Reputations at Risk

In an era in which social media can shatter or strengthen a reputation in a matter of minutes, colleges and universities are increasingly mindful of situations that threaten their reputation. Data from a 2017 survey of board members and administrative leaders show how institutional leaders view risks to their reputation and their ability to manage this risk. The United Educators survey, administered by the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities, was completed by 145 individuals representing presidents, CFOs, and board chairs.

**How Many?**
79% of institutions reported incidents occurring in the past three years that were considered a major reputational risk. The number of these such incidents:

- 1% 7-9 incidents
- 14% 4-6 incidents
- 21% 0 incidents
- 61% 1-3 incidents
- 1% 10 or more incidents

**Oversight of Reputational Risk**
- 87% Believe the board has oversight
- 83% Believe reputational risk is more important than three years ago
- 78% Believe that the institution has identified drivers of reputational risk

**Responding to Incidents that Threaten Reputations**
- 67% Have a reputational risk plan and response in place
- 26% Believe that their institution responds consistently and proactively to reputational risk events
- 23% Stated their approach was reactive

**What Happened?**
Types of incidents that threatened the institution’s reputation in the past three years.

- Campus climate
- Sexual assault/Title IX
- Academic programs
- Student behaviors
- Business model
- Cybersecurity

**What Next?**
Types of incidents that may impact the institution’s reputation in the coming three years.

- Campus climate
- Sexual assault/Title IX
- Academic programs
- Student behaviors
- Business model
- Cybersecurity