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DCP Campus Simulation:¹ Springton University

March 2020

*NOTE: The simulation is intended to be as realistic as possible; as a result, there is language that is included in the simulation fact patterns that is racist, offensive and hurtful. Experience has demonstrated that including realistic fact patterns makes the simulation more effective, and participants understand the ways in which volatile conflicts can inflict unequal burdens on different parts of a community. Consider alerting participants to the sensitive nature of the subject matter of the simulation, including trigger warnings as appropriate.

General Instructions:

Springton University is a well-recognized research university. To support its scientific and medical research, the university has a contract with an online research database, MedSearch, which provides key research tools to its scientific and medical researchers and the students in those programs. The university is two years into its five-year contract with MedSearch. Assume that Springton University resembles in size and other aspects, including whether it is a private or public institution, the university where this simulation takes place.

Assume the truth of the following fictional national events:

Last year, the President of the United States advanced an anti-immigration platform through executive orders limiting the number of people allowed into the United States from certain countries. The President also attempted to end DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), a Program created by executive order of a former President. The President gave Congress six months to pass legislation to replace the program before ending it. DACA protects from deportation certain undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children. Several organizations challenged the President's executive order seeking to end DACA in the lower courts. The Supreme Court heard arguments about the fate of the program, and a decision is expected in the coming months. Several members of the U.S. Senate have promised to block any legislation that would include DACA protections. Indeed, some members have threatened to pass legislation, introduced as S.B. 2176, that would prevent any Administration from extending DACA protections. It is uncertain whether these anti-DACA actions have enough votes to get through both houses, but some commentators fear that they might. Without DACA protections, a number of Springton University students and their family members would be vulnerable to deportation. The President has endorsed these anti-DACA legislative actions in campaign speeches and on social media.

The following fictional events took place over the past week:

¹ The facts of this case are drawn from a variety of actual conflicts but names and other details have been changed to respect confidentiality. As a result, the facts do not apply to any specific U.S. community. Andria Dorsten-Ebert wrote the simulation while a student at the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law.

1. Students have learned that MedSearch, in addition to providing research tools to universities, also collects personal data on individuals and supplies that information to law enforcement officials. MedSearch has an extensive government contract, valued at \$52 million, to provide this information to agencies including the FBI, NSA, and ICE. In particular, ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement, an agency within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security) uses this data to facilitate its deportations. There is a national movement brewing, and students, faculty members, and grassroots activists across the country are calling for their local universities to #CancelICEContracts, hoping that collectively they can pressure their universities to cut their contracts.
2. Already feeling vulnerable from the national anti-immigration rhetoric, pending litigation, and proposed legislative actions, which could potentially strip students of their DACA status, students now feel exposed by the university itself through its close association and contract with MedSearch.
3. Connected with the national movement, Springton University students have protested the university's contract with MedSearch. They have posted flyers around campus and gathered student signatures on a petition calling on university officials to #CancelICEContracts. Yesterday, a group of students gathered on the campus square with signs and banners, calling for Springton University to cut its contract with MedSearch.
4. Yesterday's protests caught the attention of the local news. Reporters attended the rally on the campus square and ran a segment on the local demonstration and the national #CancelICEContracts movement during the evening news.
5. Seeing the local coverage, supporters of the President's immigration stance have gathered with their own banners to counter-protest the second day of the #CancelICEContracts rally.
6. U.S. Representative Mattie Jones, who represents Springton University's district and is co-sponsoring the House version of S.B. 2176, is holding a town hall in an hour to discuss S.B. 2176. The town hall will be held at Johnson House, a Springton University administration building situated just off of the campus square. Hearing about the protests, Rep. Jones has stated on social media that these students are "acting against public safety, and are no better than the criminal immigrants that they are trying to protect."

These events have sparked a series of hostile arguments both on social media and in person. Many students are sympathetic to the #CancelICEContracts movement and do not want to see their friends deported. Others have followed Rep. Jones' viewpoint, alleging that this is a public safety issue, and advocating for the removal of immigrants. Posts and statements have included insulting and hateful comments about ICE, about immigrants, and about Springton University's involvement with these issues. Some students have called for a sit-in to block Johnson House and prevent the town hall, but there is no indication yet that a sit-in will occur.

In response to the escalating tensions, the Springton University President gathered a team of advisors—all University employees—together to coordinate talking points and strategize next steps for Springton University’s response. The President will present these talking points at a press conference later today. The Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion has called a meeting of leaders of various constituent groups at the same time, in a different room. If you are not a University employee, you have been invited to meet with the Associate Provost in a different room from the President’s meeting.

Players:

Attending the Springton University President’s meeting:

1. President of Springton University
2. Executive Assistant to the President
3. Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost (reports to the President)
4. Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion (reports to the Provost)
5. Vice President and General Counsel for the University (reports to the President)
6. Vice President for Student Life (reports to the President)
7. Dean of the Medical Program (reports to the Provost)
8. Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (reports to the Provost)
9. Communications Director (reports to the President)
10. Communications Assistant (reports to the Communications Director)
11. Springton University Facilities Director (reports to the VP for Business and Finance)
12. Springton University Vice President for Business and Finance (reports to the President)
13. Springton University Police Chief (reports to the President)

Attending the meeting with the Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion:

14. Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion (reports to the Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion)
15. Springton Police Chief
16. ICE Field Office Chief
17. Director of Springton Coalition for Migrant Farmworkers
18. Chair of the Springton Interfaith Coalition
19. Chair of the Springton Latinx Coalition
20. President of NAACP Branch in Springton
21. Chair of the Springton Asian American Justice Coalition
22. Rep. Jones’ Chief of Staff
23. President of the Student Body
24. ACLU Director
25. Springton Chronicle Journalist
26. President of the Immigrant Student Association

If you would like to talk with persons not listed here, 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 role. To facilitate this, 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 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 Springton mascot as the Bear or the student paper as The Roar, 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 role, please stay in yours.