

Session 4: Trump 2.0: The Impact of Public Policy on College Students' Mental Health

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TRUMP 2.0: THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC POLICY ON COLLEGE STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

CCNY CONFERENCE 2025

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

*THE PRESENTERS HAVE NO ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL
CONFLICTS OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO THIS
PROGRAM.*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe

Describe new the 2025 Executive Orders and how they are impacting the mental health of college students.

Discuss

Discuss challenges the new Executive Orders poses to our work and our staff with particular attention to marginalized staff members.

Generate

Generate strategies for providing culturally informed and trauma-informed care in the current political climate

WHAT IS A PRESIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE ORDER?

Original intent of Executive Orders:

- to establish a clear legislative agenda with priorities for the aims and goals they would like their party's representatives to work toward in Congress
- to serve as directives that order the government to take specific actions to ensure “the laws be faithfully executed,”

Recent intent of Executive Orders: to directly influence a diverse range of policy areas — from immigration to scientific research many of which have already been challenged in court.

EXECUTIVE ORDERS AS MANDATES

From Jan 2025 through May 2025, Donald Trump has signed 152 Executive Orders, more than any President in US modern history (Federal Register, May 26, 2025)

Increasing use of executive orders by Presidents of both parties to bypass traditional legislative processes is concerning as it shifts the balance of power away from Congress and raises questions about the long-term implications for our democratic system

EXECUTIVE ORDERS WITH DIRECT OR INDIRECT IMPACT ON COLLEGE STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH



STUDENT VISAS AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

- EO: Protecting the US from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats
- EO: Protecting the American People against Invasion
- DHS rescinded sensitive locations policies – ICE allowed now on college campuses
- Threats to end OPT (optional practical training)
- Termination of several thousand SEVIS records, many for unclear reasons
- Jailing of international students – viral video of Tufts student being grabbed on the street
- Attempts to stop Harvard from enrolling any international students
- May 15th pause of all new student (F/J) visa appointments, May 28th threat to Chinese student visas, June 5th travel ban against 12 countries
- And it goes on and on....

STUDENT VISAS AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

- How is the impact of this Executive Order showing up on your campus?
- What are students reporting? What are their concerns?

RESTRUCTURING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:

- Intention of EO:
 - To dismantle the Department of Education (ED) and transfer its responsibilities to individual states and local communities.
 - Federal funds must not support diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives or “gender ideology”
- Additional related developments
 - Some functions moved to other areas of the administration
 - Efforts to overhaul accreditation
 - 2026 budget proposal includes funding cuts
 - Loan collection resumed

RESTRUCTURING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:

- Impact:
 - Potential loss of federal support for colleges (e.g. student loans, DEI programs, federal grants that students rely on)
 - Campus efforts to avoid loss of federal support
 - Potential changes to accreditation system, Civil Rights enforcement
 - Shift in perceived value of higher education

RESTRUCTURING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:

- How is the impact of this Executive Order showing up on your campus?
- What are students reporting? What are their concerns?

LIMITS ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI) FUNDING

- Imposes significant restrictions on DEI initiatives within federal agencies and among recipients of federal funding
- Mandates that federal contractors and grant recipients certify they do not operate DEI programs that violate federal anti-discrimination laws and stresses that noncompliance could result in the loss of federal funds
- United States will no longer recognize birthright citizenship for children born here whose parents are undocumented.
- The US will only recognize two sexes, male and female.
- Federal DEI guidance and tools must be rescinded or rescinded in part

LIMITS ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI) FUNDING

- Uncertainty about the future of diversity-related student organizations and cultural centers.
- Less access to inclusive pedagogy and campus efforts to address systemic inequality.
 - Historical facts may no longer being taught
 - Academic departments eliminated.
 - Lines of research no longer funded
 - Loss of scholarships
- The negative impact of not being allowed to use preferred named, being misgendered, dead names are used.
- Increase in accusations of reverse discrimination

LIMITS ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI) FUNDING

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REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND TITLE X ACCESS

- The Title X provides grants to public and nonprofit agencies to offer family planning services, research, and training. Title X is the only federal program dedicated solely to family planning and related preventive health services, and it prioritizes low-income individuals
- Reinstated the 2019 “gag rule” that prohibits providers from referring patients for abortion care or having co-located family planning and abortion services.
- Violation of gag rule results in loss of federal funding and providers/clinics being dropped from the Title X network.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND TITLE X ACCESS

- Denies abortion coverage to individuals enrolled in the federal Medicaid program, military servicemembers, veterans, and federal employees.
- Less access to reproductive health care off campus
 - Fewer clinics and providers
- Fewer options for gender-affirming care due to lack of funding
 - No access for people under the age of 19
 - Increased IVF access likely excludes LGBTQI community
- Stops public education and awareness efforts about access to reproductive health care, including informing people about how to obtain birth control.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND TITLE X ACCESS

- How is the impact of this Executive Order showing up on your campus?
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IMPACT ON DELIVERY OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE



BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH CAMPUS POLICIES RELATED TO THE NEW EXECUTIVE ORDERS

CAMPUS DEI GUIDANCE

We need to be strategic and intentional in promoting diversity, equity and inclusion *in compliance with legal requirements.*

AFFINITY GROUPS

The current guidance does not prohibit student groups and associations based on race, national origin, shared ancestry and ethnic characteristics.

- Groups and group activities must be open (and welcoming) to all.
- Campus cannot assign different benefits based on race related to these groups (for example, mentoring opportunities to students based on race)



CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

Cultural and historical celebrations and recognition are explicitly permitted.

As with other activities, they must be open and welcoming to all.

Schools cannot require participation in these activities.



DISCUSSIONS, WORKSHOPS, AND PRESENTATIONS

Discussions, workshops, and presentations can address issues including race, discrimination, bias, stereotyping, and microaggressions as long as they do not engage in racial stereotyping and do not create a hostile environment.

- Topics including *white* privilege, *white* fragility, and other areas focusing on whiteness are likely to be found stereotypical and in violation of current interpretations of Title VI. In addition to creating risk, these topics may alienate your audience, making them harder to reach and keeping you from achieving your goals.
- At the same time, we can address how unconscious bias, stereotypes, and microaggressions often present themselves and how to combat these.



CHANGES TO DATA COLLECTION AND DOCUMENTATION

- Demographic items in paperwork and surveys
 - Optional responses
 - Balance between data loss and protection of information
- Clinical documentation
 - More general descriptions
 - Discuss preferences with client
 - Potential impacts versus protection of information
 - Looking back and looking forward
 - Context of overall security of records

BOLSTERING SUPPORT FOR MARGINALIZED/TARGETED STUDENTS

- Participation in town halls for F-I and J-I Students
- Specialized outreach
 - Rest is Resistance
 - Reproductive Health and Justice
 - Empowerment Through Action: Current Events with the Healing Power of Activism
 - Hope and Grounding
- Letters of support
- Advocacy role and information sharing with campus partners
- Making sure student employees are following federal employment restrictions

DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACT ON COUNSELING CENTER STAFF

- International counseling staff visa status
- Sense of being erased
- Reduced external resources - and worry about colleagues across the university
- Anger/frustration with university administration
- Feelings of resignation and increasing helplessness → demoralization

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION



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