

FREE SPEECH AND CAMPUS INCLUSION

College leaders face the pressing challenge of managing the tensions between campus inclusion and freedom of expression. In February 2018, the American Council on Education surveyed nearly 500 college and university presidents to better understand their viewpoints on and experiences with these tensions. Despite the political polarization and high-profile campus incidents in recent years that have often pitted inclusion and expression against each other, survey results underscore that these values are inseparable and mutually reinforcing.

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DEMOCRACY



98% of presidents

indicated that both promoting an inclusive society and protecting freedom of speech are extremely or very important to our democracy

COLLEGE ROLE



96%

believe that it is important for colleges to allow students to be exposed to all types of speech, even if they may find it **offensive** or **biased**



4%

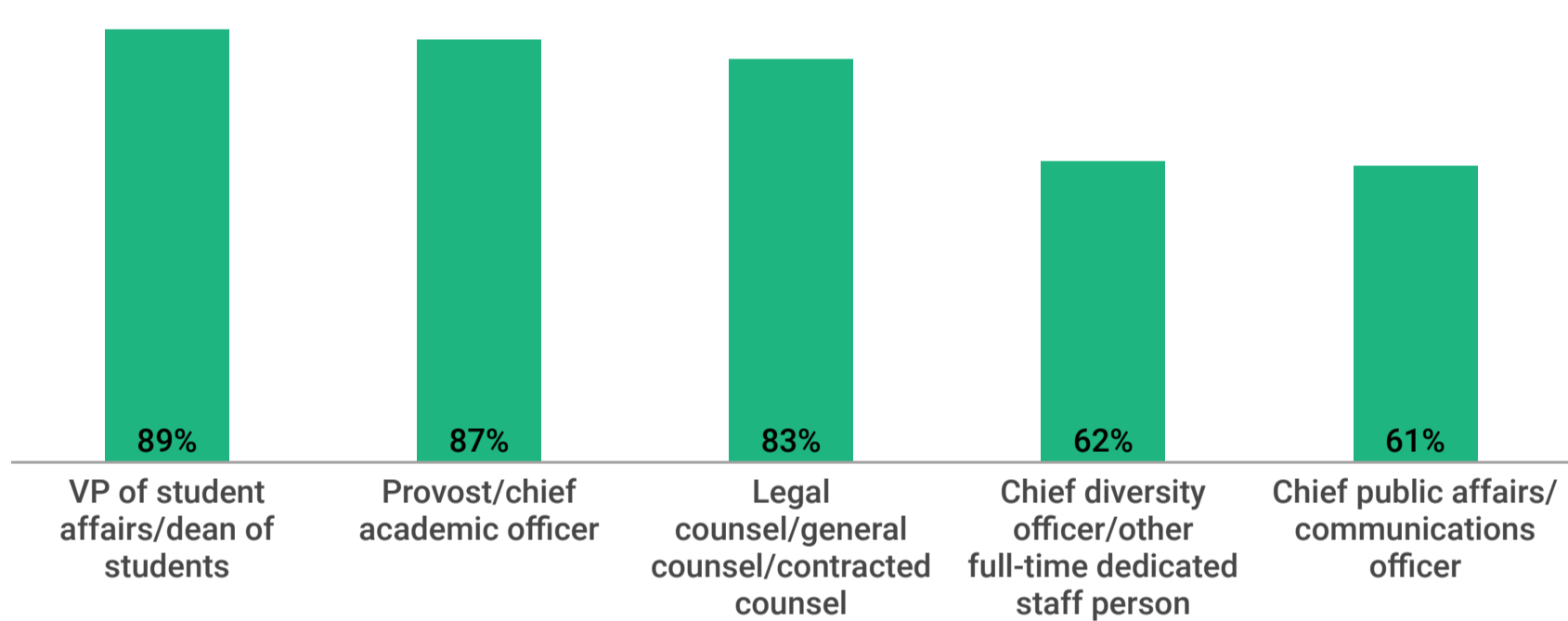
believe it is important to protect students by **prohibiting** speech they may find offensive or biased

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

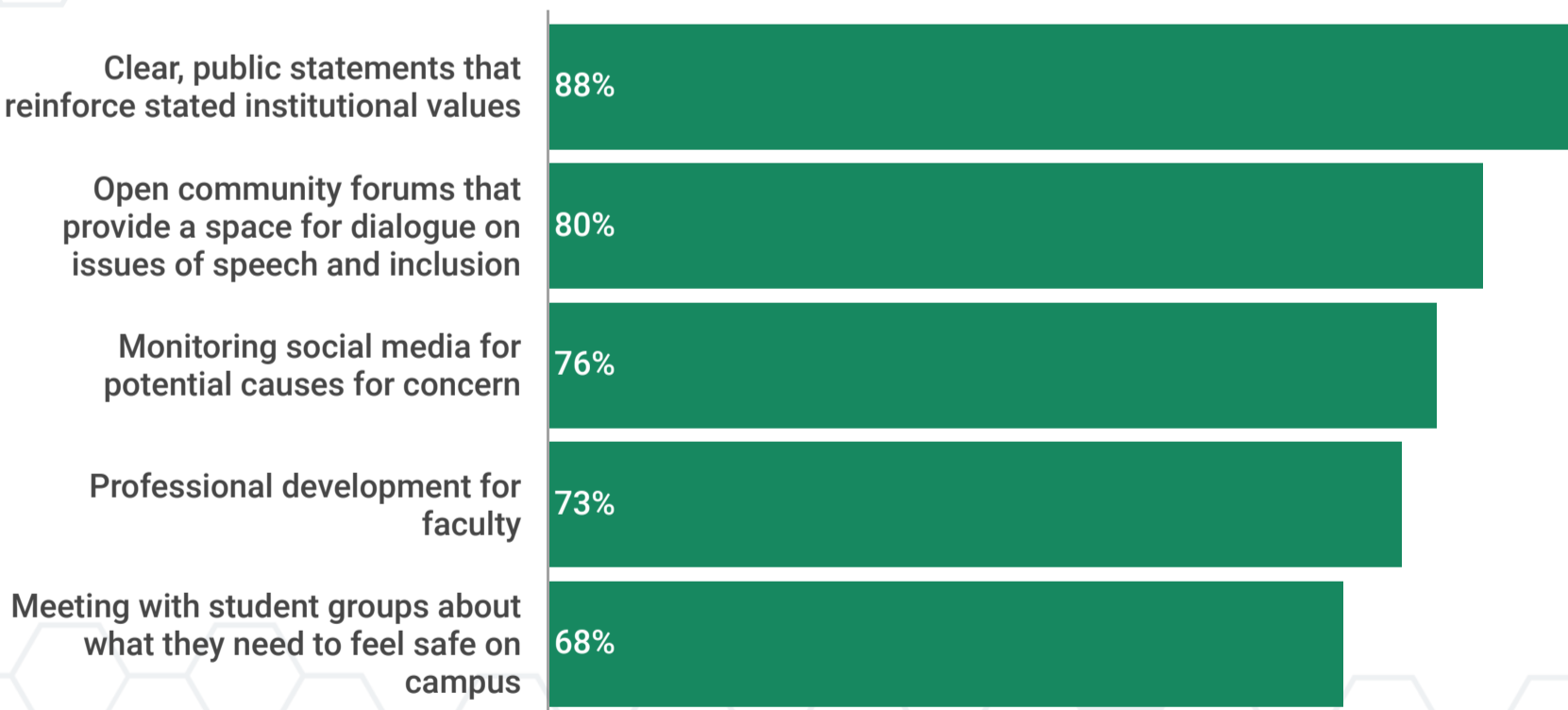
Top five senior staff members relied on by presidents when addressing conflict between campus inclusion and free speech

When setting institutional policy

When responding to active conflict



Top five practices used by presidents to manage the tension on campus between free speech and inclusion



STUDENT ACTIONS

Do you think the following actions that could be taken by college students are always acceptable, sometimes acceptable, or never acceptable?



50%

of presidents surveyed believe that it is **always acceptable** for students to engage in protests against speakers



55%

of presidents surveyed believe it is **sometimes acceptable** for students to engage in sit-ins or similar attempts to disrupt operations in campus buildings



100%

of presidents agreed that it is **never acceptable** for students to use violence to stop a speech, protest, or rally

*The source for these data is ACE's Pulse Point survey of presidents on free speech and campus inclusion. Four hundred seventy-one college and university presidents responded—78 percent lead four-year institutions (40 percent public and 60 percent private) and 22 percent lead two-year institutions (97 percent public and 3 percent private). To review the full set of findings, [click here](#).