

GALLUP®

# Historically Black College and University Students' Views of Free Expression on Campus



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# Executive Summary

As a follow-up to their [April report](#) on U.S. college students' views of First Amendment rights, Knight Foundation and the Newseum Institute partnered with Gallup to conduct a survey of students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

For this study, Gallup conducted telephone interviews with 302 full-time students at HBCUs, 93% of whom identified their race as black or African-American. Throughout this report, HBCU students' opinions are compared with those of a national sample of 3,072 college students (including HBCU students) and, from that larger national sample, 357 black students at non-HBCU colleges.

- HBCU students tend to report a more positive racial climate on their campuses than the national sample of college students, which may reflect the majority-minority composition of the student bodies at HBCU colleges.
- HBCU students are more comfortable than black students at non-HBCU colleges about policies on their campus aimed at deterring offensive or biased speech.
- HBCU students are similar to the national sample in saying schools should foster open learning environments that allow a wide range of expression, including offensive speech, rather than foster positive learning environments that prohibit potentially offensive speech or expression.
- At the same time, HBCU students are much more likely than the national sample to favor limits on the press' First Amendment rights to cover campus protests. Fifty-six percent of HBCU students — double the percentage in the national sample (28%) — think college students should be able to prevent reporters from covering campus protests.
- Consistent with that viewpoint, HBCU students are much more likely than the national sample to say a desire to be left alone, a desire to share one's story on social media, and concerns about unfair reporting are legitimate reasons for student protestors to block news media from covering campus protests.
- Even as HBCU students endorse steps that effectively limit press freedoms, 75% of these students believe freedom of the press is secure in this country, similar to the 81% of all college students saying the same. HBCU students are also aligned with the national sample more generally in believing that freedom of speech and freedom of religion are secure in the U.S.

- HBCU students are much less likely than the national sample to believe freedom of assembly (45% to 66%) and freedom to petition the government (56% to 76%) are secure.
- HBCU students express less trust in the news media than the national sample, but HBCU students are more positive about the role of student-run media on their campuses.

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*

# Detailed Findings

## I. Campus Racial Climate

HBCU students generally report a more positive racial climate on their campuses than the national sample of college students, including black students at non-HBCU colleges. Forty-one percent of HBCU students describe inter-race relations on campus as “excellent,” compared with 20% of black students at non-HBCU schools. Twenty-six percent of the national sample, including those of all races, ethnicities and institution types (including HBCUs), rate race relations as excellent.

Thinking about how students of different races interact and treat one another, how would you rate the overall racial climate on your college’s campus — as excellent, good, only fair or poor?

|             | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|-------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % Excellent | 41            | 20                                  | 26                           |
| % Good      | 43            | 41                                  | 48                           |
| % Only fair | 11            | 26                                  | 20                           |
| % Poor      | 5             | 13                                  | 6                            |

Along these lines, when asked how the president or chancellor of their college has responded to concerns about diversity on campus, 78% of HBCU students say it has not been an issue on their campus. That compares with slightly less than half of college students nationwide who say the same. Students at all schools tend to be more positive than negative about the chancellor’s or president’s responsiveness when concerns about diversity arise.

Would you say the president or chancellor of your college does or does not appropriately respond to student concerns about diversity and the racial climate on campus, or has this not been an issue on your campus?

|                                  | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % Responds appropriately         | 15            | 34                                  | 34                           |
| % Does not respond appropriately | 7             | 20                                  | 17                           |
| % Has not been an issue          | 78            | 45                                  | 48                           |

HBCU campus student bodies tend to be less racially and ethnically diverse than the national average, as the vast majority of students attending those schools are black. Perhaps, as a result, only 10% of HBCU students describe their campus as highly diverse, compared with roughly one-third of the national sample.

How racially and ethnically diverse do you consider your college to be — highly diverse, somewhat diverse, not very diverse or not diverse at all?

|                      | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|----------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % Highly diverse     | 10            | 30                                  | 32                           |
| % Somewhat diverse   | 41            | 35                                  | 35                           |
| % Not very diverse   | 38            | 26                                  | 28                           |
| % Not diverse at all | 11            | 9                                   | 6                            |

HBCU students are somewhat less likely than college students nationally to report hearing disrespectful, inappropriate or offensive comments about someone’s race, ethnicity or religion. Whereas 31% of all college students in the national sample say they hear such comments at least occasionally, only 21% of HBCU students agree. Black students at non-HBCU schools report above-average rates of hearing offensive comments — 38% say they hear these at least occasionally.

How often do you hear someone at your college making disrespectful, inappropriate or offensive comments about someone’s race, ethnicity or religion — frequently, occasionally, rarely or never?

|                | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % Frequently   | 7             | 7                                   | 6                            |
| % Occasionally | 14            | 31                                  | 25                           |
| % Rarely       | 46            | 35                                  | 47                           |
| % Never        | 34            | 27                                  | 22                           |

## II. Perceived Security of First Amendment Rights

Of the five freedoms the First Amendment guarantees, freedom of the press is the one HBCU students are most likely to believe is “very secure” or “secure” (75%) in the U.S. today, followed by freedom of religion (62%), freedom of speech (60%), freedom to petition the government (56%), and freedom of assembly (45%). In fact, more describe freedom of assembly as threatened (54%) than as secure.

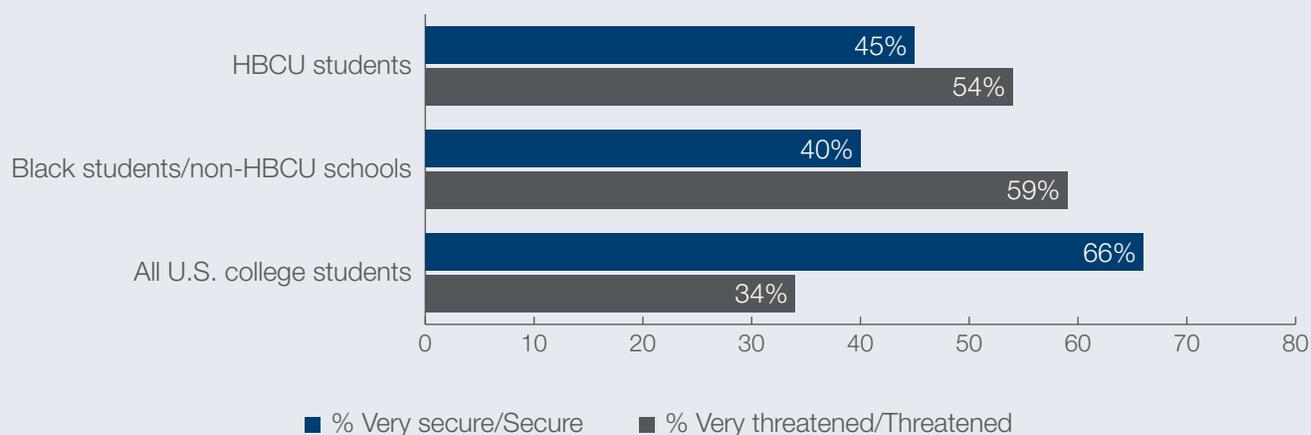
HBCU students, as well as black students at non-HBCU colleges, are less likely than the national sample to view each of the five freedoms as secure. The biggest difference is on freedom of assembly, a right deemed secure by 66% of the national sample but only 40% of black students at non-HBCU schools and 45% of HBCU students.

HBCU students diverge from black students at non-HBCU colleges in the degree to which they view freedom to petition the government as secure: 56% of HBCU students versus 69% of black students at other colleges believe that right is secure.

| Do you think each of the following rights is very secure, secure, threatened or very threatened in this country today? |               |                                     |                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                        | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
| <b>Freedom of the press</b>                                                                                            |               |                                     |                              |
| % Very secure/Secure                                                                                                   | 75            | 74                                  | 81                           |
| % Very threatened/Threatened                                                                                           | 25            | 27                                  | 18                           |
| <b>Freedom of religion</b>                                                                                             |               |                                     |                              |
| % Very secure/Secure                                                                                                   | 62            | 57                                  | 68                           |
| % Very threatened/Threatened                                                                                           | 38            | 43                                  | 33                           |
| <b>Freedom of speech</b>                                                                                               |               |                                     |                              |
| % Very secure/Secure                                                                                                   | 60            | 62                                  | 73                           |
| % Very threatened/Threatened                                                                                           | 40            | 29                                  | 27                           |
| <b>Freedom to petition the government, meaning presenting requests to the government without fear or punishment</b>    |               |                                     |                              |
| % Very secure/Secure                                                                                                   | 56            | 69                                  | 76                           |
| % Very threatened/Threatened                                                                                           | 44            | 30                                  | 23                           |
| <b>Free for people to assemble peacefully</b>                                                                          |               |                                     |                              |
| % Very secure/Secure                                                                                                   | 45            | 40                                  | 66                           |
| % Very threatened/Threatened                                                                                           | 54            | 59                                  | 34                           |

*HBCU students and black students at non-HBCU colleges perceive the freedom of assembly as threatened, but the national sample of college students says it is secure.*

**Freedom for people to assemble peacefully**



HBCU students are no different from the national sample in their perceptions of whether Americans' ability to exercise their free speech rights is stronger than it was 20 years ago. Roughly half of HBCU students, black students at non-HBCU colleges and the national sample say free speech rights are stronger now, while about one-quarter of each group says those rights are weaker today.

From what you have heard or read, do you think Americans' ability to exercise their free speech rights is stronger, about the same or weaker than it was 20 years ago?

|                  | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % Stronger       | 50            | 50                                  | 53                           |
| % About the same | 27            | 24                                  | 17                           |
| % Weaker         | 22            | 25                                  | 27                           |

### III. Free Speech on Campus

The overwhelming majority of HBCU students (70%) say colleges should strive to create an open learning environment that allows students to express various viewpoints, including offensive ones, rather than a positive environment that prohibits certain types of speech that could hurt or offend. That sentiment is shared by black students at non-HBCU colleges and by the national sample, although HBCU students and black students at non-HBCU schools slightly exceed the national average in believing colleges should deliberately foster a positive environment.

If you had to choose, do you think it is more important for colleges to — [ROTATED: create a positive learning environment for all students by prohibiting certain speech or expression of viewpoints that are offensive or biased against certain groups of people (or to) create an open learning environment, where students are exposed to all types of speech and viewpoints, even if it means allowing speech that is offensive or biased against certain groups of people]?

|                                                    | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % Open environment/<br>Allow offensive speech      | 70            | 70                                  | 78                           |
| % Positive environment/<br>Prohibit certain speech | 29            | 30                                  | 22                           |

Students in the national sample, including HBCU students, generally oppose policies that would restrict the expression of political views that could offend, but they support restrictions on slurs and wearing costumes that stereotype certain racial or ethnic groups on campus. On all of these matters, black students from non-HBCU colleges are most likely to favor restrictions. HBCU students' level of support for banning slurs is similar to the national sample, but HBCU students show above average support for restrictions on stereotypical costumes and offensive political views.

Do you think colleges should or should not be able to establish policies that restrict each of the following types of speech or expression on campus? How about — [RANDOM ORDER]?

|                                                                                                   | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Expressing political views that are upsetting or offensive to certain groups</b>               |               |                                     |                              |
| % Yes, should be able to restrict                                                                 | 34            | 41                                  | 27                           |
| % No, should not be able to                                                                       | 65            | 59                                  | 72                           |
| <b>Using slurs and other language on campus that is intentionally offensive to certain groups</b> |               |                                     |                              |
| % Yes, should be able to restrict                                                                 | 68            | 79                                  | 69                           |
| % No, should not be able to                                                                       | 32            | 21                                  | 31                           |
| <b>Wearing costumes that stereotype certain racial or ethnic groups</b>                           |               |                                     |                              |
| % Yes, should be able to restrict                                                                 | 71            | 77                                  | 63                           |
| % No, should not be able to                                                                       | 28            | 23                                  | 37                           |

HBCU students generally think their institution has done an appropriate job of adopting policies designed to discourage offensive speech. Roughly seven in 10 say their college has been “about right” in this area, in line with the national average. By comparison, black students at non-HBCU schools are less likely to hold this view: 54% say their school has been about right in taking steps to deter potentially harmful speech, while 42% say their college has not gone far enough.

Next, we’d like you to think about policies some colleges have adopted that are designed to discourage speech and behavior that could be seen as offensive or insensitive toward certain groups of people. Based on what you know about any steps your college has taken in this area, has your school — [ROTATED: gone too far, been about right, (or) not gone far enough]?

|                       | <b>HBCU students</b> | <b>Black students/<br/>non-HBCU schools</b> | <b>All U.S.<br/>college students</b> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| % Gone too far        | 3                    | 3                                           | 7                                    |
| % Been about right    | 68                   | 54                                          | 71                                   |
| % Not gone far enough | 26                   | 42                                          | 20                                   |

While students in the national sample tilt toward agreeing their campus climate prevents people from saying things because others might find them offensive (54% to 46%), HBCU students tilt in the other direction, with the majority disagreeing that such a “chilling effect” on speech exists on their campus.

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: the climate on my campus prevents some people from saying things they believe because others might find them offensive.

|                     | <b>HBCU students</b> | <b>Black students/<br/>non-HBCU schools</b> | <b>All U.S.<br/>college students</b> |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| % Strongly agree    | 18                   | 16                                          | 15                                   |
| % Somewhat agree    | 26                   | 34                                          | 39                                   |
| % Somewhat disagree | 27                   | 23                                          | 31                                   |
| % Strongly disagree | 29                   | 27                                          | 15                                   |

### IV. Press Rights and Campus Protests

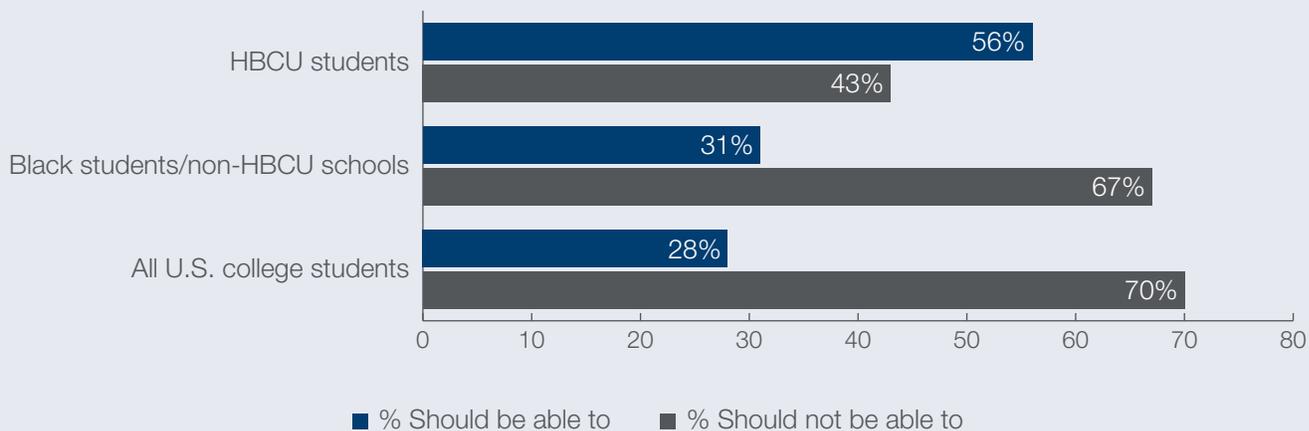
HBCU students report higher levels of attention to the protests on racial matters that occurred on numerous college campuses last fall, most notably at the University of Missouri. Forty-three percent of HBCU students say they paid “a great deal” of attention to news of the protests, compared with 34% of black students at non-HBCU schools and 25% of the national sample.

As you may recall, student protests took place on a number of college campuses recently over concerns about racism and the treatment of minority students. How much have you heard or read about these protests — a great deal, a fair amount, only a little or nothing at all?

|                  | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % Great deal     | 43            | 34                                  | 25                           |
| % Fair amount    | 34            | 49                                  | 46                           |
| % Only a little  | 20            | 13                                  | 24                           |
| % Nothing at all | 3             | 4                                   | 6                            |

Those protests brought into sharp focus the sometimes competing claims to the exercise of First Amendment rights, in particular, the rights of free speech, press and assembly. HBCU students appear to sympathize more with the protestors than with reporters about whether students should be able to deny press access to the protests. By 56% to 43%, HBCU students say that student protestors should be able to prevent reporters from covering campus protests. College students nationally take the media’s side, by a 70% to 28% margin. Notably, black students at non-HBCU colleges also express more sympathy with the media (67%) than with the protestors (31%) in this dispute.

#### Do you think students should or should not be able to prevent reporters from covering protests held on college campuses?



HBCU students tend to be sympathetic to various reasons protestors might offer to block media coverage of the event. Seven in 10 HBCU students believe it is a legitimate reason for protestors to deny press access to campus events because the protestors assert a right to be left alone and, separately, because the protestors believe the press will be unfair in their reporting. Slightly fewer, 62%, think protestors' desire to tell their own story on social media and the internet justifies preventing media coverage of the event.

Black students at non-HBCU colleges also tend to see the reasons to deny the press access to a protest as legitimate, though they are slightly less likely to do so than HBCU students.

College students in the national sample are largely divided on the legitimacy of each of these three reasons why protestors might attempt to block the press from covering a campus protest.

Next, we'd like you to think about the ability of the press to cover protests, demonstrations or other public events. Do you believe each of the following is — or is not — a legitimate reason for people attending a protest or other public gathering to deny the press access to an event? How about — [RANDOM ORDER]?

|                                                                                                                    | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>The people at the protest or public gathering say they have a right to be left alone</b>                        |               |                                     |                              |
| % Legitimate reason                                                                                                | 73            | 61                                  | 48                           |
| % Not a legitimate reason                                                                                          | 26            | 39                                  | 51                           |
| <b>The people at the protest believe the press will be unfair to them in its reporting</b>                         |               |                                     |                              |
| % Legitimate reason                                                                                                | 73            | 66                                  | 49                           |
| % Not a legitimate reason                                                                                          | 27            | 33                                  | 50                           |
| <b>The people at the protest or public gathering want to tell their own story on the internet and social media</b> |               |                                     |                              |
| % Legitimate reason                                                                                                | 62            | 53                                  | 44                           |
| % Not a legitimate reason                                                                                          | 37            | 46                                  | 56                           |

*HBCU students say that student protestors should be able to prevent reporters from covering campus protests. U.S. college students as a whole believe protestors cannot deny the media access.*

## V. Views of the News Media

Correspondingly, HBCU students have a low level of trust in the news media. Whereas 42% of the national sample and 39% of black students at non-HBCU schools say they have “a great deal” or “fair amount” of trust in the news media to report the news accurately and fairly, only 28% of HBCU students agree.

Next, we have some questions about the press, meaning reporters and journalists who cover the news. How much do you trust the press to report the news accurately and fairly — a great deal, a fair amount, not much or not at all?

|               | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % Great deal  | 3             | 4                                   | 3                            |
| % Fair amount | 25            | 35                                  | 39                           |
| % Not much    | 49            | 51                                  | 49                           |
| % None at all | 24            | 10                                  | 10                           |

HBCU students are, however, similar to the national sample in their opinions about whether a free press is more important to democracy than in the past. Both groups are about evenly divided between saying a free press is "more important" or "just as important" as it was 20 years ago. Black students at non-HBCU colleges show a clearer belief that a free press is more important today.

From what you have heard or read, do you think a free press is — [ROTATED: more important to democracy today than it was 20 years ago, just as important, (or) less important to democracy today than it was 20 years ago]?

|                     | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % More important    | 40            | 56                                  | 46                           |
| % Just as important | 44            | 35                                  | 44                           |
| % Less important    | 16            | 9                                   | 10                           |

Despite lower levels of trust in the news media, HBCU students are quite positive about the roles their student-run media play on campus. They are much more likely than the national sample of college students to view their student-run media as playing a very important role in creating a place for an open exchange of ideas on campus, 51% to 24%, respectively. By somewhat smaller margins, HBCU students are more likely than the national sample to say their student media have a very important role in keeping students up to date on campus events and policies or issues that affect them.

**(Asked of those whose college has student-run media)** How important a role does your student-run newspaper or website have in each of the following areas of campus life — a very important role, somewhat important or not too important? How about — [RANDOM ORDER]?

|                                                                               | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Creating a place for an open exchange of ideas on campus</b>               |               |                                     |                              |
| % Very important                                                              | 51            | 33                                  | 24                           |
| % Somewhat important                                                          | 33            | 37                                  | 46                           |
| % Not that important                                                          | 16            | 23                                  | 27                           |
| <b>Keeping students up to date on events happening on campus</b>              |               |                                     |                              |
| % Very important                                                              | 61            | 63                                  | 44                           |
| % Somewhat important                                                          | 26            | 26                                  | 40                           |
| % Not that important                                                          | 14            | 11                                  | 14                           |
| <b>Keeping students up to date on key policies or issues that affect them</b> |               |                                     |                              |
| % Very important                                                              | 45            | 32                                  | 32                           |
| % Somewhat important                                                          | 35            | 41                                  | 46                           |
| % Not that important                                                          | 19            | 20                                  | 21                           |

HBCU students (40%) and black students at non-HBCU colleges (27%) differ from the national sample (51%) in their willingness to rely on traditional news sources to get an accurate depiction of what is happening in the world. At the same time, traditional news sources (40%) still outrank social media posts (32%) and digital-only news sources (25%) as HBCU students' preferred source. That is not the case among black students from non-HBCU colleges, among whom newer digital-only news sources (37%) and social media posts (33%) are more commonly trusted sources than traditional news media (27%).

If you had to pick just one of the following to get an accurate picture of what is happening in the U.S. and the world on issues you care about, would you — [ROTATED: watch or read stories from a traditional news organization in a newspaper, on TV, or online, go to a newer digital-only news source like BuzzFeed, Mic or Huffington Post to read or watch their stories, (or) read or watch news items posted or linked to by people you follow online on sites like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter]?

|                                   | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % Traditional news sources        | 40            | 27                                  | 51                           |
| % Newer digital-only news sources | 25            | 37                                  | 20                           |
| % Items posted on social media    | 32            | 33                                  | 26                           |

# Conclusion

HBCU students have a unique experience compared with most other college students in that they are predominantly members of U.S. racial minority groups but attend colleges where they are the majority racial group on campus. Perhaps, as a result, HBCU students tend to report a more positive racial environment on campus than college students nationwide.

Despite their unique college experiences, HBCU students are similar to the national sample of college students in viewing most of the First Amendment rights as secure in the U.S. today and in believing free speech rights are no less secure than in the past.

Like the nationwide college student sample, HBCU students also favor an open learning environment that invites students to express a range of viewpoints, even some potentially offensive ones.

At the same time, HBCU students appear more willing than the national sample to deny First Amendment freedoms to the press. A majority of HBCU students believe student protestors should be able to deny the media the ability to cover campus protests, something the national sample — including black students at non-HBCU colleges — oppose. Also, HBCU students are more likely than the national sample to view several reasons student protestors might give to prevent the press from reporting on campus protests as legitimate.

Taken together, these surveys of college students paint a complicated and important picture of free speech on campuses today. Students in diverse higher education environments in terms of size, geography and demography are all confronting significant issues related to free expression, press freedom and the First Amendment. While their environments and backgrounds seem to have some influence on their views and responses to key events, it is clear students are thinking about these rights and the nature of expression in new and changing ways.

# Appendix

## Additional Questions Asked on the Survey

Just your best guess, what percentage of [RANDOM ORDER] do you think respect freedom of speech for all Americans? [OPEN-ENDED]

|                         | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>U.S. Adults</b>      |               |                                     |                              |
| Mean                    | 55.5          | 54.3                                | 62.6                         |
| <b>College Students</b> |               |                                     |                              |
| Mean                    | 63.1          | 69.1                                | 71.0                         |

How would you rate the job Americans do at seeking out and listening to differing viewpoints from their own — very good, good, fair, poor or very poor?

|             | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|-------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % Very good | 2             | 2                                   | 2                            |
| % Good      | 15            | 15                                  | 14                           |
| % Fair      | 45            | 33                                  | 35                           |
| % Poor      | 29            | 36                                  | 38                           |
| % Very poor | 9             | 15                                  | 12                           |

When it comes to people living in the United States who practice different religious beliefs, is our society too accommodating, about right or not accommodating enough?

|                            | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % Too accommodating        | 9             | 5                                   | 10                           |
| % About right              | 27            | 35                                  | 34                           |
| % Not accommodating enough | 63            | 60                                  | 56                           |

As far as you know, has each of the following types of demonstrations or protests taken place on your campus during the 2015-2016 school year? [RANDOM ORDER]  
**(Asked of those who say protest took place on their campus)** Did you personally attend that type of demonstration or protest, or not?

|                                                                               | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Demonstrations or protests regarding free speech</b>                       |               |                                     |                              |
| % Took place/Participated                                                     | 12            | 3                                   | 3                            |
| % Took place/Did not participate                                              | 20            | 17                                  | 19                           |
| % Did not participate                                                         | 68            | 77                                  | 73                           |
| <b>Demonstrations or protests regarding issues of diversity and inclusion</b> |               |                                     |                              |
| % Took place/Participated                                                     | 15            | 19                                  | 12                           |
| % Took place/Did not participate                                              | 21            | 24                                  | 42                           |
| % Did not participate                                                         | 63            | 56                                  | 44                           |

Do you believe the president or chancellor of your college values racial and ethnic diversity, or not?

|                | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % Yes, does    | 91            | 85                                  | 88                           |
| % No, does not | 9             | 12                                  | 10                           |

Next, does your college have any student-run media, such as a newspaper or website, where students are responsible for the content?

|                | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % Yes, does    | 85            | 95                                  | 94                           |
| % No, does not | 12            | 5                                   | 4                            |

Where do you get most of your news about important things happening in the U.S. and the world?  
 [OPEN-ENDED]

|                                         | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                                         | %             | %                                   | %                            |
| Internet/Web/Online news (non-specific) | 41            | 34                                  | 38                           |
| Social media (non-specific)             | 32            | 30                                  | 16                           |
| TV news (non-specific)                  | 25            | 19                                  | 14                           |
| Local news (non-specific)               | 18            | 19                                  | 6                            |
| Newspapers (non-specific)               | 12            | 7                                   | 10                           |
| CNN                                     | 10            | 9                                   | 9                            |
| Word of mouth                           | 10            | 7                                   | 7                            |
| Family/Friends/Peers                    | 10            | 7                                   | 5                            |
| Teachers/Professors                     | 7             | 3                                   | 3                            |
| Twitter                                 | 6             | 6                                   | 5                            |
| Facebook                                | 5             | 12                                  | 10                           |
| Email (non-specific)                    | 3             | 1                                   | 2                            |
| Other specific internet news website    | 3             | 2                                   | 1                            |
| Phone/Cellphone (non-specific)          | 3             | *                                   | 1                            |
| Other specific TV stations/networks     | 2             | 2                                   | 5                            |
| Other specific radio station mentions   | 2             | 4                                   | 3                            |
| School newspaper                        | 2             | 1                                   | 2                            |
| Mobile app (non-specific)               | 2             | 1                                   | 1                            |
| Other specific social media site        | 2             | 2                                   | 1                            |
| <i>The New York Times</i>               | 1             | 4                                   | 7                            |
| BBC                                     | 1             | 1                                   | 3                            |
| Yahoo! News                             | 1             | 2                                   | 3                            |
| Other specific newspaper                | 1             | 1                                   | 2                            |
| Reddit                                  | 1             | *                                   | 2                            |
| Publications/Journals (non-specific)    | 1             | 1                                   | 2                            |
| Google News                             | 1             | 1                                   | 1                            |
| News apps (non-specific)                | 1             | 1                                   | 1                            |
| YouTube                                 | 1             | 1                                   | 1                            |

**Continued**

Where do you get most of your news about important things happening in the U.S. and the world?  
[OPEN-ENDED]

|                                        | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|----------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                                        | %             | %                                   | %                            |
| MSNBC                                  | 1             | 1                                   | 1                            |
| The Huffington Post                    | 1             | —                                   | 1                            |
| BuzzFeed                               | 1             | 2                                   | 1                            |
| Web-based newspapers<br>(non-specific) | 1             | 2                                   | 1                            |
| Fox News                               | *             | 2                                   | 3                            |
| National Public Radio/NPR              | *             | 2                                   | 3                            |
| <i>The Washington Post</i>             | *             | *                                   | 1                            |
| Magazines (non-specific)               | *             | 1                                   | 1                            |
| Al Jazeera                             | *             | 1                                   | 1                            |
| NBC                                    | *             | —                                   | 1                            |
| <i>The Wall Street Journal</i>         | —             | 1                                   | 2                            |
| theSkimm                               | —             | *                                   | 2                            |
| <i>The Economist</i>                   | —             | —                                   | 1                            |
| Classmates                             | —             | *                                   | 1                            |
| None                                   | 1             | *                                   | 1                            |
| Other                                  | 5             | 47                                  | 30                           |

Note: \*Less than 0.5%  
— 0%

Which of the following comes closest to how you handle posts on social media written by people you disagree with — you read them and sometimes respond, you read them but don't respond, you ignore them, or you block or unfollow the people posting them?

|                           | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| % Read, sometimes respond | 35            | 34                                  | 23                           |
| % Read, don't respond     | 43            | 51                                  | 58                           |
| % Ignore them             | 13            | 12                                  | 13                           |
| % Block or unfollow them  | 7             | 3                                   | 5                            |

Thinking generally about how people interact on social media, do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements. How about — [RANDOM ORDER]?

|                                                                                                                                   | HBCU students | Black students/<br>non-HBCU schools | All U.S.<br>college students |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>The dialogue that occurs on social media is usually civil</b>                                                                  |               |                                     |                              |
| % Strongly agree                                                                                                                  | 7             | 8                                   | 6                            |
| % Somewhat agree                                                                                                                  | 35            | 29                                  | 35                           |
| % Somewhat disagree                                                                                                               | 31            | 38                                  | 39                           |
| % Strongly disagree                                                                                                               | 27            | 26                                  | 21                           |
| <b>It is too easy for people to say things anonymously on social media</b>                                                        |               |                                     |                              |
| % Strongly agree                                                                                                                  | 61            | 51                                  | 43                           |
| % Somewhat agree                                                                                                                  | 23            | 29                                  | 31                           |
| % Somewhat disagree                                                                                                               | 7             | 17                                  | 19                           |
| % Strongly disagree                                                                                                               | 9             | 3                                   | 6                            |
| <b>Social media allows people to have more control over their story</b>                                                           |               |                                     |                              |
| % Strongly agree                                                                                                                  | 52            | 46                                  | 35                           |
| % Somewhat agree                                                                                                                  | 35            | 49                                  | 51                           |
| % Somewhat disagree                                                                                                               | 7             | 3                                   | 10                           |
| % Strongly disagree                                                                                                               | 6             | 2                                   | 3                            |
| <b>People use social media to effectively express their views and be heard</b>                                                    |               |                                     |                              |
| % Strongly agree                                                                                                                  | 66            | 58                                  | 43                           |
| % Somewhat agree                                                                                                                  | 31            | 35                                  | 45                           |
| % Somewhat disagree                                                                                                               | 2             | 5                                   | 10                           |
| % Strongly disagree                                                                                                               | 2             | 2                                   | 3                            |
| <b>Social media stifles free expression because too many people block views they disagree with</b>                                |               |                                     |                              |
| % Strongly agree                                                                                                                  | 23            | 11                                  | 12                           |
| % Somewhat agree                                                                                                                  | 39            | 42                                  | 36                           |
| % Somewhat disagree                                                                                                               | 21            | 23                                  | 38                           |
| % Strongly disagree                                                                                                               | 17            | 23                                  | 15                           |
| <b>Social media stifles free expression because people are afraid of being attacked or shamed by those who disagree with them</b> |               |                                     |                              |
| % Strongly agree                                                                                                                  | 31            | 20                                  | 13                           |
| % Somewhat agree                                                                                                                  | 32            | 35                                  | 36                           |
| % Somewhat disagree                                                                                                               | 20            | 26                                  | 34                           |
| % Strongly disagree                                                                                                               | 17            | 20                                  | 17                           |

# Methodology

This study includes a sample of U.S. college students and an oversample of students at HBCUs.

Results for the **college student sample** are based on telephone interviews with a random sample of 3,072 U.S. college students, aged 18 to 24, who are currently enrolled as full-time students at four-year colleges. Gallup selected a random sample of 240 U.S. four-year colleges, drawn from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), that were stratified by college enrollment size, public or private affiliation, and region of the country. Gallup then contacted each sampled college in an attempt to obtain a sample of their students. Thirty-two colleges agreed to participate. The participating colleges were University of California-Merced, Culver-Stockton College, Duke University, East Georgia State College, Georgia Institute of Technology, Green River College, Harrisburg University of Science and Technology, James Madison University, Keuka College, Kentucky State University, LaGrange College, University of Louisiana at Monroe, Lourdes University, Martin Luther College, Morehouse College, Minnesota State University Moorhead, University of North Alabama, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Northwestern University, University of Oregon, University of the Ozarks, Pace University, Rocky Mountain College, Saint Francis University, The University of Scranton, Southeastern Baptist College, Southwest Minnesota State University, Spalding University, Tabor College, Texas Christian University, Trinity Baptist College, and Troy University.

Gallup used random samples of 40% of each college's student body, with one school providing a 32% sample, for its sample frame. The sample frame consisted of 54,806 college students from the 32 colleges. Gallup then emailed each sampled student to complete an internet survey to confirm his or her eligibility for the study and request a phone number to contact the student for a telephone interview.

A total of 6,928 college students completed the web survey, for a response rate of 13%. Of these, 6,814 students were eligible and provided a working phone number. Telephone interviews were conducted Feb. 29-March 15, 2016. The response rate for the phone survey was 49% using the American Association for Public Opinion Research's RR-III calculation. The combined response rate for the web recruit and telephone surveys was 6%.

The college student sample was weighted to correct for unequal selection probability and nonresponse. It was also weighted to match the demographics of U.S. colleges on enrollment, public or private affiliation, and region of the country, based on statistics from the IPEDS database, to ensure the sample is nationally representative of U.S. college students.

For results based on this sample of college students, the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 3$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Results for the **non-HBCU black college student sample** are derived from the larger college sample and are based on interviews with 357 black students who attend a non-HBCU college. For results based on this sample, the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 7$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Results for the **HBCU student sample** are based on telephone interviews with a random sample of 302 U.S. college students, aged 18 to 24, who are currently enrolled as full-time students at four-year Historically Black Colleges and Universities. This includes interviews with 71 students conducted as part of the national college survey and 231 as a special HBCU student oversample. Gallup selected a random sample of 24 HBCU colleges, drawn from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), that were stratified by public or private affiliation. Gallup then contacted each sampled college in an attempt to obtain a sample of their students. Six colleges agreed to participate. The participating colleges were Coppin State University, Kentucky State University, Lane College, Lincoln University, Morehouse College, and Virginia State University.

Gallup used random samples of 85% of each college's student body for its sample frame. The sample frame consisted of 8,653 college students from the six colleges. Gallup then emailed each sampled student to complete an internet survey to confirm his or her eligibility for the study and request a phone number to contact the student for a telephone interview.

A total of 743 HBCU students completed the web survey, for a response rate of 9%. Of these, 653 students were eligible and provided a working phone number. Telephone interviews were conducted Feb. 29-June 9, 2016. The response rate for the phone survey was 51% using the American Association for Public Opinion Research's RR-III calculation. The combined response rate for the web recruit and telephone surveys was 5%.

The HBCU student sample was weighted to correct for unequal selection probability and nonresponse. It was also weighted to match the demographics of HBCU colleges on public or private affiliation and student gender, based on statistics from the IPEDS database, to ensure the sample is nationally representative of HBCU students. For results based on this sample of HBCU college students, the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 6$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

All reported margins of sampling error include the computed design effects for weighting.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

The full questionnaire, topline results, detailed cross-tabulations and raw data are available upon request.

# About

## About KNIGHT FOUNDATION

Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. We believe that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged.

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