

Sample Question

On October 27 the *Washington Post* reported data from a recent AP poll indicating that a slight majority of Americans held negative attitudes towards African Americans, and that that percentage had increased in the last four years. The same was true for Hispanics. Your VP for Student Affairs is concerned that the larger national statistics will have a ripple effect on your campus resulting in an increase in, if not outright cases of, hate speech and racial intolerance. She wants to be prepared. She has asked you, as her assistant, to head a task force to help her prepare a response. The charge to the task force is to prepare a briefing paper that addresses the following:

1. Sets the institution in context. What kind of college or university is it? How many students does it have? How is it organized and governed? What difference does any of this make in your response?
2. Provides historical background. Is this a new phenomenon in higher education?
3. Identifies a plan for figuring out whether, and to what extent, racial intolerance is a problem on your campus, and whether the problem is on the rise over time. The plan should identify what you want to know, where, and from whom you might collect data.
4. What do you know about student development theory and research on college students that informs your response to the problem?
5. What course of action do you recommend based on your analysis of the nature of the problem on campus (3) and your knowledge of the literature on college students (4)?
6. Identifies a plan to evaluate the recommended actions (pick one recommendation). Again, the plan should include what “big” questions you want to ask and answer about the intervention, what kind of data you would collect, and from where you would get it.