

RESPONDING TO RELIGIOUS WORLD EVENTS: Results and Recommendations from INSPIRES

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Below are the key takeaways from the October 7th institutional response module administered by the INSPIRES Climate INDEX.

Nearly 75% of the 43 institutions that provided data made one or more public statements following the global events of October 7, 2023.

PRESIDENTIAL RESPONSES

Over 93% of institutional responses were issued by college or university presidents.

Other academic representatives (i.e., deans and provost) made statements at 13% of campuses.

Chaplains and other spiritual life officers made statements at 30% of campuses.



Nearly all (96.7%) presidential responses came via a campus-wide email.

Several campuses reported posting the presidential responses on their website (33%) or on social media (30%). Only a 23% of campuses issued an official press release.



The statements mostly expressed sentiments of support for the campus community.

Most messages included notes intended to validate emotional responses (83%), support campus communities (80%), and stress the need for safety for communities on campus (73.3%). Several offered mental health resources (66.7%).



About half of the statements condemned the Hamas terrorist attacks and antisemitism; only 13% offered explicit support for Israel.

However, 43% of statements condemned Islamophobia. One-third offered support for Israeli, Jewish, and Muslim students, faculty, and staff, whereas only 23% offered support for Palestinian community members.



When university leaders contacted experts to help craft their statements, about half relied on religious or spiritual life staff employed by the institution or their communications offices.

Only one-third consulted campus counseling services personnel, while 27% contacted legal counsel. Less than 15% of statements included perspectives from faculty or students.

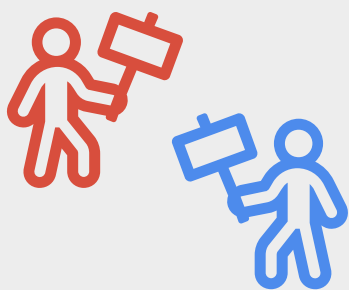
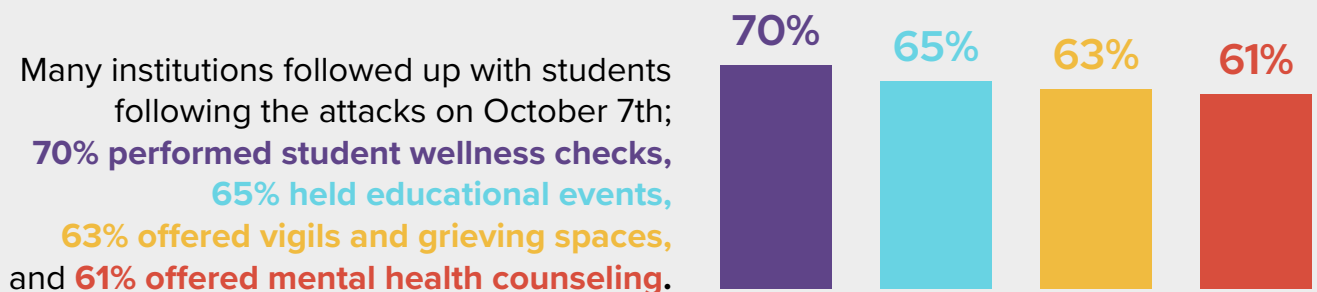
REFRAINING FROM STATEMENTS

About **25% of campuses did not issue a public statement**. For many of these institutions, statements were not articulated because leadership chose not to make them (27%) or because the institution has a policy of not issuing statements on world events (9%).

Little backlash occurred for institutions that did not issue statements. Less than 18% of institutions encountered calls for a public statement from faculty, staff, students, or alumni.



CAMPUS RESPONSES



Students responded to the events by mostly showing **solidarity for Palestinian students (51%)** and **protesting in support for Palestine (44%)**. Students at a **few campuses (37%)** showed **solidarity for Jewish students**, but only **23% of campuses experienced student solidarity for Israel**.

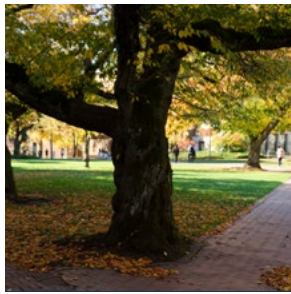
Vigils recognizing the loss of life on both sides or promoting peace also occurred at 42% of campuses.



Over 36% of campuses received formal bias reports concerning antisemitism; 18% experienced alleged hate crimes targeting Jewish persons and/or spaces on campus.



Fewer campuses (26%) received formal bias reports concerning Islamophobia; 13% experienced alleged hate crimes targeting Muslim persons and/or spaces on campus.



Most campuses (56%) don't plan to make changes to policies or protocols in response to the October 7th events. The most common changes are to crisis response protocols (18%) and updating bias incident response processes to include religious identity (18%).

NEXT STEPS

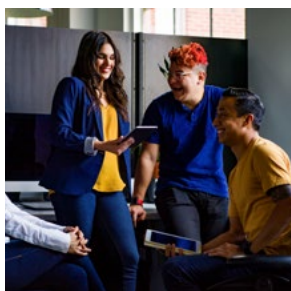


Sixty percent of campuses don't plan on adding interfaith co-curricular options to campus following October 7th. Those that do plan to add meditation/prayer spaces available to students of all RSS identities (13%) or add a spiritual life office or department (5%).



Several campuses (35%) plan to address religious, secular, and spiritual diversity in DEI goals. They also intend to provide religious, secular, and spiritual diversity training to faculty (30%), staff (33%), and students (30%).

Nearly half of campuses plan to increase interfaith engagement opportunities offered to all students, including programs that offer opportunities for dialogue across issues of deep disagreement related to religious, secular, and spiritual beliefs.



About 53% of campuses without an interfaith council or committee plan to add one following the October 7th events. Nearly 20% have made adjustments to their senior leadership team to include those with diverse religious, secular, and spiritual identities.



Interfaith, Spiritual, Religious, and Secular Campus Climate Index

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The INSPIRES Campus Climate Index project is a collaboration between researchers at The Ohio State University and North Carolina State University, based on data gathered through the [Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey \(IDEALS\)](#). The project is funded by the [Arthur Vining Davis Foundations](#), an organization committed to courageous multi-faith efforts.

