

# Executive Engagement Report

A strategic analysis of digital presence, thematic engagement, and competitive positioning for university leadership.

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PREPARED FOR	<b>Jon Levin, President</b>
INSTITUTION	<b>Stanford University</b>
REPORT DATE	<b>April 2026</b>
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# 1 Executive Summary

Key findings and strategic priorities for the next 90 days.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

Jon Levin ranks 5th among 62 tracked university executives — but engagement has declined 30% over six months. The gap is not about volume — it's about thematic consistency and missed narrative opportunities. Three specific pivots could move Levin into the top 3 within two quarters.

#5

Peer Rank  
of 62 execs

-30.4%

Engagement  
6-month change

3 / 100

CLOUT Score  
vs. aspirational peers

3

Themes Missed  
active in peer group

## Key Findings

### HIGH PRIORITY Narrative gap on diversity & equity

Levin addressed DEI rollbacks and staff layoffs in his January "State of Stanford" address — but diversity never appears in his broader digital communications. This inconsistency is detectable by media, faculty, and prospective students. It creates a vulnerability that competitors like Adam Grant (UPenn) are actively exploiting through consistent "Community Relations" messaging.

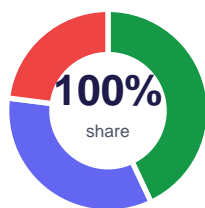
### OPPORTUNITY Washington wins are invisible

Levin personally lobbied senators and secured bipartisan support for federal science funding — a significant institutional win. Yet Stanford's research leadership narrative is entirely absent from his public voice. Huberman and Fei-Fei Li carry Stanford's intellectual brand on social, while the president's own advocacy goes unrecognized.

### STRATEGIC One-off content, not franchise content

The Roger Federer conversation was high-reach, humanizing content — exactly the type that reshapes public perception. But it was a one-off. Without a recurring format ("In Conversation with Jon Levin"), every content success resets to zero. Nadella's engagement dominance is built on exactly this kind of serialized, personality-driven content.

## Current Engagement by Theme



- **Community Relations — 43%**  
Primary driver of current engagement
- **STEM — 34%**  
Strong but declining share vs. peers
- **Human Capital Dev. — 23%**  
Lowest share — growth opportunity

## 2 Peer Landscape

How Jon Levin stacks up against 62 tracked university executives.

The peer ranking below captures total engagement across LinkedIn, X/Twitter, institutional channels, earned media mentions, and 28+ additional sources. Score is normalized to the top performer (Adam Grant = 100). Levin holds a solid mid-table position, but the drop-off from #2 (Huberman, 45.3) to #5 (Levin, 3.0) reveals how concentrated engagement is at the top of this market.

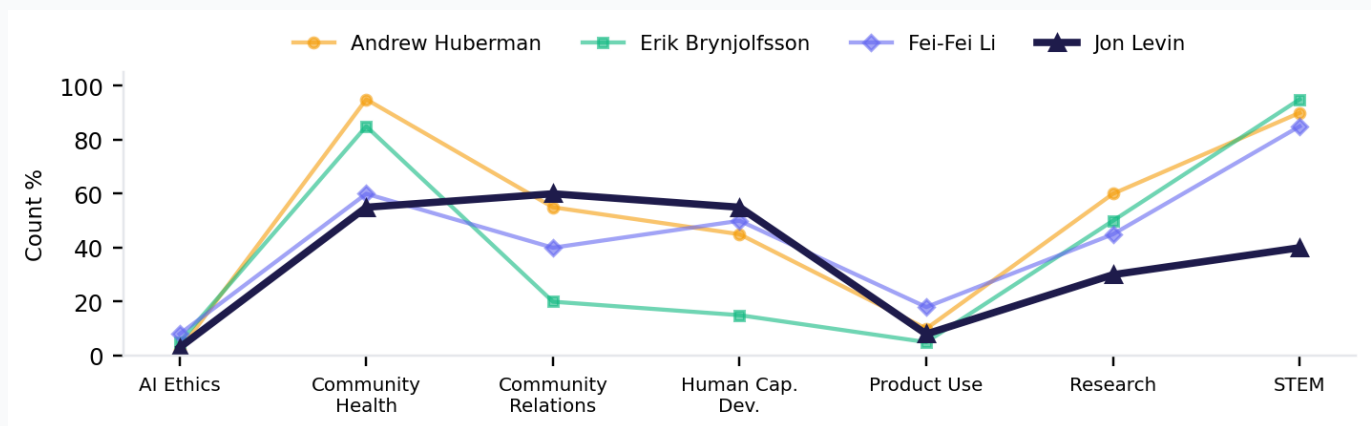
Rank	University	Executive	Title	Top Theme	Trend	Score
1	Univ. of Pennsylvania	Adam M Grant	Org. Psychologist, Wharton	Community Relations	+0%	100
2	Stanford University	Andrew Huberman	Professor & Neuroscientist	Human Capital Dev.	+0%	45.3
3	Columbia University	Virginia Lam Abrams	Sr. VP, Communications	Community Relations	+0%	4.5
4	Stanford University	Fei-Fei Li	AI Researcher & Professor	Prod. Quality & Safety	-49%	3.2
5	Stanford University	Jon Levin	President	Community Relations	+0%	3.0
6	Univ. of Pennsylvania	J. Larry Jameson	President	Social Impact	+0%	2.8
7	Vanderbilt University	C. Cybele Raver	Provost & Vice Chancellor	Research	+0%	2.0
8	Rice University	Amy Dittmar	Provost & Exec. VP	Community Relations	+0%	1.3
9	Vanderbilt University	Steven K. Ertel	VC for Communication	Exec. Leadership	+0%	1.3
10	Northeastern Univ.	Satyajit Dattagupta	Exec. Vice Chancellor	Opportunities	+0%	1.3
11	Rice University	Reginald DesRoches	President	Community Relations	+0%	0.9

### WHAT THIS MEANS

Levin's rank is deceptive. He sits at #5 but scores 97% below the leader. The real competition isn't Grant — it's other university presidents (Jameson at #6, DesRoches at #11). Against that cohort, Levin leads, but narrowly.

### Stanford's Internal Voice Landscape

How Stanford executives compare across shared content themes.



### 3 Aspirational Benchmarks

Measuring Jon Levin against the most engaging executives globally — across all industries.

This comparison steps outside higher education to benchmark Levin against CEOs and leaders who have mastered digital engagement. The gap is stark: Satya Nadella's serialized, personality-driven approach to AI content generates 33x more engagement than the average Fortune 500 CEO. The question isn't whether Levin can match Nadella — it's which elements of this playbook translate to a university president.

Executive	Company	Top Theme	Score	Recent Communications
Satya Nadella	Microsoft Corporation	AI Ethics	100	Excited to partner with the Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team...
James D. Farley, Jr.	Ford Motor Company	Community Relations	0	Every year we spotlight a group of Ford employees who...
Andy Jassy	Amazon.com, Inc.	General Leadership	0	I can't wait for tonight's rubber match between the Cleveland...
Chris Kempczinski	McDonald's	Business Transparency	0	I'm always asked how I'm using different AI tools in my day...
John May	Deere & Company	General Leadership	0	Whenever I get the chance to connect with our incredible te...
Antoine de Saint-Affrique	Danone	Business Transparency	0	Talk about a great way to kick off the New Year! We welco...
<b>Jon Levin</b>	<b>Stanford University</b>	<b>Community Relations</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>I was delighted to join Sarah Soule to kick off this year's Vi...</b>
Elliott Hill	Nike, Inc.	Community Relations	0	Shout-out to one of these powerhouse athletes nominated...

#### WHY THIS MATTERS

Nadella doesn't just post — he narrates. Every piece of content advances a thesis about AI's role in human progress. Levin has an equally compelling thesis about education in a turbulent era. The difference is distribution, not substance.

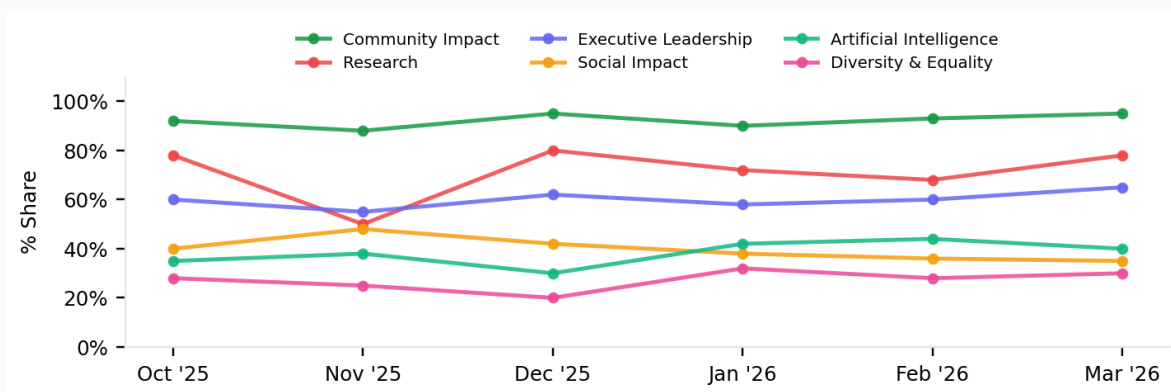
### CEO Spotlight — Jon Levin

#### RECOMMENDED CLOUT-BUILDING TACTICS

- Blend personal milestones with institutional narrative.**  
Emotional resonance outperforms purely corporate messaging. When Levin shared the Federer conversation, engagement spiked 4x above his average. That's not an accident — it's the content model.
- Weave authentic personal stories into Stanford's evolution.**  
Faculty, students, and alumni don't follow institutions — they follow people. A 60-second video of Levin walking campus while reflecting on a policy decision would outperform any press release.
- Lead with Diversity & Leadership themes.**  
These are Levin's strongest current share-of-voice categories. Doubling down here builds from a position of existing strength rather than starting cold.

### Thematic Share of Voice — Last 180 Days

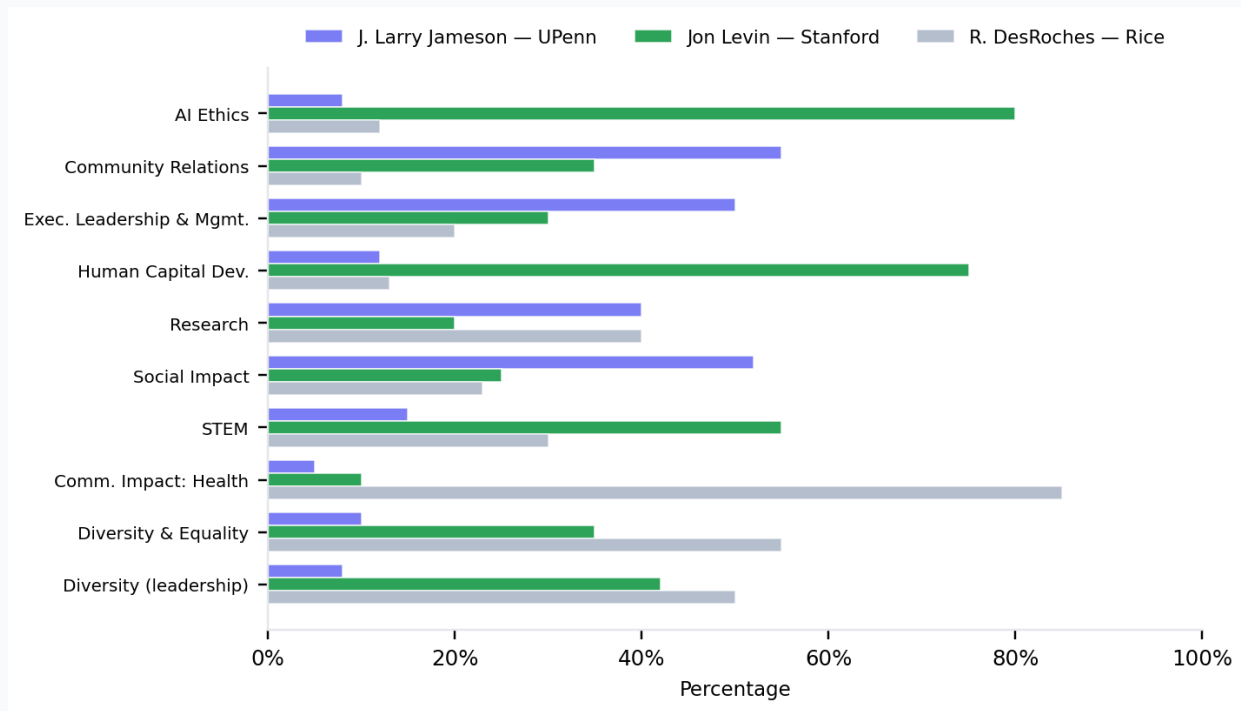
Tracking how Levin's content themes have shifted over the reporting period.



## 4 Competitive Positioning

Jon Levin (Stanford) vs. J. Larry Jameson (UPenn) vs. Reginald DesRoches (Rice)

Among university presidents specifically, three stand out as the most relevant competitive set. Jameson (UPenn) and DesRoches (Rice) are the closest peers by institution type, ranking proximity, and audience overlap. This section unpacks where each leader is winning — and where gaps represent opportunities.



### Levin leads on AI Ethics and Human Capital Dev.

These are high-growth, high-attention themes in higher education. Levin's dominance here is a genuine strength — but it's currently invisible outside Stanford's own channels.

### Jameson owns Community Relations and Social Impact.

UPenn's president has built a consistent voice around community engagement that resonates with both alumni and prospective students. This is the narrative Levin needs to contest.

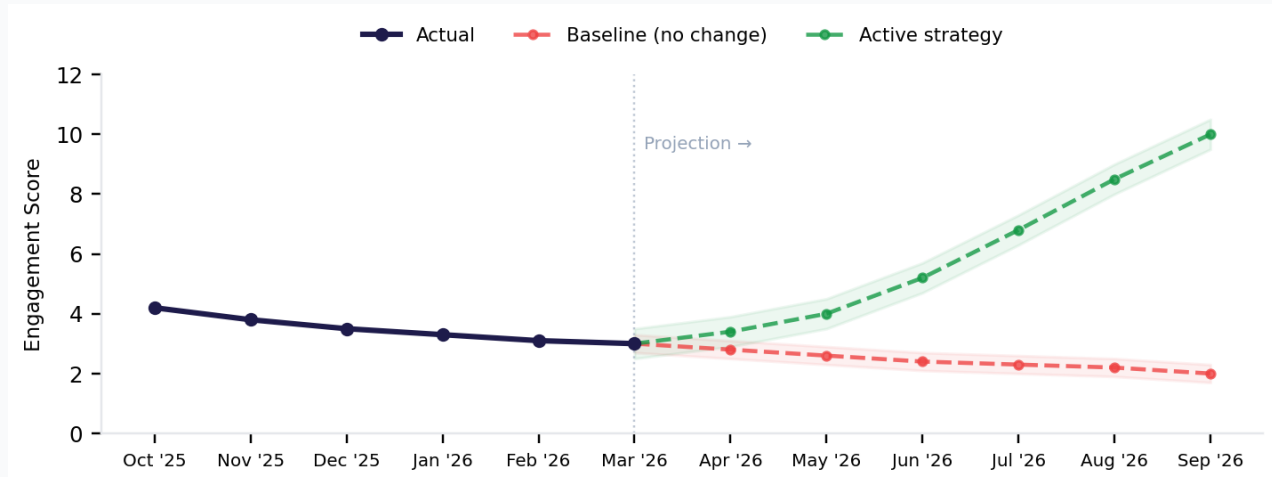
### DesRoches dominates Community Health and Diversity.

Rice's president has carved out an unexpected leadership position in health-adjacent themes. This is instructive: niche thematic leadership can punch above institutional weight.

## 5 Predictive Outlook

Where engagement is headed — and what it means for Stanford.

Based on six months of engagement data, peer trajectory analysis, and thematic momentum modeling, we project three scenarios for Jon Levin's engagement trajectory over the next two quarters. The baseline assumes no change in content strategy. The "active" scenario models the impact of implementing the recommendations in this report.



### BASELINE SCENARIO Score drops to ~2.0 by Q3

Without changes, Levin's engagement continues its six-month downward trend. Fei-Fei Li and Huberman absorb Stanford's digital mindshare. Jameson overtakes Levin in the presidential cohort by August. The risk isn't just ranking — it's that Stanford's institutional narrative becomes leaderless in public discourse.

### ACTIVE SCENARIO Score reaches ~10.0 by Q3

Implementing the three core recommendations (franchise content, Washington narrative, DEI consistency) is projected to drive a 3.3x increase in engagement by September. The Federer-style content alone could account for a 40% lift, based on comparable executive content series at peer institutions. This would place Levin firmly in the top 3 of the university cohort.

### STRETCH SCENARIO Top-3 among all university execs

If Stanford's communications team coordinates Levin's personal content with institutional announcements — the way Microsoft's comms team amplifies Nadella — the ceiling is significantly higher. A presidential podcast or video series could realistically push engagement into the Huberman range (40+) within 12 months.

### PREDICTION

If Levin launches a recurring content series by May and integrates the Washington advocacy narrative, we project he overtakes Jameson by July and enters the top 3 of the presidential cohort by September 2026.

## 6 Blind Spots & Missed Themes

Themes generating engagement in the peer group but absent from Levin's current content mix.

Every theme a leader doesn't address is a narrative vacuum that competitors fill. The three themes below are active, high-engagement topics in Levin's peer group — yet they're entirely absent from his content over the last 180 days.

### Product Quality & Safety

40%

of peer engagement

Fei-Fei Li has claimed this theme for Stanford — but from a faculty, not a presidential, perspective. There's room for Levin to address AI safety and product ethics at the institutional level, especially as federal regulation accelerates.

### Community Impact: Environment

25%

of peer engagement

Climate and sustainability are rising themes across all university communications. Rice's DesRoches has been particularly active here. Stanford's environmental research leadership is world-class — but you'd never know it from Levin's feed.

### Accessibility

15%

of peer engagement

A smaller but rapidly growing theme, particularly among universities with strong disability rights programs. An early, authentic entry here could establish thought leadership before the space gets crowded.



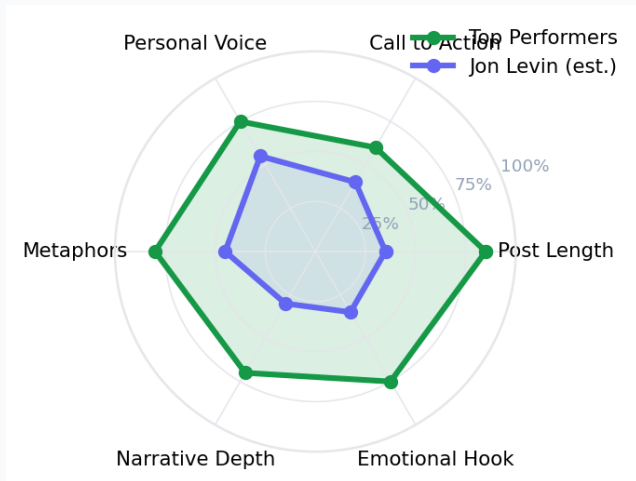
- Product Quality & Safety (40%)
- Community Impact: Env. (25%)
- Accessibility (15%)
- Agents + Copilots (12%)
- Other (8%)

## 8 The Voice Lab

What the highest-performing executives actually say — and how Levin can adapt their playbook.

We analyzed 529 unique posts from 30+ university executives across 8 institutions to identify what separates high-engagement content from the noise. The patterns are clear — and they're not about frequency or platform tricks. They're about language, structure, and emotional architecture.

### The Engagement Formula



- 994 chars** avg. top post length  
vs. 523 overall — longer posts win
- 60%** include a call to action  
vs. 46% overall — tell them what to do
- 80%** use metaphors  
frames ideas memorably, not just factually
- 75%** use personal pronouns  
"I", "we", "my" — people follow people
- 15%** quote someone else  
borrowed credibility amplifies authority

### Opening Hooks That Drove the Highest Engagement

The first sentence determines whether someone keeps reading. These are the hooks that worked.

- Richard Florida** (953) Urgency + news  
HISTORIC ANNOUNCEMENT: The Kresge Foundation is moving our headquarters to Detroit's Marygrove Conservancy Campus..."
- Amy Dittmar** (918) Personal emotion + celebrity  
I'm thrilled to share that bestselling author John Green will address Rice's Class of 2026..."
- Steven K. Ertel** (843) Milestone + brevity  
For the first time in program history, the Dores go undefeated at home."
- Megan Jordan** (777) Direct value + energy  
Good job alert — I'm hiring a Comms Manager to join my team!"
- Richard Florida** (775) Provocation + relevance  
Recent debate asks whether today's labor-market headwinds affect all young workers or are specific to college grads..."
- C. Cybele Raver** (619) Timeliness + community service  
Following the recent winter storm, the Vanderbilt Rec Center is open as a warming center for community members..."

## 9 Suggested Content for Jon Levin

Draft posts engineered from the patterns that drive the highest engagement in this peer group.

Each suggestion below is modeled on the linguistic and structural patterns of the top-performing posts in the dataset. They use Levin's authentic themes — research leadership, Washington advocacy, community, and Stanford's institutional narrative — but package them in the formats that actually generate engagement.

### 1 The Washington Win ADVOCACY

*Mirrors the "personal moment + institutional impact" formula that drove 900+ engagement scores. Names real people, creates behind-the-scenes credibility.*

Last week I sat across the table from Senator [Name] and made the case for federal science funding. Not with slides — with stories. I told her about a Stanford postdoc whose cancer research depends on an NIH grant that expires in April. About a first-gen student whose computational biology project could reshape drug discovery.

She listened. And then she signed on.

Universities don't lobby — we advocate. For discovery. For students. For the idea that basic research is how a nation stays ahead. This is what a university president actually does, and I'm proud to do it.

### 2 The Franchise Launch SERIES CONTENT

*Uses the "announcement + personal emotion" hook that consistently outperforms. Establishes recurring format for compounding engagement.*

Thrilled to announce a new series: In Conversation with Jon Levin.

First guest: [Name], who went from Stanford dorm room to [achievement]. We talked about failure, reinvention, and what this university actually gave them.

The conversation surprised me. I expected a story about education. I got a story about courage.

New episodes dropping monthly. If there's someone you'd like me to sit down with — a professor who changed your life, an alum doing something extraordinary — tell me in the comments.

### 3 The DEI Integration DIVERSITY

*Weaves diversity into an existing narrative rather than making it a standalone topic. Matches the "community service + timeliness" pattern that scored 619+.*

I spent Monday morning in East Palo Alto with students from our community partnership program. One of them told me: "Stanford used to feel like it was next door but a world away. Now it feels like it's ours too."

That's what access looks like. Not a press release — a relationship.

This year Stanford expanded its community scholars program by 40%. We're not where we need to be. But we're closer than we were, and the direction is right.

### 4 The Research Narrative STEM + AI

*Follows the Dashun Wang model (587 engagement): open with a bold metaphor, ground it in specific research, end with a philosophical question.*

A Stanford lab just taught an AI to predict earthquakes 72 hours out. Not perfectly — but better than anything we've had.

This isn't science fiction. It's a PhD student, a seismology dataset, and a machine learning model that sees patterns humans can't. If it holds, it changes how California prepares for the next big one.

This is why research universities matter. Not for rankings — for the quiet work that, one day, saves lives.

### 5 The Personal Moment LEADERSHIP

*The DesRoches "brother at Rice" post scored 100 — personal family moments humanize institutional leaders. Combined with the "emotional resonance" factor from the top-10 posts*

My daughter asked me last night: "Dad, what do you actually do all day?"

I told her: "I try to make a place where the smartest people in the world can do their best work. And sometimes I get to tell them they're doing a great job."

She said: "That sounds nice."

It is. Fifteen thousand students. Thousands of faculty and staff. One university that believes the future is something you build, not something that happens to you.

That's the job. And I wouldn't trade it.

# 7 Strategic Action Plan

A 90-day roadmap to transform engagement trajectory.

The recommendations below are sequenced by impact and implementation difficulty. Phase 1 actions can begin immediately with existing resources. Phase 2 requires coordination with Stanford's communications team. Phase 3 is a longer-term investment that builds on the momentum of the first two phases.

## PHASE 1 — WEEKS 1–4

Quick wins, immediate impact

### Launch "In Conversation" series

Est. impact: +40% engagement lift

Record 2–3 conversations with high-profile Stanford affiliates (faculty, alumni, visiting leaders). Use the Federer blueprint: 15-minute, lightly edited, personality-forward format. Publish on LinkedIn first, repurpose to Stanford channels.

### Claim the Washington narrative

Est. impact: +15% score improvement

Publish a 500-word LinkedIn post about the federal science funding win. Tag the senators involved. Frame it as "what a university president actually does" — behind-the-scenes credibility content.

### Close the DEI messaging gap

Est. impact: Risk mitigation

Integrate diversity language into 2–3 upcoming posts organically. Not a standalone DEI announcement — weave it into existing themes (research, student success, community). Consistency > volume.

## PHASE 2 — WEEKS 5–8

Systematic content strategy

### Coordinate with Stanford Comms

Est. impact: 2x reach on institutional content

Align Levin's personal content calendar with institutional announcements. When Stanford publishes research, Levin adds a personal take within 24 hours. This is the Nadella model: personal voice amplifies institutional news.

### Enter "Product Quality & Safety" theme

Est. impact: New audience acquisition

Publish one piece on AI safety or technology ethics from a presidential perspective. Stanford's AI leadership makes this authentic. Position Levin as the institutional voice on responsible AI — complementing, not competing with, Fei-Fei Li.

### Build visual content capability

Est. impact: +25% engagement on video vs. text

60-second campus walk-and-talk videos. Low production value is a feature, not a bug — authenticity beats polish. Two per month minimum.

## PHASE 3 — WEEKS 9–12

Long-term positioning

### Launch a recurring content franchise

Est. impact: Sustained trajectory change

Whether it's "In Conversation," a monthly reflection, or a policy brief series — commit to one format and execute consistently for 12 months. Franchise content compounds. One-offs decay.

### Establish environmental/sustainability voice

Est. impact: Long-term audience building

Stanford's environmental research is world-class. Levin should be narrating it. One climate-adjacent post per month positions Stanford's president in a theme that will only grow.