

# Capability Demonstration: Wake Forest University



*“It is time to file a heavy lawsuit against Wake Forest University @WakeForest for their incredibly racist and insensitive behavior! Wrong! (Source: @RealJhonnieDoe, [Twitter](#))*

***“The last two weeks at @WakeForest have been the most exhausting yet. Until the university enacts a zero tolerance policy we will never have a welcoming academic environment” @mello, [Twitter](#)***

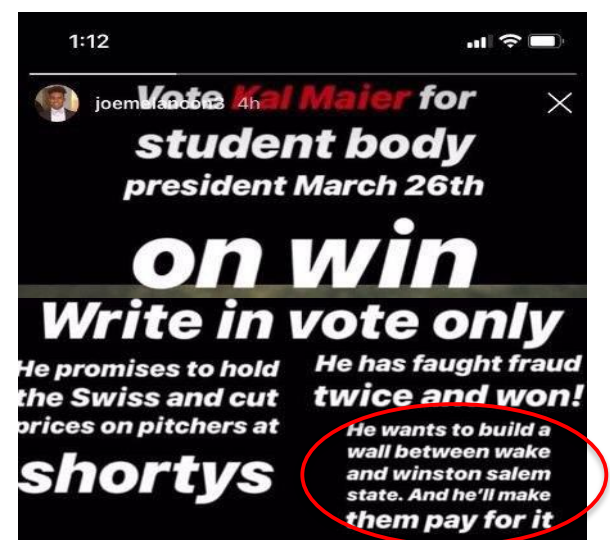
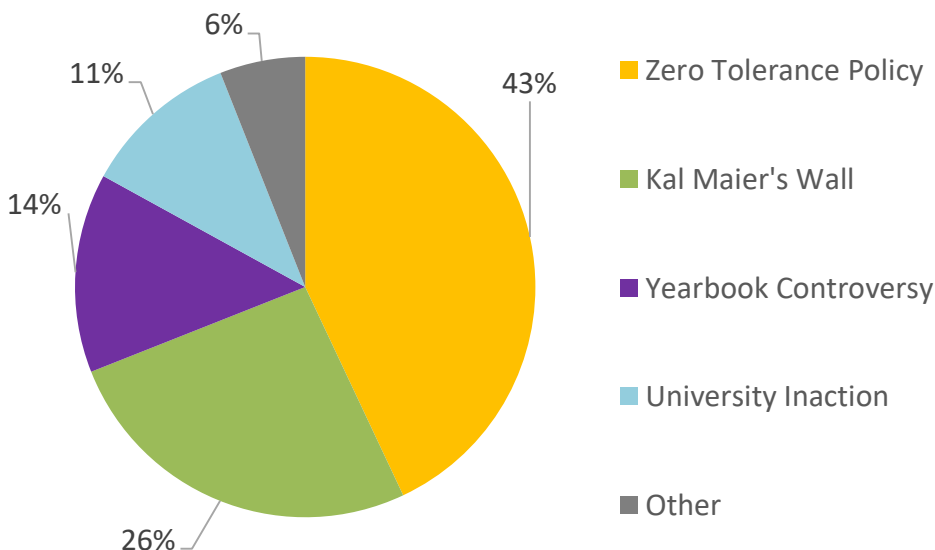
## Overview

Analysts examined online discussions related to “Racist Events” at Wake Forest, a key topic identified by ENODO’s Social Listening Module, which has monitored conversations about the university over the past ninety (90) days. Analysts identified trending topics informing public debate, measured their polarity (i.e. positive, negative, and neutral sentiment) associated with these topics, identified the online platforms where discussions occurred most frequently, and identified key influencers and their ability to shape public perception.

## Findings: Topic Modeling

Online discussions associated with racist incidents at WFU revealed four (4) trending topics:

- **Zero Tolerance Policy:** 43% of discussions highlighted the desire for immediate implementation of a Zero Tolerance Policy
- **Kal Maier’s Wall:** 26% showed anger over a student body presidential candidate’s promise to build a wall separating WFU from Winston-Salem State, a neighboring, historically Black University
- **Yearbook Controversy:** 14% were concerned with the 1982 Wake Forest yearbook showing images of lynching, the Confederate flag, and students dressed in ‘black face’
- **University Inaction:** 11% were frustrated with WFU administration’s inaction in addressing students’ concerns about widespread racism on campus



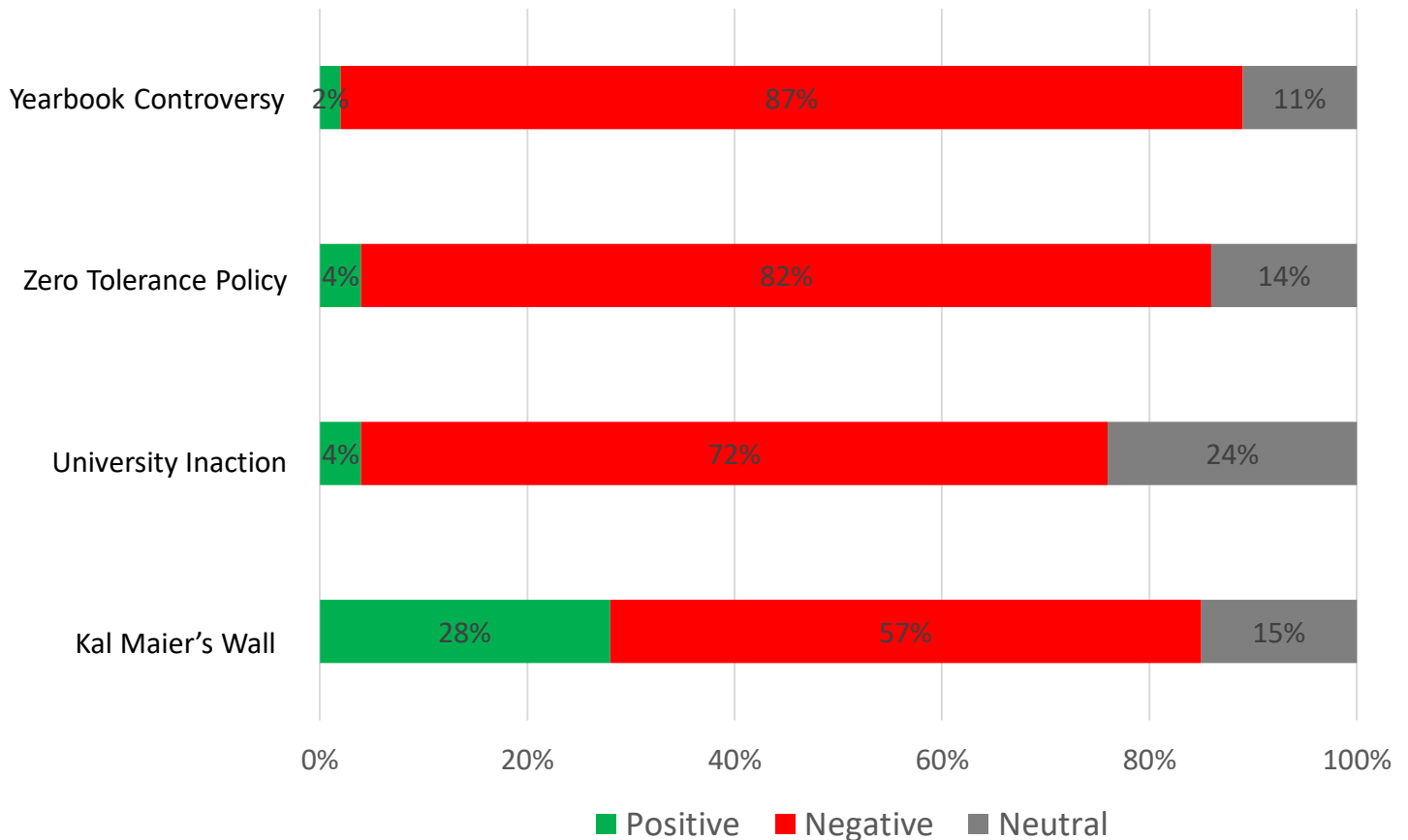
“And yes, y’all read that correctly! He wants to build a wall to keep students from an HBCU away. #wfuZEROTOLERANCE”  
(Source: Tiffany, [Twitter](#))

**“End WFU’s white supremacy on campus and throughout Winston-Salem  
👊👊👊 #WhiteForest1834 #NoHumanitate” @wfydsa, [Twitter](#)**

**Findings: Sentiment Analysis**

Ordered trending topics based on negative public sentiment (i.e. highest to lowest):

- **Yearbook Controversy:** 87% expressed negative sentiment toward the 1982 edition of *The Howler* yearbook
  - 92% was influenced by student groups (e.g. Wake Forest University Anti-Racism Coalition)
- **Zero Tolerance Policy:** 82% was predominately due to the lack of a Zero Tolerance Policy
  - 88% of discussions were found on Twitter that carried photos of students holding signs and banners with hashtag “#WhiteForest1834”
- **University Inaction:** 72% was directed toward WFU’s President Nathan Hatch and Dean Martha Allman
- **Kal Maier’s Wall:** 57% of public sentiment was negative
  - 93% emerged from student groups (e.g. Wake Forest Young Democratic Socialists of America)

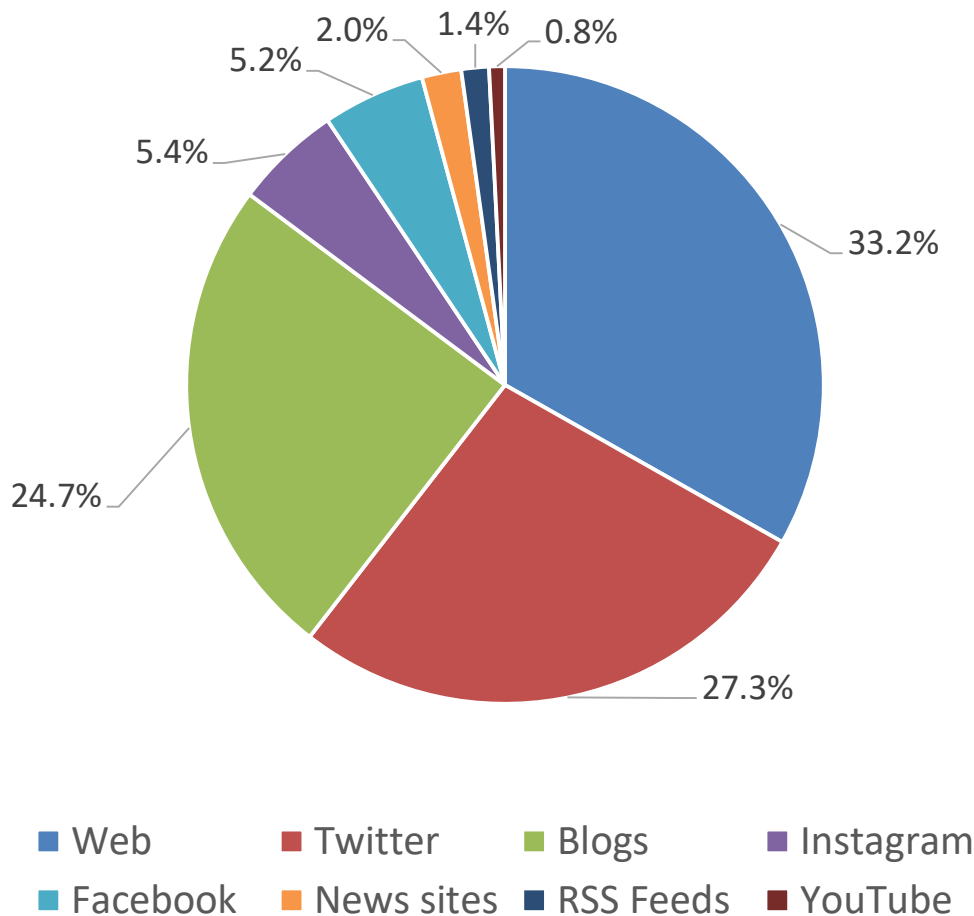


***“Wake Forest, we need to do better. Racism should have no place on this campus. We need to fix that.”*** Logan Richardson, [Twitter](#)

## Findings: Social Media Distribution

Identified where online discussions about WFU racist activities are occurring:

- The highest percentage of discussions (33.2%) were found on website comment boxes and discussion boards (e.g. WFU’s website)
- Twitter was the most used social media platform (27.3% of discussions) followed by blogs (24.7%) posted by student groups (e.g. Wake Forest University Anti-Racism Coalition)
- Social media platforms with high visual content (e.g. Instagram and YouTube) have a relatively lower penetration rate (5.4% and 0.8% respectively) due to privacy and safety concerns expressed by students
  - 81% of all Instagram posts related to racism did not identify the students by their face or by their name



***“Notice the handwriting on the posters. It’s the same on all of them. It’s probably only one person behind all of this.”*** *Barbara Clarke, [online blog](#)*

## Findings: Key Influencers

Analysts identified the top five (5) influencers currently shaping public perceptions and classified them based on their social media reach (i.e. number of online users engaged). Influencers vary from student groups to news outlets.

Influence Rank [1= Highest, 5= Lowest]	Influencer	Online platform	Link to Online Profile
1	Wake Forest University Anti-Racism Coalition	Twitter	<a href="#">@WFUArc</a>
2	Wake Forest Young Democratic Socialists of America	Twitter	<a href="#">@WFUYDSA</a>
3	Winston Watchman	Twitter	<a href="#">@Fortune420Group</a>
4	Hate Out of Winston-Salem	Twitter	<a href="#">@out_winston</a>
5	Winston Salem DSA	Twitter	<a href="#">@WinstonSalemDSA</a>

## Findings: Impact of Key Influencers

Online influencers were further analyzed to uncover their ability to shape online conversations about specific racism topics in Wake Forest.

Influence Rank [1= Highest, 5= Lowest]	Influencer	Topics Influenced	Impact Score [0 = Low Impact, 1 = High Impact]
1	Wake Forest University Anti-Racism Coalition	Wall, Yearbook	0.95
2	Wake Forest Young Democratic Socialists of America	Yearbook	0.84
3	Winston Watchman	University Inaction, Yearbook	0.78
4	Hate Out of Winston-Salem	Zero Tolerance Policy, Wall	0.67
5	Winston Salem DSA	Zero Tolerance Policy	0.52



***“I am so tired of this! How many more examples does @WakeForest need for a #WFUZeroTolerance policy? #NoHumanitate #WhiteForest1834” Tiffany Crystal, [Twitter](#)***

## Key Findings

- WFU students are troubled over various racist incidents, especially the discovery of racist photos in a 1982 edition of *The Howler* yearbook
- The proliferation of social media discussions about racist events on campus (e.g. those that use hashtags #WhiteForest1834 and #WFUZeroTolerance) combined with WFU’s perceived inaction to address student grievances have triggered activism and protests
- WFU has a narrow window of opportunity to create and implement effective communications and engagement strategies prior to students returning to campus.

## Recommendations

Leverage Social Listening tools in order to:

- Monitor online discussions in real-time to identify changes in topics, sentiment, and grievances as well as the impact of WFU communications
- Design a communication strategy and engagement activities that address student (and other key stakeholder) grievances
  - Coordinate activities between school departments (e.g., safety, communications, admissions, and student life)

## Data Analytics

ENODO analysts collected and analyzed 36,790 Twitter posts, 22,907 Facebook posts, 19,378 Instagram posts, 16,321 YouTube comments, 14,330 news websites, and 12,632 blogs of on online discussions over a 90 days at WFU’s main campus in Winston-Salem.





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