Chad Ballay

CYBR320-342N

Week 5

**Operational Risk – University**

Of the three selections for risk management exploration, the University choice interests me the most. This setting puts it in the realm of both worlds. Government funding rules often will require universities to adopt risk management strategies above and beyond the private sector. A university’s connection to the private sector will similarly drive the risk management strategies to align with the economic goals of the corporate realm. In truth a university has to adhere to both while also dealing with thousands of young adults, tenured professors, and the “Animal House” antics that people expect to occur in a college setting.

**Reputational Risk**

I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description ["hard-core pornography"], and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it, and the motion picture involved in this case is not that.

* US Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart. (Jacobellis v. Ohio, 1964)

Your brand is your worth is a harrowing trend in social media but it has been the de facto pillar of Universities for centuries. It is a nebulous concept akin to pornography. You can’t readily quantify it, but you can definitely compare and contrast around it. The institution of the university is governed on the timeline of decades but tested each semester. In the wake of the Jerry Sandusky child sex abuse scandal applications fell by 10%. Dartmouth had a 14% drop after the Rolling Stone expose on the hazing culture present. Eventually those slumps recovered but only after engagement of intensive media rehabilitation externally and invasive corrective audits internally. (Smith & Rooney, 2019)

Universities have to implement a strong audit wing with a one way communication channel to the PR, HR, and Legal directorates for early classification and response plans. The open nature of the campus, the age range of the students, and the power imbalances inherent within the academic roles often leaves a vacuum that will be abused. It is the institutional response during the unfolding of the discovery that will dictate the impact, more so than the actual events that have occurred.

**Educational Rights and University Policies**

That they are educating the young for citizenship is reason for scrupulous protection of Constitutional freedoms of the individual, if we are not to strangle the free mind at its source and teach youth to discount important principles of our government as mere platitudes.

* US Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson (John F. TINKER and Mary Beth Tinker, Minors, etc., et al., Petitioners, v. DES MOINES INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT et al., 1969)

The university plays the role of educator, employer, counselor, landlord, chef, health care provider, security guard and many other roles all at the same time for most of the people on the campus. These roles are at best adjacent and at worst at directly opposing sides. Many of these roles have the added distinction of only being unique to the realm of higher education and not found in private or public entities. (Higher Education, n.d.) In addition to this, you have students who mostly are just across the border into being legally adults with not enough life experiences to have developed their adult identity. (Johnson, 2009) Moving up the spectrum you have similar legal exceptions carved out for work study, the athlete compensation, intellectual property rights, etc, etc…. All of these are thorny, dynamic, and unresolved issues that can’t be decided conclusively at the country level and instead tend to differ on a case by case basis.

Universities have to implement a methodical judiciary process to allow the flexibility for the uniqueness of the student body with respect to legal rights. Controls on policy awareness, resolution procedures, appeal process, and review process will mitigate the shifting terrain.

**Mission Creep To The Strategic Goal Of Dynamism**

The liberties of none are safe unless the liberties of all are protected.

* US Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas

(Douglas, 1961)

Risk management errs to the cautious path. It’s a natural progression of avoidance of risk is a conservative approach. (Norman & Sandelson, n.d.) This trend of long term stagnation in growth and dynamism is anathema to the role of cultural engine that education plays. Universities are not trade schools. They are not locations at which you exchange money for a specific set of skills and nothing more. The implicit charter that we assign to them is that they are to create a thinking citizen. They are not factories that churn out automata for maintaining the economic well-being of our nation. It is a core deliverable of the process, but the original mission is the transformation of young adults into thought leaders, innovators, and other force multiplier roles in our society. (Daley, n.d.) This exercise will yield ideas, people, and processes that will step outside of the existing norm. A smothering of these activities out of an aversion to any possible institutional risk will yield short term benefit but at the cost of future progression. This isn’t just social changes but new and creative approaches for application of technologies.

Universities have to counterbalance the perceived benefit of risk reduction actions against the more nebulous missed opportunities. Establishing strict adherence to factual statements of risk is a core tenant needed for any risk management program. Within the sphere of the university a culture of focusing on the opportunity costs should be communicated from the executive level downward.

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