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*Real Time Expert<sup>©</sup> Poll*

*Corporate Political Activism*

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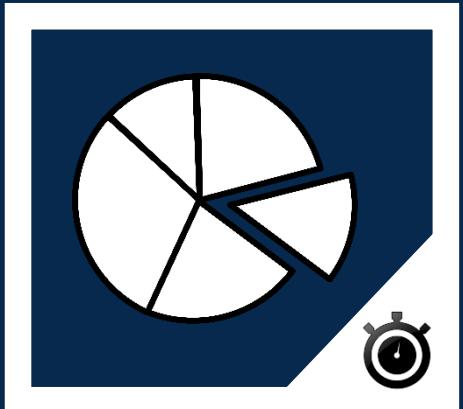
## Our Mission

*To provide an objective voice and immediate feedback when companies become politically active.*

## What is Corporate Political Activism?

*“A public position taken by an organization, or its executives, on a divisive political issue, election, or legislation.”*

## How it Works



### Company Takes Stand

Company announcement will be chosen about 6 times per year based on newsworthiness and interest level of the panel.

### Expert Panel Surveyed

Panelists grade the company's management of the stand and give brief open-ended reactions.

### Results Sent to Media

Responses are aggregated and reported to the media within 4-6 hours.

### Follow-up Interviews

Reporters follow-up with individual panelists.

# The Panel

Expert panelists are from 40 universities in 8 countries. They represent both liberal and conservative political leanings, and specialize in diverse topics such as corporate reputation, social impact, communications, politics, and economics.

**Tamar Avnet**

*Yeshiva University*

**Mike Barnett**

*Rutgers Univ.*

**Jos Bartels**

*Tilburg Univ. (Netherlands)*

**Sharon Beatty**

*Univ. of Alabama*

**Aronete Bennett**

*Villanova Univ.*

**Marya Besharov**

*Cornell Univ.*

**CB Bhattacharya**

*ESMT (Germany)*

**Dora Bock**

*Auburn Univ.*

**Tom Brown**

*Oklahoma State Univ.*

**Vanessa Burbano**

*Columbia Univ.*

**Archie Carroll**

*Univ. of Georgia*

**Rick Clancy**

*Univ. of North Carolina- Chapel Hill*

**Alin Coman**

*Princeton Univ.*

**Andrew Crane**

*Univ. Bath*

**Timothy Coombs**

*Texas A & M*

**Chiara Cordelli**

*Univ. of Chicago*

**Peter Dacin**

*Queen's Univ. (Canada)*

**Jeff Dotson**

*Brigham Young Univ.*

**Shuili Du**

*Univ. of New Hampshire*

**Pam Ellen**

*Georgia State Univ.*

**Jenn Griffin**

*Loyola Univ.*

**Julie Irwin**

*Univ. Texas*

**Russ Klein**

*American Marketing Association*

**Sherryl Kuhlman**

*Univ. of Pennsylvania*

**Alex Kull**

*Univ. of San Diego*

**Dan Laufer**

*Victoria Business School (New Zealand)*

**Tom Lyon**

*Univ. of Michigan*

**Jeanette Mena**

*Univ. of South Florida*

**Kevin Money**

*Univ. Of Reading (U.K.)*

**Rowena Olegario**

*Univ. of Oxford (U.K.)*

**Vanessa Perry**

*George Washington Univ.*

**Neeru Paharia**

*Georgetown Univ.*

**Vontresse Pamphile**

*Northwestern Univ.*

**Vanessa Perry**

*George Washington Univ.*

**Davide Ravasi**

*City University (U.K.)*

**Stefanie Robinson**

*North Carolina State Univ.*

**Americus Reed II**

*Univ. of Pennsylvania*

**Simona Romani**

*LUISS Guido Carli (Italy)*

**Laura Schons**

*Mannheim Univ. (Germany)*

**Sankar Sen**

*Baruch College*

**Nancy Sirianni**

*Univ. of Alabama*

**Craig Smith**

*INSEAD (France)*

**Scott Swain**

*Clemson Univ.*

**Tillman Wagner**

*WHU (Germany)*

**Rupert Younger**

*Univ. of Oxford (U.K.)*

**Alex Zablah**

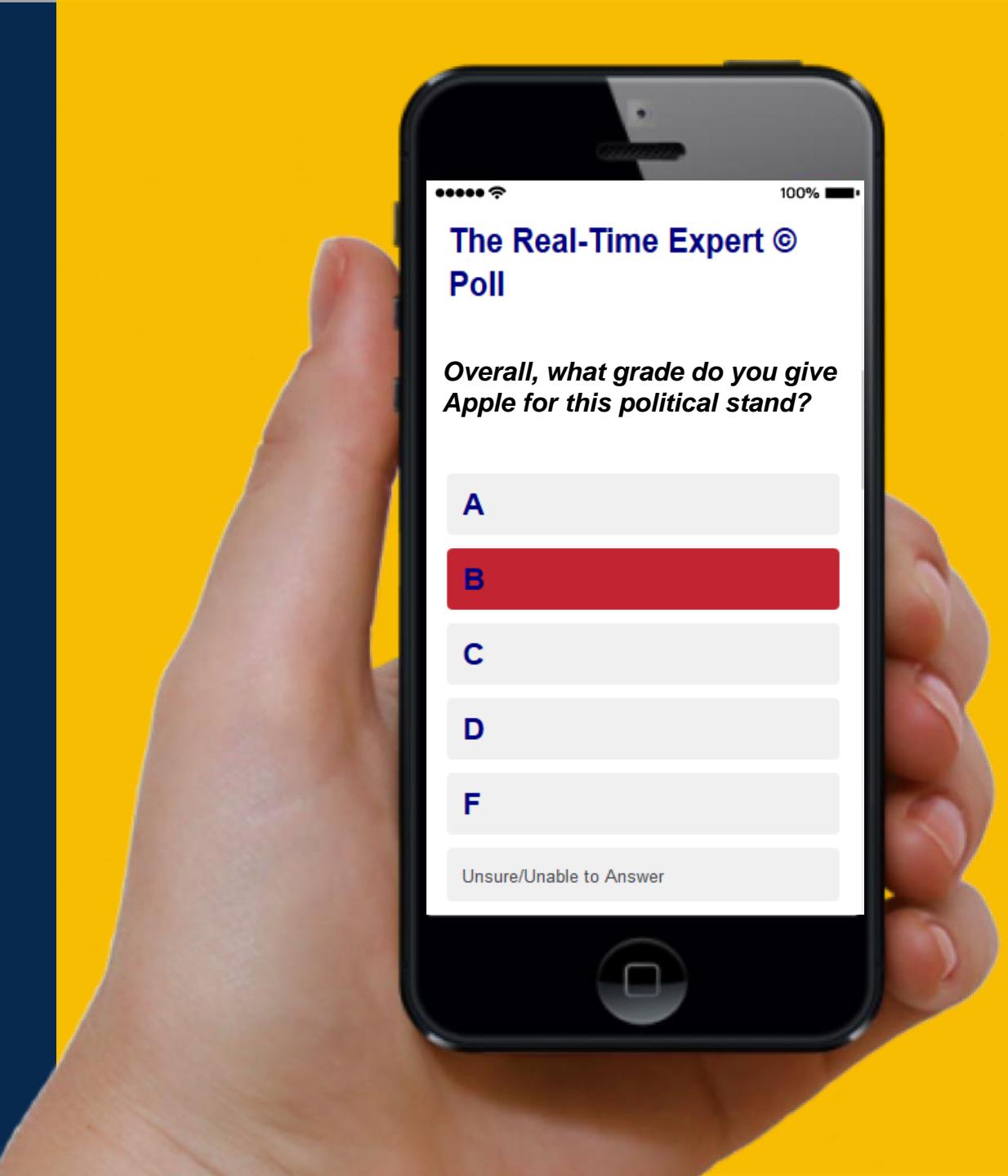
*Univ. of Tennessee – Knoxville*

# Latest Study Microsoft and DACA (May 6, 2017)

Many companies have come out against President Trump's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

Microsoft has perhaps taken the strongest stand. A few examples of its actions over the past week:

- It signed an open letter to Trump in support of DACA (along with 400 other companies)
- Microsoft President Brad Smith said Congress "should adopt legislation on DACA *before* it tries to adopt a tax reform bill. This is the only way, given the number of legislative days Congress has scheduled over the next six months, we realistically can expect Congress to complete DACA legislation in time"
- Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella posted a message in which he said that supporting DACA "is core to who we are at Microsoft and I believe it is core to what America is."
- The company vowed, "If Dreamers who are our employees are in court, we will be by their side."



## Poll Items

1. Overall, what grade do you give [company] for this political stand?

(Scale: A, B, C, D, F)

2. Evaluate the political stand on each dimension:

- a) Leadership      *the political stand is proactive, setting a standard for peer companies to follow*
- b) Consistency      *the political stand is consistent with the central and enduring values of the company*
- c) Transparency      *the company is forthcoming in describing the motivations behind the political stand*
- d) Materiality      *the political issue is substantively relevant when key stakeholders are deciding whether or how to interact with the company*

*(Each dimension rated on 1-5 scale, Extremely Inaccurate-Extremely Accurate)*

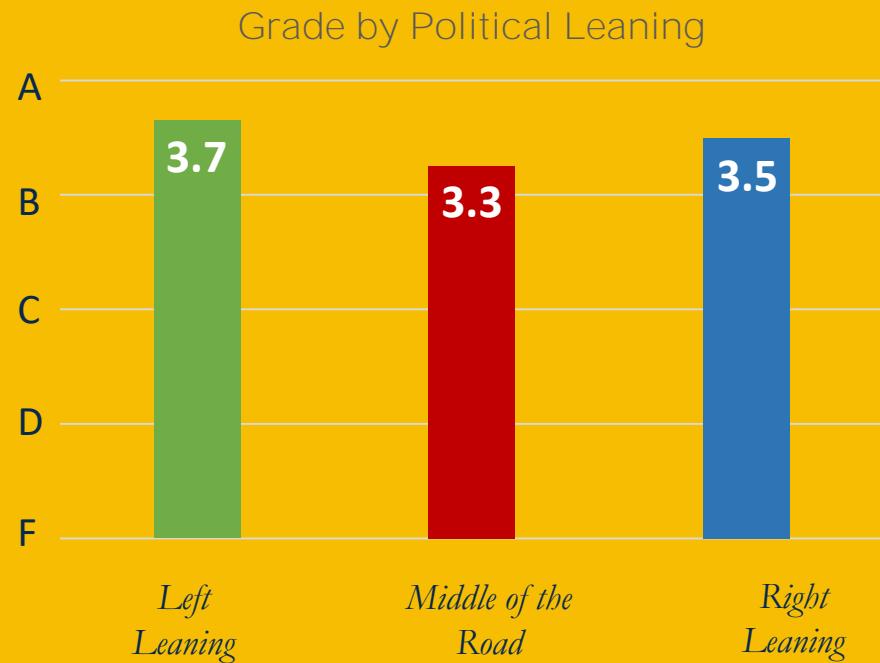
3. If you have additional comments, write them here. (Responses are anonymous unless you choose to sign your name)
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## Topline Result

# A

The panel gives Microsoft a grade of A for how they are handling the political issue.

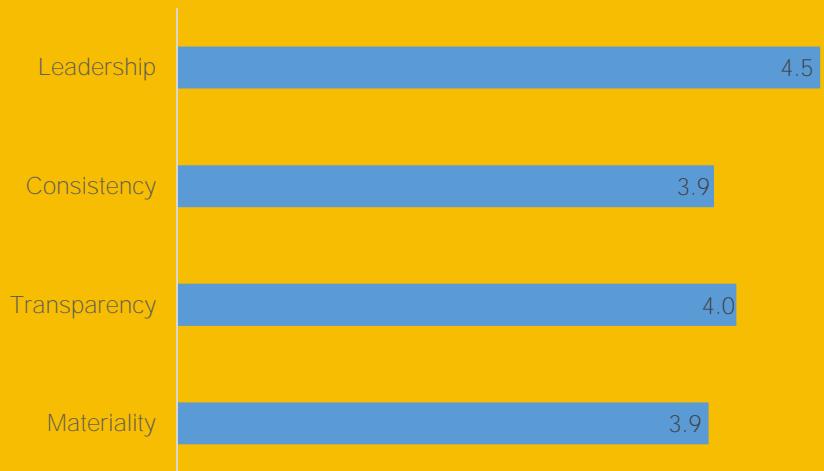
Scores were high across the political spectrum.



## Key Indicators

The panel gave high marks across the board to Microsoft: for taking leadership on the issue (4.5 on a 5-point scale), for being transparent in their position (4.0), for presenting a consistent message across the organization and over time (3.9), and for acting on an issue that is materially relevant to its stakeholders such as investors, employees, and customers (3.9).

Microsoft Performance by Key Dimension



## Open-ended Comments

The professors on the panel were generally positive in their comments. The company was lauded for tying its stance to American values, not just the company's values.

However, there was also some skepticism about Microsoft's motives. One panelist also objected to framing the stand as a material issue when the panelist believes it should be supported on moral grounds.

"For Microsoft, continued access to highly skilled foreign labor is essential. Thus, this seems a strategic "no-brainer", as it signals to those it seeks to attract and retain that the firm stands behind them. It's hard to see how any backlash would harm Microsoft, as anti-immigrant buyers cannot switch to Apple, if for no other reason, Apple has a similar stand. Thus, there only seems to be an upside."

-Michael Barnett, Rutgers University

"Brad Smith, in particular, did a nice job of tying the stance with Microsoft's core interests as well as core American values."

-Anonymous panelist

"One more example of companies "posing" to be socially responsible."

-Anonymous panelist

"It is a very reasoned and thoughtful statement on its blog."

-Anonymous panelist

"Focusing their opposition to DACA being revoked around their hiring pool---feels selfish. Dreamers, Microsoft employees or otherwise, are deserving of defense and protection."

-Anonymous panelist

## About Our Sponsor

Drexel LeBow's Institute for Strategic Leadership advances an evidence-based perspective to leadership. The Institute believes that clear, verifiable support will help leaders diagnose preconceived ideas and assumptions that may not be accurate, and replace them with practices that have been proven to be effective. It generates evidence –based knowledge through research grants, curriculum development, and corporate outreach.

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## ***Real Time Expert® Poll on Corporate Political Activism***

For more information, please contact:

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