White Supremacist Propaganda Nearly Doubles on Campus in 2017-18 Academic Year

ADL’s Center on Extremism continues to track a growing number of white supremacist propaganda efforts targeting college campuses, including the distribution of racist, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic fliers, stickers, banners and posters. The 2017-18 data shows a 77 percent increase of incidents from the previous academic year, with 292 cases reported, compared to 165 in 2016-2017.

White supremacists have been actively targeting U.S. college campuses since January 2016, but the practice failed to gain any real traction until the fall semester of that year. Since then, propaganda efforts have steadily increased.
Since September 1, 2016, ADL has recorded 478 incidents of white supremacist propaganda appearing on college and university campuses. These campaigns have targeted 287 college campuses in 47 states and the District of Columbia.

This continues to be a favorite tactic among groups within the alt right segment of the white supremacist movement. Identity Evropa was responsible for nearly half (230 of 478) of the incidents while Patriot Front (which formed only nine months ago) is responsible for 70 incidents. Andrew Anglin’s Daily Stormer Book Clubs have targeted campuses, albeit to a much lesser degree (16 incidents). Tiny, localized alt right groups have also targeted campuses -- including Louisiana-based Identity Acadia, West Virginia-based Patriots of Appalachia, New York’s White Rochester, Idaho’s Boise State Nationalists and New Jersey’s European Heritage Association.

Several National Socialist groups have targeted college campuses, as well. This includes groups such as the now-defunct Traditionalist Worker Party (TWP), Vanguard America (VA), and the National Socialist Legion (NSL), a new group founded by former members of VA.
The propaganda, which ranges from veiled white supremacist language to explicitly racist images and words, often includes a recruitment element, and frequently attacks minority groups including Jews, Blacks, Muslims, non-white immigrants and the LGBT community.

Some of the most recent campus propaganda has focused on the baseless perception of the dangers posed by a caravan of undocumented immigrants traveling toward the Mexican-American border. Identity Evropa’s “Stop the Caravan” fliers urged students to call the White House and demand the Trump administration take action to stop the caravan, while a Patriot Front flier implored students to “Keep America American” and to report “illegal aliens” to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.
In addition to widely targeting Jewish learning institutions, white supremacists have also targeted minority-related venues and buildings with propaganda. In January 2018, Identity Evropa fliers were posted on the Ethnic Studies Department bulletin board at Santa Clara University in California, and racist fliers were found plastered over photos of black historical figures outside the department of African-American studies at the University of South Carolina at Columbia. In February, fliers referencing Hitler were placed over posters promoting Black History Month at the University of Tennessee, and a Patriot Front flier that read, “Not here not ever” was posted over a sign promoting a learning series on the issue of “civility” at Weber State University in Utah.

Near Term Outlook

As was the case during the summer of 2017, the rate of campus fliering is likely to wane during the upcoming summer months. When so many students are away for the summer break, white supremacist groups have found off-campus propaganda distribution to be more appealing and productive. Popular off-campus locations include residential driveways and pedestrian-heavy urban areas.
In fact, off-campus fliering (by many of the same groups that target campuses) has accelerated since January 2018. The ADL has counted 185 off-campus propaganda distributions since January 2018 -- averaging more than one incident per day for the first 5 months of the year.

Off-campus propaganda distribution is a tactic long favored by neo-Nazis and other white supremacists, but in recent years it's been most consistently used by the Klan movement. Between 2014 and 2017, there were an average of 80 Klan fliering incidents each year.

Recent Examples of Non-Propaganda White Supremacist Activity on Campus

**University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, April 2018:** “Unite the Right” organizer Jason Kessler was issued a no-trespass warning for the University of Virginia campus after allegedly threatening students on campus and harassing them online.

**Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas, April 2018:** After eight people posted white supremacist fliers on campus, they were cited with criminal trespass charges. According to police, the individuals were not students and admitted being affiliated with white supremacist organizations.

**Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, March 2018:** Richard Spencer spoke at an event attended by several dozen of his fellow white supremacists. Violence erupted as white supremacists and counter-protesters clashed outside the event. Approximately two dozen counter-protesters were arrested, mostly on charges related to resisting and obstructing police. After the lackluster event, Spencer shelved his planned college speaking tour and said the protesters that have confronted him at such events, sometimes using violent tactics, were “winning.”

**University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, February 2018:** Matthew Heimbach spoke in a privately rented hall to an audience of approximately 45 people that
included members of Heimbach's now-defunct Traditionalist Worker Party, members of the League of the South, and several members of Vanguard America. The event was both the first and the last of Heimbach's (recently cancelled) "National Socialism or Death" college lecture series.

**Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado, February 2018:** Approximately six white supremacists appeared on the Colorado State University campus during a Turning Point USA speaking event featuring Charlie Kirk. The 6 men shouted “white power” and “blood and soil” and skirmished with counter-protesters. No arrests were made.

**University of North Florida (UNF), Jacksonville, Florida, November 2017:** Several members of the neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement rallied outside the University's Alumni Center on behalf of Ken Parker, a UNF student and former Klansman and neo-Nazi. Parker was suspended from the school after making controversial social media posts.

**University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, October 2017:** Richard Spencer spoke at an event attended by several dozen of his fellow white supremacists, including members of Patriot Front, who controlled the ticket distribution and security. After the event, three attendees allegedly yelled, “Heil Hitler,” while driving by a group standing near a bus stop, leading to an altercation in which one of three reportedly fired a gun. Texans Tyler Tenbrink and Colton Fears are facing charges related to the incident. Charges against the third man have been dropped.