

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When first aware of a concern, conflict, or divisive incident, college and university leaders should consider working with others to take – roughly simultaneously – the following steps, all discussed in more detail in this guide:

- 🌸 **REACT EARLY:** *Become engaged right away*, asking other campus leaders to do the same, and augment resources as necessary to respond quickly and effectively. Support students, consult widely, and search for safe and effective avenues for students to pursue their goals.
- 🌸 **FRAME:** *Issue a statement that “frames the matter”* by summarizing what has occurred, recognizing the impact, describing issues, announcing decisions, acknowledging who has been consulted, identifying the processes and values that will be applied to address the issues – all with an authentic voice and delivered by a person whose message will be trusted.
- 🌸 **TEACH AND CREATE OPTIONS:** *Capture the opportunity* presented by divisive incidents and conflicts for students to learn to advocate, negotiate, facilitate, and understand each other, laws regarding freedom of expression, and conflict resolution techniques. Offer students safe and effective options to meet their needs and goals.
- 🌸 **COMMUNICATE:** *Develop communications plans* and engage in constant messaging.
- 🌸 **LISTEN:** *Stay in touch* with students, faculty, staff and other key groups, using both informal techniques and mediators.
- 🌸 **DEVELOP PROTOCOLS:** *Create protocols with safety agencies*, especially regarding disruptive activities that do not threaten safety, consider the common message that all will convey, and let the campus community know that this has occurred.
- 🌸 **HELP FACULTY:** *Prepare the faculty* for the ways that issues will play out in classrooms.

Once volatile events cease, university leaders should organize staff, faculty, students, and other constituencies to:

- 🌸 **CONTINUE SOLVING PROBLEMS:** *Develop and implement solutions* to both immediate concerns and longer-term problems.
- 🌸 **CONTINUE TO COMMUNICATE:** *Issue regular reports* to let these constituencies know how issues are being addressed.
- 🌸 **LEARN:** *Learn how to respond more effectively* next time through an after-incident analysis.
- 🌸 **PLAN:** *Develop plans* for responding to the next crisis, based on lessons learned.<sup>1</sup>
- 🌸 **RECONCILE:** *Work to improve relationships* that were strained during the conflict.