marshaling duties successfully and help maintain public safety during community events:

<https://www.justice.gov/crs/our-work/training/event-marshals>.

The DOJ CRS Reducing Risk During Public Events: Contingency Planning training provides best practices and tools to help law enforcement, government officials, event organizers, and community volunteers plan safe demonstrations, rallies, or other public events:

<https://www.justice.gov/crs/our-work/training/reducing-risk-during-public-events>.

The DOJ CRS Facilitating Meetings Around Community Conflict (FMACC) program is designed to educate community leaders in the fundamentals of facilitating meetings where community tension requires difficult conversations:

<https://www.justice.gov/crs/our-work/training/facilitating-meetings-around-community-conflict>.


- 3. Review policies and mutual aid agreements that will be tested during a mass demonstration event.** An important part of the planning process is the development and maintenance of institutional policies that are current and actionable.

For campus leaders, predicting potential mass demonstration scenarios enables them to modify policies in advance. That, in turn, allows time to follow regular campus policy decision-making processes and averts a potential claim that policies were adopted because of administration bias against a particular cause. Campus policies can address the use of campus property and resources, permitting for large gatherings, access to campus for outsiders, and opportunities for students to engage in regular dialogue with campus leaders.

This same principle applies to campus public safety and law enforcement agencies who will have policies specific to their operations. The topics of these policies will include use of force or response to resistance, mass demonstration response, arrest procedures, incident command, communications, media relations, and working with other law enforcement agencies.

For campus leaders with the responsibility for determining whether to authorize or request law enforcement action, it is important for campus administrators to understand law enforcement policies. In turn, law enforcement leaders can act more effectively if they understand campus policies.

For public safety agencies, mutual aid agreements establish the authority and procedures for one law enforcement agency to assist another agency with operations in the requesting agency's jurisdiction. This might include a situation where two agencies have jurisdiction but one is recognized as the primary responding agency (such as a campus agency and the host community's municipal agency or a municipal agency and a state agency), or a situation where the co-responding agency does not normally have



jurisdiction for the response but the agreement grants jurisdiction under specified circumstances (such as one municipal or campus agency responding to a different municipality or campus). Each scenario involves interaction between law enforcement and a community that are unfamiliar to each other. Whenever possible, the requesting or host agency (ideally a campus public safety agency familiar to the community) should serve as the primary points of contact. These personnel are familiar with the community, are accountable to the community, and are embedded in the organizational structure of campus leadership.

Preparing and exercising policies and mutual aid agreements is critical to operational success. Federal and state laws governing law enforcement use of force and citizen engagement are rapidly evolving; out of date policies jeopardize the ability of public safety personnel to make appropriate decisions. Mutual aid—without intentional and collaborative planning—may be ineffective or inefficient when needed.


### Relevant resources

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Policy Center offers model policies for law enforcement agencies on a variety of topics. This resource can be accessed only by IACP members.  
<https://www.theiacp.org/policycenter>.

Many state chiefs of police or sheriffs' organizations share model policies for their agencies that are specific to the nuances of each state.

4. **Publicize permitted and prohibited behavior including what responses can be expected if prohibited behavior is exhibited.** This notification should be made well in advance of demonstrations and remain available for the duration. Any change should be publicized using the same sources as the original notifications and any additional sources determined to be likely to reach demonstrators quickly. Demonstrators, especially students, may be attending their first event of this type and thus may not appreciate the parameters and potential consequences of violating event guidelines. Official notice from campus leaders should anticipate this and be explicit in the language used. Students will probably not proactively search for rules on a website, so it is important to take advantage of multiple means of communication to spread these messages. Law enforcement can help to publicize these notifications to community members who may join the campus protests.
5. **Establish an Emergency Operations Center to coordinate with partners during the event.** Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) allow those leaders who will be making key strategic decisions about the institutional, governmental, and law enforcement response to a demonstration to co-locate (although virtual options are now available) and discuss issues in real time.

“An EOC is a central command and control system responsible for carrying out the principles of emergency preparedness and emergency management, or disaster management at a strategic level during an emergency, and ensuring the continuity of operation of a company,



political subdivision, or other organization. An EOC is a location from which leaders of a jurisdiction or organization coordinate information and resources to support incident management activities (on-scene operations). EOC team structure and composition can vary widely.

“Primary functions of staff in EOCs, whether virtual or physical, include:

- Collecting, analyzing and sharing information;
- Supporting resource needs and requests, including allocation and tracking;
- Coordinating plans and determining current and future needs; and
- In some cases, providing coordination and policy direction.”<sup>17</sup>

Staff in the EOC are distinct from the Incident Commander (IC), who is usually on scene and making operational (as opposed to strategic) decisions. Campus leaders are strongly encouraged to make sure that all public safety personnel and administrators in key functional positions are trained in the tenets of National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS). Information on these resources can be found in the “Relevant resources” note following this item.

EOCs can reduce the potential of escalation and violence by making sure that all components supporting the response to mass demonstration are communicating and making joint decisions. By establishing an EOC, campus leaders bring together voices that would not normally be involved in the strategic decision-making process in order to identify potential problems and develop solutions. For example, law enforcement might identify the presence of full trash dumpsters as a potential fire hazard as night begins to fall on a large protest. A Director of Facilities, if present in the EOC, might be the best person to identify a fast solution, thereby eliminating a safety hazard. Or leaders might get information that a large group of students of one faith are planning to confront a group that is demonstrating in opposition to their faith’s beliefs. An administrator from a campus faith center or similar entity might be able to quickly identify an appropriate mediator and avoid a violent confrontation.

Several universities have already created a campus EOC for planning and operational decision-making. Members are trained and include both leaders from across campus and those from law enforcement.


### **Relevant resource**

The Emergency Management Institute of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency provides training for first responders, emergency managers, and others on the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS). <https://training.fema.gov/emi.aspx>.

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17. FEMA, *Emergency Operations Center How-to*, 2



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6. **Manage counterprotests in a way that minimizes the potential for violence and demonstrates equal treatment.** Because demonstrations often begin as a way to speak out against a perceived injustice, it is natural to think that others in society will hold beliefs identifying with the protested view. Campus leaders should expect counterprotesters and work with law enforcement to keep the groups separated to an extent that the potential for violence is minimized. Consider how campus leadership and law enforcement will respond to demonstrators in a uniform, balanced manner that does not discriminate based on viewpoint. Some tactics might include designating separate, equivalent spaces for the groups, relative to the size of the group and have similar orientation towards media and campus leadership exposure. This way neither group feels that their voice was subjugated to the other.

### Relevant resource

In 2022, the COPS Office and the National Policing Institute published *21st Century Protest Response: Promoting Democracy and Advancing Community and Officer Safety*:

<https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-p459>.

7. **Practice dialogue, de-escalation, and discretion when possible.** When arrest is necessary, give warning when feasible and anticipate crowd reactions. Campus leaders are encouraged to have direct and candid conversations with law enforcement leaders about alternatives to arrest, when possible, but also about understanding the circumstances for which arrest is the safest response for all concerned.

Discretion in the use of force and arrest is central to modern law enforcement training and policy development.<sup>18</sup> De-escalation is an effective discretionary tool for law enforcement decision-making. Although research on de-escalation training for law enforcement is still developing, early studies have found promising results indicating that departments that train their officers in de-escalation realize fewer incidents of use of force, fewer civilian injuries, and fewer officer injuries.<sup>19</sup>

*“De-escalation means taking action or communicating verbally or non-verbally during a potential force encounter in an attempt to stabilize the situation and reduce the immediacy of the threat so that more time, options, and resources can be called upon to resolve the situation without the use of force or with a reduction in the force necessary.”*<sup>20</sup>


While de-escalation strategies are associated with ways to “lower the temperature” when emotions are high, dialogue seeks to engage in collaborative problem-solving. Dialogue can take place between campus and demonstration leaders seeking to resolve key differences or at a more personal level between public safety personnel and protesters or

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18. IACP, *National Consensus Policy and Discussion Paper on Use of Force*.

19. Engel et al, “Assessing the Impact of De-Escalation Training.”

20. Law Enforcement De-Escalation Training Act of 2022.



counterprotesters.<sup>21</sup> Examples of this dialogue would be a campus law enforcement officer dissuading a group of marchers from following a route that might put them in contact with an adversarial group or a security officer explaining to students why a particular building is closed because of protest disruption and working with them to find alternative means of reaching where they need to be. Some law enforcement agencies deploy specially trained teams of officers to engage in this type of solution-focused dialogue: Police in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina, engage demonstrators with a Constructive Conversation Team,<sup>22</sup> while Columbus, Ohio, has a Police Dialogue Team.<sup>23</sup>

By assessing each crowd and applying these principles to mass demonstration scenarios, public safety personnel aim to avoid escalating both at the individual level and with respect to crowd dynamics.

### Relevant resources

In 2024, the COPS Office, DOJ CRS, and DCP published guidance on immediate steps *communities* might take in the immediate aftermath of a law enforcement critical incident, *Tools for Building Trust: Designing Law Enforcement–Community Dialogue and Reacting to the Use of Deadly Force and other Critical Law Enforcement Actions*: <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-r1151>.

The COPS Office supports a network of regional Law Enforcement De-escalation Centers that provide de-escalation training at no cost to law enforcement agencies throughout the country: <https://copstrainingportal.org/in-person/cops-national-de-escalation-training-network/>.


8. **Law enforcement should communicate with campus leadership about potential tactical strategies.** This does not mean that non-law enforcement campus leaders will make decisions on the tactical law enforcement strategies, but it does mean that they should be aware of what the options are and under what circumstances law enforcement will use them. As they decide whether to ask law enforcement to clear campus spaces of demonstrators, campus leaders will want to consider the implications of the range of tactics that law enforcement professionals might employ if students resist. Topics of discussion might include the decision to arrest; the decision to clear a protest or encampment; closing pedestrian or motor vehicle routes of travel; or the deployment of chemical irritants, noise disruption devices, or other less than lethal force options. If a decision to clear is made, those who know the campus best should be involved in establishing multiple avenues of egress for demonstrators who choose to leave voluntarily. Campus leaders will also be critical participants in deciding whether to cancel

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21. DCP, *Tools for Building Trust*.

22. DCP, *Tools for Building Trust*, 15.

23. Deidrich and Dirr, “A ‘Police Dialogue Team.’”



classes or events on campus; whether to allow demonstrators access to services such as campus buildings, electricity, and wi-fi; and whether to take disciplinary action against students who do not follow the rules.

9. **Communicate with the campus community before, during, and after the event.**

Thank those who participated peacefully and provide transparency and accuracy about any arrests, injuries, or property damage. Communicating an accurate narrative of the event's activities promptly through multiple traditional and social media outlets is critical to the public's understanding of what transpired and, if that public understanding is positive, the reaffirmation of the effectiveness of confrontational yet civil acts of assembly and disagreement. Recent guidance from the COPS Office suggests that leaders consider the unique aspects of their communities, humanize messages, avoid defensiveness, acknowledge harm, and demonstrate support, all while maintaining authenticity and appropriately framing institutional messages.<sup>24</sup>

Many institutions use text messaging platforms, apps, and email correspondence to quickly and accurately share critical information with students, faculty, staff, and other constituencies. Sharing messages through formal and informal channels and leaderships to meet the intended audience on the platforms and communication channels they use most frequently can help break through the information fog and increase the chances that the message will be trusted.

### Relevant resources

In 2023, the COPS Office, DOJ CRS, and the Major Cities Chiefs Association published *Strategic Communications for Law Enforcement Executives*:

<https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-r1127>.

In 2024, the COPS Office, DOJ CRS, and DCP developed guidance on immediate steps *communities* might take in the immediate aftermath of a law enforcement critical incident, *Tools for Building Trust: Designing Law Enforcement–Community Dialogue and Reacting to the Use of Deadly Force and other Critical Law Enforcement Actions*:

<https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-r1151>.

10. **When possible, train staff with brief scenarios or tabletop simulations.** Tabletop simulations are brief role-play scenarios, either fictional or recreations of events that occurred elsewhere. These simulations may aid in planning efforts by managing expectations around the identification of risks and potential responses;<sup>25</sup> catalyzing conversation and collaboration;<sup>26</sup> developing empathy for what community leaders and members experience during a crisis; or enhancing trust and mutual understanding


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24. DCP, *Tools for Building Trust*, 10–13.

25. National Center for Campus Public Safety, *Managing Campus Protests and Demonstrations*.

26. National Police Foundation, *How to Conduct an After-Action Review*.





among participants.<sup>27</sup> The facilitator's instructions and general facts for a fictional tabletop simulation included in the toolkit at the end of this guide offer an opportunity to begin this training for leaders who do not have experience facilitating scenarios and tabletop simulations. Discussions of brief scenarios could be used for a variety of purposes. Another approach is to present a 10-minute scenario that occurred elsewhere to prompt discussions of how the leadership group would respond if this happened on their campus.

### Relevant resource

The DCP provides dispute resolution and systems-design expertise to help local community and university leaders enhance community resiliency and prepare for and respond to events that polarize their communities. Winner of the American Bar Association's Cooley Lawyer as a Problem Solver Award, the project helps strengthen local capacity to transform division into collaboration and progress. For materials, including simulations and table-top exercises, connected to the DCP's #CampusBridge project, visit <https://go.osu.edu/campusbridge>.

11. **Announce that an after-action review will occur and follow up the announcement with the timeline and method of distribution for any reports.** The National Police Foundation urges law enforcement and public safety officers to “use every available opportunity to identify promising practices and lessons learned to continue to enhance their ability to respond.”<sup>28</sup> After-action reviews are opportunities for group reflection and observation in order to identify lessons learned and enhance future planning and preparation.<sup>29</sup> Particularly for every event interaction involving multiple personnel, demanding time constraints, and potentially significant public visibility, conducting a post-event review and analysis helps to apply lessons learned to the next such gathering.

All collaborators in the mass demonstration event, including outside law enforcement and community planners, should be included in after-action planning. An institution may choose to use in-house resources to complete an after-action report or it may engage an independent reviewer. The decision to use an independent reviewer may increase the perception of legitimacy in the process. If law enforcement or campus leadership decides that parts of an after-action report cannot be released publicly for any reason, this decision should be clearly explained.

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27. Barnes-Proby et al., *A Toolkit for Community-Police Dialogue*, 10, 54

28. National Police Foundation, *How to Conduct an After-Action Review*, v.

29. National Police Foundation, *How to Conduct an After-Action Review*, 1.



## Relevant resource

In 2020, the COPS Office and the National Police Foundation (now the National Policing Institute) published *How to Conduct an After-Action Review*: <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-w0878>.

- 12. Provide support for personnel exposed to violence, stress, hate, or bias because of the mass demonstration.** As discussed earlier in this report, mass demonstrations can be highly emotional events because they involve groups of people disagreeing about serious issues that they feel impact them strongly. Campus staff and public safety personnel are not immune to the stress, fear, anger, anxiety and violence or injury that may be experienced in this environment. Campus and public safety leaders should assess the physical, mental, and emotional health of their staff as soon as practical after a mass demonstration event and continue to assess in weeks and months after, providing support as necessary.

## Relevant resources

In 2019, the COPS Office published the *Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act: Report to Congress* (<https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-p370>) and a companion piece, *Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Programs: Eleven Case Studies*: <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-p371>.

In addition, in 2019 the COPS Office and the IACP published *How to Start a Law Enforcement Family Support Group: Insights and Considerations*: <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter?item=cops-w0879>.



## Checklist 4. Coordination

### Planning priorities for partnering with law enforcement on mass demonstrations

- **Plan for likely crowd scenarios including contingencies** where case dynamics change quickly.
- **Reach out to event organizers and influencers**, coordinating with them and sharing information when appropriate.
- **Review policies and mutual aid agreements** that will be tested during a mass demonstration event.
- **Publicize permitted and prohibited behavior** including what responses can be expected if prohibited behavior is exhibited.
- **Establish an Emergency Operations Center** to coordinate with partners during the event.
- **Manage counterprotests** in a way that minimizes the potential for violence and demonstrates equal treatment.
- **Practice dialogue, de-escalation, and discretion when possible.** When arrest is necessary, give warning when feasible and anticipate crowd reactions.
- **Campus leaders should communicate with law enforcement** about tactical strategies that may be used.
- **Communicate with the campus community before, during, and after the event.** Thank those who participated peacefully and provide transparency and accuracy about any arrests, injuries, or property damage.
- When possible, **train staff with brief scenarios or tabletop simulations.**
- **Announce that an after-action review will occur** and follow up with a timeline and method of distribution of any reports.
- **Provide support for personnel** exposed to violence, stress, hate, or bias because of the mass demonstration.





# Toolkit for Rapid Response to Campus Conflict

## Rapid response checklists

### Checklist 1. Awareness

- **Identify** key constituents in the community that are likely to be affected by the source of conflict and who may need to hear specific messaging, receive additional support, or be given opportunities to have their voices heard.
- **Engage listeners** from among those who work closely with students and student organizations, government and alumni affairs, faculty and staff affairs, and others who can transmit information to the identified synthesizer of the information quickly and accurately, as well as cultivate trusted relationships with affected groups.
- **Designate a synthesizer** with the skill set to analyze and summarize the information provided by listeners, and with an in-depth understanding of campus dynamics.
- **Distribute the summary** to key decision-makers and those whose responsibility it is to carry out the decisions made.
- **Renew the listening process** in anticipation of changing campus dynamics, augment identification of the groups listed in the section on the assessment protocol, and re-ignite it in a rapidly developing situation as needed.

### Checklist 2. Communication

- **Campus leaders should communicate consistently and with urgency** when conflict arises.
- **Communications taking a stand on perceived hate speech**, or incidents motivated by bias should be consistent with a pre-established standard of behavior that has been developed in consultation with legal authorities and other campus leaders.
- **The decision to weigh in (or to decline to weigh in) on off-campus** conflicts that divide campus communities is one that should be considered carefully.
- **A messaging template can be designed specifically for communicating quickly and clearly** when tension is high.
- **Important messaging on conflict should use a personal, authentic voice** rather than the more formal, passive language of more routine communication.
- **Imagery can send a powerful message**, particularly when written communication seems to get lost in the information fog.
- **Trusted messengers** can amplify and support a leader's message.



### Checklist 3. Support

- **Safety.** Create a website dashboard for those who want to keep track of incidents on or near campus; facilitate phone or protected online networks among students who are fearful; organize escorts and buddy systems.
- **Support.** Make suggestions to faculty, staff (including counseling staff), residence hall counselors, student leaders, faith leaders, parents of students, community groups, and the students themselves on how they might reach out to extend support to students and one another; organize vigils when students are mourning and ways to express their anger or concerns.
- **Learning opportunities that span differences.** Expand options that engage students across campus divisions as they learn, including facilitated dialogues—sometimes about issues other than those that are dividing the campus—to model these skills and draw students out of isolation produced by divisions and short courses or workshops on difficult conversations or promoting dialogue during protests. Arrange these so that they can be layered onto a student’s existing course schedule.
- **Opportunities to make a difference.** Based on students’ goals, organize options for preparing humanitarian aid or serving affected communities; participate in campus de-escalation teams; get their viewpoints out through podcasts and other means; and identify community groups offering student opportunities.
- **Community resiliency.** Deepen the assessment teams (chapter 1) so that students see quick responses to their concerns and goals; articulate and model a campus spirit (joint aspirations and values) that resonates as unique to your campus, crosses lines of division, and provides a reason to treat others well, even if they share different views.
- **Publicity for rules and laws.** Enhance publicity (beyond a website) to help students understand what they and other students are permitted to do under the law and student codes, what they are not, and the range of consequences for violations; let them know the range of places to report concerns and opportunities for support if they have been victims (discussed in chapter 4).
- **Problem solving.** Consult with a mediator or CRS conciliator when divisive issues are threatened, with an eye to preparing for or beginning problem-solving conversations with or among those on different sides of the divides and engaging with students who are unwilling to talk with staff in the assessment team (chapter 1).



## Checklist 4. Coordination

### Planning priorities for partnering with law enforcement on mass demonstrations

- **Plan for likely crowd scenarios including contingencies** where case dynamics change quickly.
- **Reach out to event organizers and influencers**, coordinating with them and sharing information when appropriate.
- **Review policies and mutual aid agreements** that will be tested during a mass demonstration event.
- **Publicize permitted and prohibited behavior** including what responses can be expected if prohibited behavior is exhibited.
- **Establish an Emergency Operations Center** to coordinate with partners during the event.
- **Manage counterprotests** in a way that minimizes the potential for violence and demonstrates equal treatment.
- **Practice dialogue, de-escalation, and discretion when possible.** When arrest is necessary, give warning when feasible and anticipate crowd reactions.
- **Campus leaders should communicate with law enforcement** about tactical strategies that may be used.
- **Communicate with the campus community before, during, and after the event.** Thank those who participated peacefully and provide transparency and accuracy about any arrests, injuries, or property damage.
- When possible, **train staff with brief scenarios or tabletop simulations.**
- **Announce that an after-action review will occur** and follow up with a timeline and method of distribution of any reports.
- **Provide support for personnel** exposed to violence, stress, hate, or bias because of the mass demonstration.





## Tabletop simulation


*This toolkit includes the general facts and facilitator instructions for the simulation. We urge those considering the simulation to review the general facts, followed by the facilitator instructions. The DCP and CRS are available to assist with the simulation and to provide supplemental materials for use by facilitators. Interested parties should contact DCP Director Bill Froehlich at [froehlich.28@osu.edu](mailto:froehlich.28@osu.edu) and CRS at [askcrs@usdoj.gov](mailto:askcrs@usdoj.gov).*

### General facts and instructions: Nexera University

Campus tensions related to the Middle East violence escalated just before finals last semester. A portion of Nexera students seem to harbor anger that campus administrators did not seem to favor their causes. Others are upset about the treatment of fellow students during demonstrations. Still others are afraid that administrators will not protect them from insults and harassment because of their perceived viewpoints.

During the semester break, some outside constituencies expressed their lost trust in the Nexera administration as well, viewing campus leaders variously as not controlling the campus, not protective of students who felt targeted by slogans and other acts, or coming down too hard on protesting students. As on other campuses, students report being frustrated when they report to police or student affairs about being targeted; students say they are merely directed to campus police or counseling because what they complained about, though frightening for them, does not violate student code or criminal statutes.

Yesterday, an NGO released a digital report about an escalation in violence in the Middle East, which included previously undisclosed incidents of violence and eyewitness footage of those injured and dead that has gone viral on social media. A group of students printed out images of the victims and posted them on bulletin boards across campus, along with an announcement of a planned rally on campus to protest ongoing violence in the region. Other groups of students ripped down the signs or papered over them with their own flyers, calling for a counterprotest. Both protests and counterprotests are anticipated later today. The primary protest group plans to gather off campus before protesting on campus; the counterprotesters plan to convene at a park across campus. News outlets have picked up on these developments and note that they expect hundreds of outside demonstrators to join in the protests and counterprotests, both within the city and on campus.



The President sent you the following email and directed it as well to those you recognize as from the University's departments of academic affairs, student affairs, security, legal affairs, communications, and inclusive excellence office—and, for the first time, also to representatives of the city police and county sheriff's office:

Dear colleagues,

I know that you have been following the news of increased violence in the Middle East. I have just learned that various student groups on campus announced a boycott of classes beginning immediately, both to protest how little the campus administration is doing (in terms of divesting or speaking out publicly against what the national government is doing or failing to do) to help stop the violence in the Middle East and to protest what they characterize as harassment of student protesters by campus and local police. Various other groups posted demands that I denounce that boycott call and re-affirm that classes will continue.

I want to get a statement out to the campus community and beyond within two hours. Please meet me in my office at time set on the calendar prompt to give me your counsel on bullet points for my statement.

A rough agenda for today's meeting:

- Brief (1 minute) updates on the situation from each of your viewpoints
- Your ideas for what should be in any communications sent out soon after the meeting to the campus community and beyond
- Your counsel on how to get messages out so that they will be heard and trusted by each part of the campus community and beyond
- Your ideas to protect the safety of our students
- Your programmatic proposals (some of which may be included in my statement to the campus) to enhance support for students, encouragement for students and others to support and respect friends regardless of viewpoints, opportunities for students to make a constructive difference in the campus climate or peacefully express their views regarding the Middle East violence, new ways to learn about difficult conversations and the Middle East, ways to keep them safe and make them feel welcome, and more
- Any ideas for joint planning by campus–law enforcement and local law enforcement for more agitated and conflicted large crowd events



## A note from the simulation facilitators

*If you would like to talk with persons not already participating in the simulation, please ask the facilitators, and they will provide a role player for any person requested. Everyone will learn more through this simulation if you can stay in the role. To facilitate this immersion, when you need more facts, make up facts that are likely to be accurate in similar circumstances. Please treat this simulation as you would “improv” (improvisational theater or comedy): Go with what is being said and say things that would be consistent with the situation even if you do not have the specific facts in your background information. For example, if another role player refers to the Nexera University mascot as the “Nexie Lion” or the student paper as “The Nexie Newsie,” refer to them by the same names. To help people remain in role, please do not break your role or refer to the simulation directions. If another person breaks the role, please stay in yours. After the simulation, participants will have an opportunity to discuss what worked well because of past planning and what more you would like to have in place in case similar events unfold on this campus.*

## Instructions for simulation facilitators: Nexera University


**Name.** You are welcome to search for and replace throughout the simulation documents the fictional “University of Nexera” with the name of your own campus. You can also change the names of each position (dean of students, etc.), the facts (where the initial demonstration began, the past student demands), and replace “university” to “college” to fit your own institution. The simulation events are fictional but, to make it feel more realistic, they are based on a combination of news reports on real campus events.

**Participants.** Invite those persons who should be involved if large-scale crowd events occur in the next few weeks. Where feasible, ask them to play their own professional roles. Because this simulation will conclude with planning to put in place what campus leaders wish they had available during the simulation, it is ideal to have the President (or a credible role-player for the President), representation from key leaders from academic, student affairs (two to three representatives here), inclusive excellence office, campus security, outside police organizations that might be involved in the worst-case scenarios, legal counsel, and communications. If any of these cannot participate, you can use knowledgeable substitutes to play them. If you want broader representation, you might include faculty with expertise in the Middle East, faculty/staff experienced in mediation, government affairs, key community representatives such as staff from the mayor’s office, and faith leaders (there are not prepared confidential instructions for these persons).

**Numbers of participants.** It can be a satisfying experience (in terms of being able to participate) if 9–16 persons participate as part of the primary group (these numbers do not include those phoned during the simulation). If you want to give the experience to and gain input from more persons, you could hold two simulations simultaneously and then combine the groups for the facilitated de-brief. Another option would be to gather about 10 people to participate in the simulation, while allowing others to watch and then participate in the de-brief.

**A valuable addition to the simulation.** If you would like to demonstrate the importance in a crisis of frequently checking with key constituents, arrange for about three people to be available by phone during the first hour of the simulation to play whatever students or faculty advisors the





participants say that they want to talk with (there are confidential instructions for these people). To arrange for quick reports back to the group, it's best to ask each role player to call just one person, as the call is likely to take 10–15 minutes. You can keep the phone numbers and place the call, identifying for the person called the person they will be playing and then handing the phone to the participant making the call. The confidential instructions encourage participants to do this, so you will have to change them if you opt out of having the calls made.

**A note about involving students as participants in the simulation.** While we've found that including students can be enriching for all involved, facilitators should remember that when emotions are raw, it may be a stressful experience for the students who are active on behalf of one of the interests in the Middle East violence to “pretend” to be in a situation that feels all too real, urgent, and personally wrenching for them. The same might also be the case for students who are frightened because others identify them with one of the groups involved in the Middle East violence. For similar reasons, this simulation is not a good one to use with a class of students. Facilitators should also remember that student involvement can, at times, dampen the candor of staff and law enforcement during the debrief, and should therefore adjust expectations accordingly.


**Time to set aside.** Set a length that allows broad participation in the simulation and includes at least 30 minutes after the simulation is stopped to discuss what more to put in place to enhance preparation for similar actual events. This might be 90 minutes (60 minutes for the simulation; 30 for the de-brief) for about 10 role-players or 120 minutes for 16 role-players, for example.

**Instructions to participants.** Ask each participant to prepare by reading the following:

- The general facts and instructions
- The confidential instructions for their role
- The *Checklists for Urgent Situations* and additional portions of *Navigating Conflict on Campus: A Guide for Campus Leaders and Public Safety Personnel* (<https://go.osu.edu/dcpccampus>) that are assigned in their confidential instructions, skimming the rest of the publication as they have time.

**Facilitators.** Two to three facilitators will be helpful to introduce the simulation, keep the simulation moving effectively, and debrief afterward. One or more facilitators can “play” some of the nonparticipant roles as needed, such as a news reporter calling or a consultant from the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service. Facilitators can hand out “notes,” and announce “breaking news,” either by posting it on PowerPoint, handing out printed copies, pulling aside a participant and telling them, or something comparable if the simulation is virtual. Facilitators will also lead the debrief (questions included later in this section).

**In person or online?** We have found that both formats work when all participants attend in person or all participate virtually. A combination of virtual and in-person participants is more complicated. The easiest approach in a hybrid approach is to ask those attending in person to join the virtual meeting room individually on their computers. Another alternative—though more complicated—is to have those attending in person talk without their computers while displaying the online participants on a large enough screen so that the participants' faces are recognizable. It would



then be helpful to have an additional large screen in the room to show slides of “breaking news,” while posting the “breaking news” virtually for digital participants. The online “chat” can be used to deliver notes to individual participants.

**Adding facts.** This simulation is designed for some of the busiest people on campus. We have therefore minimized what they need to memorize by avoiding laying out complicated facts ahead of time. We instead ask these capable people to play themselves and make up reasonable facts as they go along. (Alternatively, you could rename this for the campus involved in the simulation, and they could use facts related to their own university or college.)

**Timing.** The key to timing is to make the experience one in which campus leaders can assess (and decide to rectify!) how ready they are in each of the areas covered by the four sections in *Navigating Conflict on Campus: A Guide for Campus Leaders and Public Safety Personnel*:

1. Awareness
2. Communication
3. Support
4. Coordination

You may have to send notes to speed things up occasionally and move discussion more quickly.


You might want to stop midway through to promote discussion about what has occurred so far. Assuming the following schedule, this break might be at about the 45-minute point. This timing permits discussion of the assessment, content, transmission methods, and messengers for communications.

Here’s an approximate schedule that assumes 90 minutes total time for the simulation:

**0:00** Facilitators

- give a brief overview of the facts;
- remind participants that they can ask facilitators to play people they would call;
- remind participants to make up additional facts that would be reasonable and explain that, as in improv theater, participants should accept facts made up by others;
- mention any ground rules (e.g., won’t attribute quotes to anyone without permission, no recording).

**0:05** President calls the meeting to order and announces that the most pressing agenda item is advice about what communications should be issued and how that communication should be distributed. As background for the discussion about the communication, the President asks each participant to give a couple of sentences about how they view the situation. Then the President asks them to offer ideas for the statement the President will make publicly.



**0:17** By this point, one or two of the student affairs or inclusive excellence office participants should leave to make phone calls to students or faculty advisors as directed by their confidential instructions. If this has not occurred, remind them individually with a note. (It's best if one representative of each office remains in the room while the others make the phone calls.)

**0:20** Give a note to one of the law enforcement participants regarding a media inquiry about what is being done to ensure the safety of demonstrators at the park and nearby residents, as there are both protests and counter-protests now spilling out of the one-block area of the park and more and more people are arriving. One of the facilitators will act as the reporter.

**0:25** If the student affairs participant/s have returned but not been recognized by the President, give the President a note that the student affairs participants have new information for the group.

Let discussions continue long enough for them to realize how important it is to check in with affected groups frequently.

**0:35 Breaking news:** Parent groups for both Jewish, Arab, and Muslim students have announced that they are sending a letter to the U.S. Department of Education complaining that all the leadership is doing to support their upset, mourning, and frightened students is to give them contact information for campus counseling and police. They say no one is taking effective action to address the hostile environment impacting their students.

**0:37** Note to academic and student affairs representatives (if they have not done the following): Can you suggest some programmatic responses to support and protect students?

**0:42** Note to all law enforcement officers: Counterprotesters are gathering at a park just across the street from campus.

**0:43** Note to communications: Counterprotesters are gathering at a park just across the street from campus. Social media posts suggest the counterprotesters intend to march to campus to confront demonstrators on campus.

**0:50 Breaking news:** Nexera students are streaming out of their dorm rooms and leaving classes to join the protests on campus. Meanwhile counterprotesters are beginning to march toward campus. Are law enforcement agencies prepared?

**0:52** Note to student affairs personnel: A call from your office: A student group has invited a U.S. Representative to speak at the Student Union. The event is scheduled to begin in a half hour. He's been notified about the demonstration and his office staff says that he is coming anyway. The crowd, so far, is about 100 feet from the Student Union. What should we do?

**0:60** Breaking news: End the simulation with an oral statement from the facilitators that the Governor is on the line, and that he has asked the state troopers to head to campus to assist and wants to speak immediately to the President.





## Convene the facilitated discussion

Facilitator compliments the participants and announces that the goal of the next half hour is to elicit a list of tasks to implement quickly in order to improve leaders' preparation for events such as those in the simulation.

- What surprised you?
- What preparation done on this campus worked well in this simulation? What ideas did the simulation spark for improving campus preparation for events such as these?
- Assume the events in the simulation will occur on your campus in 90 days. Are you prepared? What steps can you take to prepare?

Press on any of the four areas discussed in *Navigating Conflict on Campus* that were not mentioned:

- Would it help to prepare for quick re-assessments of student views, concerns, goals?
- Are those listening for student concerns regularly briefing those drafting statements and making decisions?
- Do you want to prepare to communicate with the campus community more frequently or in cooperation with additional people who might be trusted by a portion of campus?
- Is there a group engaged in creating additional options for students to contribute or learn, support each other, etc.?
- Does it make sense to conduct joint planning with the various policing agencies that might be involved in large or contentious demonstrations or a response?

*Record both the things that worked well and, separately, ideas for improving campus preparation.*

**1:20** Ask the President (or their representative) to close by assigning responsibilities for implementing some of the ideas and providing a timeframe for completion.



# Resources – Consultation, Mediation, and Training Service Offered without Charge

## Available nationally

### Community Relations Service in the U.S. Department of Justice

Phone: 202-305-2935 | Email: [askcrs@usdoj.gov](mailto:askcrs@usdoj.gov)

CRS serves as “America’s Peacemaker” for communities facing conflict based on actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. CRS works toward its mission by providing facilitated dialogue, mediation, training, and consultation to assist these communities to come together, develop solutions to the conflict, and enhance their capacity to independently prevent and resolve future conflict.

All CRS services are confidential and provided on a voluntary basis, free of charge to the communities. CRS is not an investigatory or prosecutorial agency and does not have any law enforcement authority. CRS works with all parties to develop solutions to conflict and serves as a neutral party.

### Bridge Initiative of the Divided Community Project, The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law

Bill Froehlich, Director, Divided Community Project

Email: [Froehlich.28@osu.edu](mailto:Froehlich.28@osu.edu) | Website: <https://go.osu.edu/dcp>

Upon request and at no cost, mediators and other experts with extensive experience in helping local leaders respond effectively to civil unrest and tension in communities across the country can help mediate conflicts between community and law enforcement, train local community members on effective strategies to keep protests safe, and offer technical assistance to executives and community members seeking to build sustainable infrastructure for inclusive engagement.



## Available within their states

### California Civil Rights Department's Community Conflict Resolution Unit

Email: [CCRU@calcivilrights.ca.gov](mailto:CCRU@calcivilrights.ca.gov) |

Website: <https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/disputeresolution/community-conflict-services/>

The CCRU works with communities and local and state public bodies to constructively manage or resolve conflict, minimize or eliminate the potential for violence, reduce or eliminate antagonism within communities, or help them reach mutually acceptable outcomes.

### Michigan Department of Civil Rights Community Engagement and Education Division

Anthony Lewis, Director

Phone: 313-456-3740 | Email: [LewisA4@michigan.gov](mailto:LewisA4@michigan.gov) |

Website: <https://www.michigan.gov/mdcr/divisions/community-engagement>

The Crisis Response Team initiates proactive measures and acts as needed to diffuse situations of community tension and unrest, and to assure that all people enjoy equal rights under the law. To carry out its responsibility, the department monitors incidents involving race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, and other civil rights-related matters. The office offers related training.

### New Jersey Division on Civil Rights Community Relations Unit

Tee Leonardo-Santiago, Director of Community Relations

Email: [Tisha.Leonardo@njcivilrights.gov](mailto:Tisha.Leonardo@njcivilrights.gov) | Website: <https://www.NJCivilRights.gov>

The New Jersey Community Relations Unit offers civil rights mediation and consultation, as well as educational programs.

### Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission Civil Rights Outreach Coordinators (CROC)

Email: [phrc@pa.gov](mailto:phrc@pa.gov) | Website: <https://www.phrc.pa.gov>

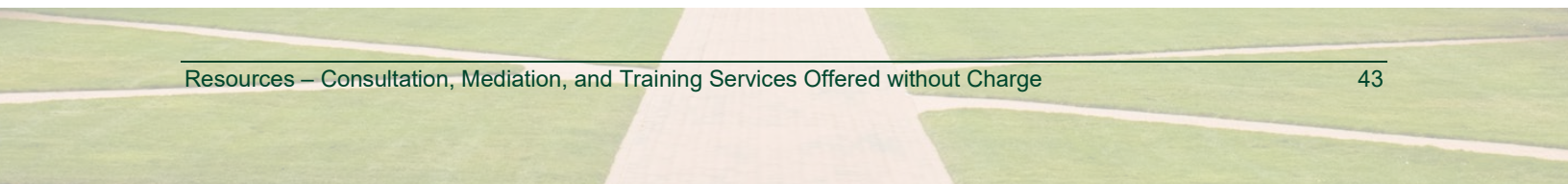
Providing complex facilitation and conflict resolution services for communities facing conflicts and tensions related to race, color, religious creed, ancestry, age, sex, LGBTQ+ status, gender, national origin, familial status, or disability status pursuant to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act.





## **At the local level**

Community mediation programs often have mediators experienced in promoting discussions among groups of people and may offer training. A search function of the National Association for Community Mediation, NAFCM, <https://www.nafcm.org/search/custom.asp?id=1949>, allows a search for a local community mediation program. The local bar association may also have a list of mediators and their experience levels, though private practitioners will typically charge fees.



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# About the Divided Community Project

The **Divided Community Project (DCP)** is housed at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law within the College's preeminently ranked Program on Dispute Resolution. DCP seeks to support community leaders as they identify and address issues tearing at the social fabric of their respective communities. DCP services are informed by conflict resolution, mediation, and dispute systems design theory and practice and grounded in the principle that problem-solving initiatives and resolutions must be informed, shaped, and led by citizens who will live with the outcomes. DCP brings together community leaders, elected officials, activists, law enforcement, faith leaders, and academics to develop guidance for community leaders in facing conflict in diverse community settings. The shared goal is to strengthen local capacity to transform division into collaboration.

The project offers a variety of resources for communities and their leaders, including the following:

- Direct real-time mediation, facilitation, and conciliation services for those facing a community or campus conflict from The Bridge Initiative@Moritz, and “office hours” for those engaged in planning in this context, upon request and at no cost to the community
- Multiday academy training programs for community and campus leadership teams
- Multiparty real-time tabletop community conflict simulations which permit leadership teams to identify how to hone their preparation in advance of divisive situations
- Checklists and guides with ideas and illustrations for facilitating potentially contentious meetings; defending democracy; and both responding to and planning in advance of social conflicts in communities and on campuses, such as those arising from the aftermath of law enforcement uses of force, divisive monuments and symbols, racial equity concerns, and challenges to democracy
- Interdisciplinary research and award-winning academic articles connected to this work

Winner of the American Bar Association Section on Dispute Resolution's Cooley Lawyer as a Problem-Solver Award. The JAMS Foundation, AAA-ICDR Foundation, U.S. Department of Justice, the Ohio State University Mershon Center for International Security Studies, Kettering Foundation, and the Mellon Foundation provide significant support for the project.

For more about the project, look here: <https://go.osu.edu/dcp>.



# About CRS

The **Community Relations Service (CRS)** is a component of the U.S. Department of Justice. As America's Peacemaker, CRS provides facilitation, mediation, training, and consultation services to communities, enhancing their ability to independently address, prevent and resolve future conflicts. Since 1964, CRS has served as a force for conciliation and peace in communities fraught with racial tension and discord. Over the years, the scope of CRS's work has expanded to address discrimination and hate crimes based on race, religion, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability. Our approach, though adaptive to the changing times, remains rooted in our core mission: to resolve conflict by engaging communities in difficult conversations through constructive dialogue. By doing so, we aim to strengthen the nation's resilience in the face of hate and discrimination. Title X of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 authorized CRS to assist communities facing disputes, disagreements, or difficulties relating to allegations of discriminatory practices based on race, color, or national origin. CRS's mandate expanded in 2009 under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act to include working with communities to prevent and respond to alleged hate crimes based on actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. CRS is the only federal component dedicated to assisting state and local units of government, private and public organizations, law enforcement, and community groups resolve conflicts based on these aspects of identity. The goals of all CRS programs are to help parties in conflict learn about different perspectives, share information about resources and best practices, and support communities as they identify and implement solutions. CRS conciliation specialists are impartial and do not take sides among disputing parties. Instead, those involved develop their own mutually agreeable solutions. CRS's true value is often in its proactive community engagement—communities do not need to wait until a crime has been committed before reaching out for assistance. While local officials or community leaders request CRS's services by contacting the regional office that supports their state, any community member can request CRS's services. All CRS services are free of charge, confidential, and provided on a voluntary basis.





# About the COPS Office

The **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)** is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When law enforcement and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem-solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community policing officers and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has been appropriated more than \$20 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing. Other achievements include the following:

- To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 136,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.
- More than 800,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations and the COPS Training Portal.
- More than 1,000 agencies have received customized advice and peer-led technical assistance through the COPS Office Collaborative Reform Initiative Technical Assistance Center.
- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than nine million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs and flash drives.

The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement. COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics such as school and campus safety, violent crime, and officer safety and wellness, can be downloaded via the COPS Office's home page, <https://cops.usdoj.gov>.



When students demonstrate on campus, college and university administrators and public safety leaders must work together to deliver a response that both keeps all members of the community safe and protects free speech. The Divided Community Project at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law joined the DOJ's Community Relations Service and the COPS Office to prepare this guide, which outlines four key concepts—awareness, communication, support, and coordination—and presents tools to help campus leaders and public safety personnel manage campus conflicts in ways that meet all their obligations.



**COPS**  
*Community Oriented Policing Services*  
U.S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of Justice  
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To obtain details about COPS Office programs, call  
the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online at [cops.usdoj.gov](https://cops.usdoj.gov).

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Published 2024