ONTARIO TECH

GUIDELINES FOR VETTING GUEST SPEAKERS AT THE UNIVERSITY

Vetting guest speakers is crucial to ensure they align with the values, objectives, and reputation of the university. It helps maintain the integrity of your event by confirming the speaker's expertise, credibility, and presentation style. Proper vetting also minimizes risks such as misinformation, controversial views, or inappropriate content, while ensuring the audience gains valuable insights from a trusted source. Overall, it enhances the quality of the event and protects your brand.

- **Preliminary Research**
    1. What is the speaker's agenda for attending campus?
    2. What is their topic?
    3. What is their content?
    4. Conduct a background check on the speaker, including academic credentials, professional experience, and affiliations.
    5. Review the speaker's public statements, publications, and social media activity to gauge their views and opinions.
    6. Investigate the speaker's previous speaking engagements, particularly at educational institutions, and assess the feedback and outcomes.
    7. References?
    8. Alignment to university policies.
- **Consultation (as applicable)**
    1. Consult with Risk Management/Legal to ensure the speaker's content will not violate any laws, including hate speech or incitement.
    2. Engage with Risk Management to assess the potential impact on the university's reputation.
    3. Consult with academic departments and administrative units that may have a stake in the speaker's topic.
- **Risk Assessment - Evaluate the potential reputational risks involved, including:**
    - Ideological Differences
    - Geopolitical Sensitivities
    - Reputational Risks | Long Term Impact
    - Security Concerns | Access Controls | Location indoor/outdoor
    - Public Perception
    - Media Coverage
    - Disruption caused by protestors
    - Ethical and Social risks
    - Community relations
    - Campus Cohesion
    - Potential for Polarization
    - Logistical challenges
    - Resources Allocation
    - Financial Implications (sponsorship, donors, legal)
- **Stakeholder Engagement (as applicable)**
    1. Contemplate other student groups on campus views and opinions.
    2. Engage with faculty and staff to get their perspective, especially those in relevant academic departments.
    3. Gauge the sentiment of alumni and donors, as they are key stakeholders who could be affected.
- **Decision-Making**
    1. Weigh the potential risks against the benefits, such as academic enrichment, diversity of thought, and community engagement.
    2. Complete the Approval process: involving Risk Management, OCIS, Emergency Management, and Security.

3. Maintain records.
- **Post-Decision Actions**
  1. Develop a communication strategy to manage the narrative internally and externally.
  2. Have a contingency plan to manage potential fallout, including a crisis communication plan. Use Crisis Management Event Form for large-scale events.
  3. Monitor media coverage and stakeholder feedback to assess the impact, list lessons learned and hold post-event meeting with key stakeholders for future event planning.

If you have any inquiries regarding this document, please contact the Office of Risk Management at orm@ontariotechu.ca.