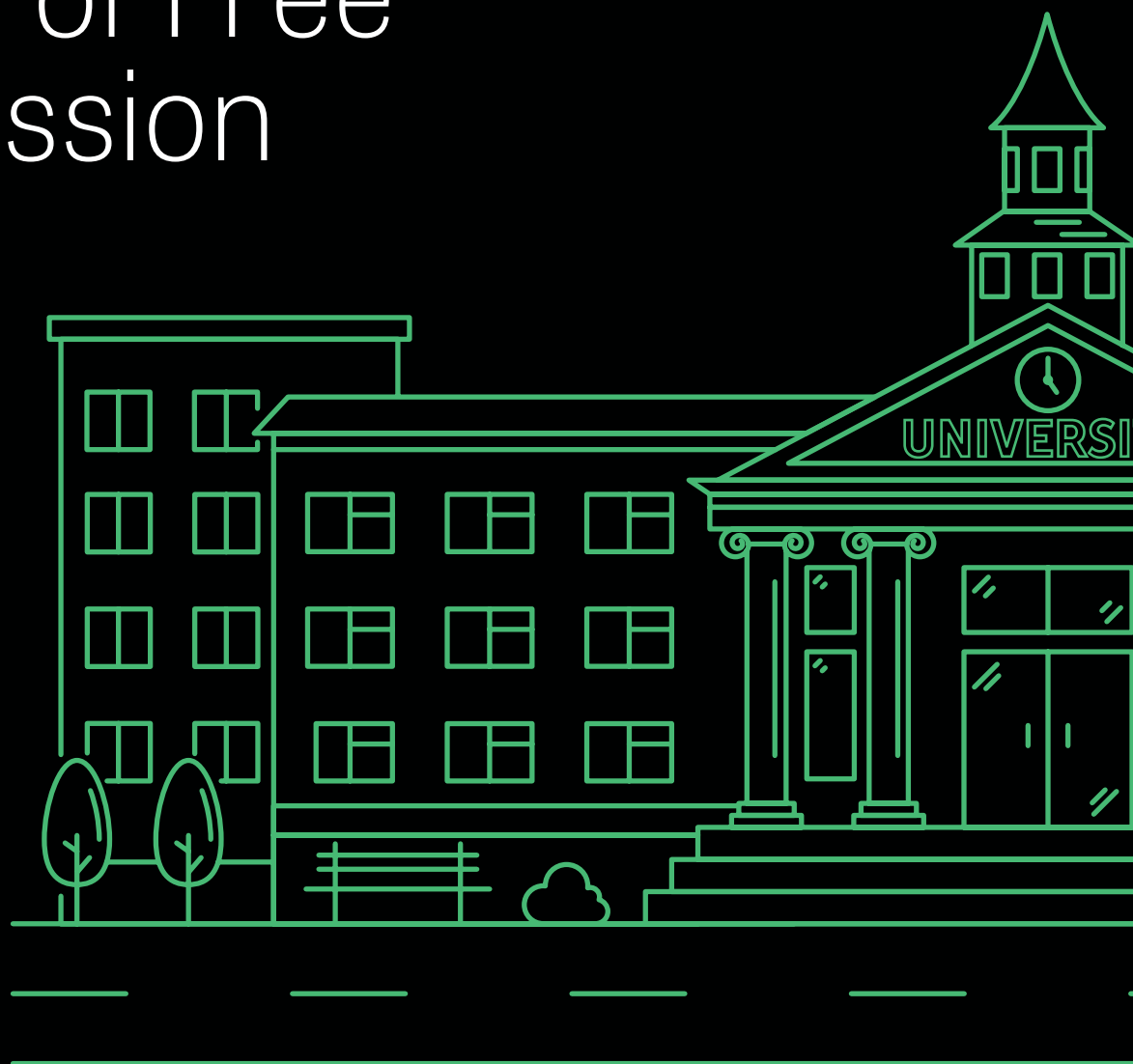


The First Amendment on Campus 2020 Report: College Students' Views of Free Expression



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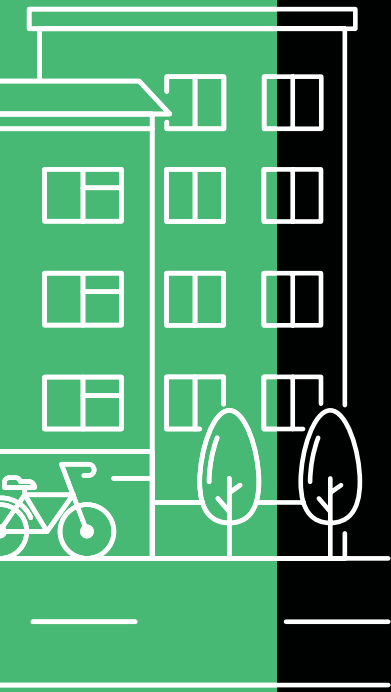
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Executive Summary

College students' views on the First Amendment are a critical harbinger of our democracy. They illustrate how well an emerging generation understands our constitutional rights during an era of changing speech, communication and interaction, and how they put these rights into practice.

For the 2020 *First Amendment on Campus* report, Gallup conducted online surveys with a nationally representative sample of more than 3,000 U.S. full-time undergraduate college students, including an oversample of students at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs).¹ A smaller number of students in the initial sample completed follow-up, in-depth telephone interviews providing further insights into college students' experiences and opinions.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and Gallup began surveying college students on First Amendment issues in the spring of 2016. Most students at the time of the first survey have finished college; however, the latest survey — conducted in late 2019 in partnership with the Charles Koch Foundation and the Stanton Foundation — finds that among today's college students, critical trends continue to hold.

Key findings of the study include:

College students broadly support free speech, yet increasingly favor restrictions on speech — particularly speech that targets minority groups.

- Close to 7 in 10 college students (68%) regard citizens' free speech rights as being “extremely important” to democracy. Nearly the same percentage (69%) believe an inclusive society that is welcoming to diverse groups is “extremely important.”
- Eighty-one percent of students widely support a campus environment where students are exposed to all types of speech, even if they may find it offensive.
- Nearly three-quarters believe colleges should not be able to restrict expression of political views that are upsetting or offensive to certain groups.
- But 78% of college students favor colleges providing safe spaces, or areas of campus that are designed to be free from threatening actions, ideas or conversations.
- Also, growing majorities of college students believe colleges should be able to restrict the use of racial slurs (78%, up from 69% in 2016) and costumes that stereotype certain racial or ethnic groups (71%, up from 63% in 2016).
- Most college students believe efforts at diversity and inclusion “frequently” (27%) or “occasionally” (49%) come into conflict with free speech rights.

¹ In addition to the more than 3,000 students interviewed by web, another 1,000 students were interviewed by telephone to facilitate the transition of the survey from the telephone methodology used in 2016 and 2017 to the web methodology used in 2019. See the Methodology appendix for more details.

Racial and gender gaps exist in the extent to which students see the First Amendment as a safeguard and on whether colleges should protect students from certain speech.

- Nearly 9 in 10 college students agree that the First Amendment protects people like themselves, including 44% who strongly agree. Male and non-Hispanic white students are more likely to strongly agree than female or racial and ethnic minority students.
- Women are twice as likely as men (23% vs. 11%), and black students are nearly twice as likely as white students (28% vs. 15%), to prefer that colleges protect students by prohibiting certain types of speech rather than exposing them to all types of speech.
- An increasing proportion of students — 38%, up from 25% in 2017 — say they have personally felt uncomfortable because of something someone said on campus. Students who felt uncomfortable are most likely to report that the offending comments referenced their race or gender.
- One in eight students report something they have heard on campus has left them feeling unsafe. Female, non-Hispanic black and Asian students are most likely to say comments they have heard made them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

College students see free speech and free press as less secure than they did in 2016.

- Fifty-nine percent of college students believe free speech rights are secure, down from 73% in 2016 and 64% in 2017.
- Sixty-five percent think free press rights are secure, which remains down from 81% in 2016 but is up slightly from 60% in 2017.
- Students believe free speech is less secure than other First Amendment rights.

Most students believe their campus climate can deter free speech.

- Sixty-three percent of students agree that the climate on their campus deters students from expressing themselves openly, up from 54% in 2016.
- Students continue to perceive that conservative students are less able than other campus subgroups to express their views freely and openly on campus.
- The majority of college students say they personally are comfortable expressing dissenting opinions in class — but students who identify politically as Democrats are more likely than independents and Republicans to say this.

Students continue to regard social media as the central forum for campus discussion, but say the discourse online is getting worse.

- Fewer students now (29%) than in 2016 (41%) say discussion on social media is usually civil. More students than in the past agree that social media can stifle free speech — both because people block those whose views they disagree with (60%, up from 48% in 2016) and because people are afraid of being attacked or shamed by those who disagree with them (58%, up from 49% in 2016).
- Students say discussion of ideas at their college is more likely to take place online via social media than face-to-face on campus.

Detailed Findings

1 Support for the First Amendment

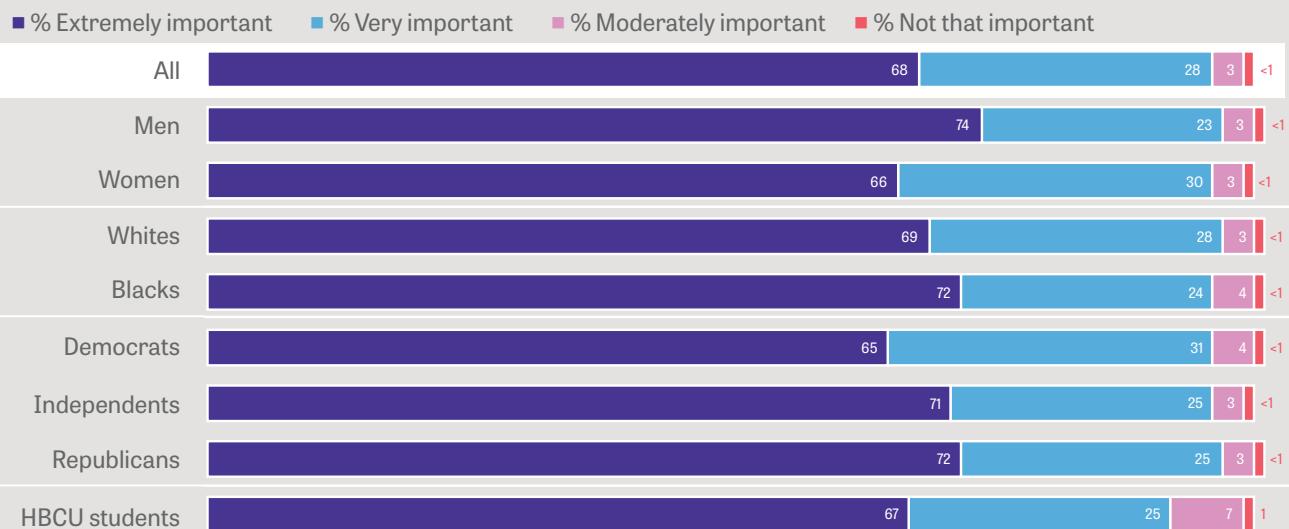
College students view free speech rights as extremely important to U.S. democracy

Sixty-eight percent of college students rate citizens' free speech rights as being "extremely important" to our democracy, while most of the rest say they are "very important." Opinions about the importance of free speech rights are broadly similar by subgroup, though male students are slightly more likely than female students to rate free speech rights as being "extremely important."

FIGURE 1

Student Views on the Importance of Free Speech

How important do you consider citizens' free speech rights to be in our democracy — extremely important, very important, moderately important, or not that important?



Note: "No answer" percentages not shown.

In the 2017 survey, 56% of college students said "protecting citizens' free speech rights" was extremely important. However, the differences between the 2017 and 2019 surveys are most likely due to a change in mode of interviewing from phone to web rather than a change in college students' opinions. The companion 2019 telephone survey found 53% of college students saying free speech rights are extremely important.

Students believe First Amendment speech, press and government petition guarantees are much less secure than in 2016

Majorities of students say each of the five freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment is secure, but they are less likely to view all but religious freedom as at least slightly less secure than students did four years ago.

Over the past four years, college students have become increasingly less likely to say free speech is secure. In 2016, 73% said it was secure, compared with 64% in 2017 and 59% now.

Likewise, students' sense that the freedom to petition the government is secure has fallen 13 percentage points since 2016, to 63%.

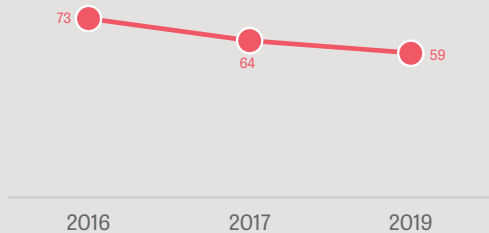
The 65% of college students who believe freedom of the press is secure is down 16 percentage points from 2016 but is slightly higher than it was in 2017 (60%). There has also been a slight rebound since 2017 in the percentage of students who believe the freedom to assemble peacefully is secure.

FIGURE 2

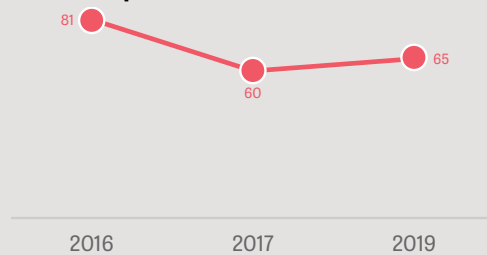
Student Perceptions of First Amendment Freedom Security, 2016-2019

Do you think each of the following rights is very secure, secure, threatened, or very threatened in the country today? (% Very secure/Secure)

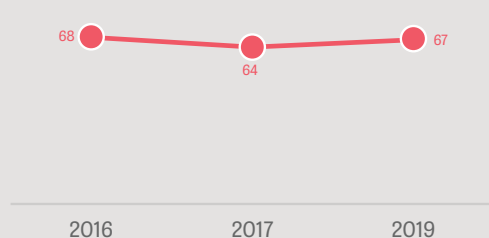
Freedom of speech



Freedom of the press



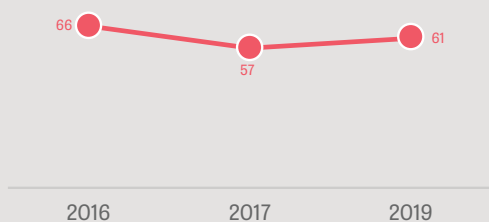
Freedom of religion



Freedom to petition the government



Freedom for people to assemble peacefully



Compared with 2016, most subgroups are showing double-digit declines in the percentage saying freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom to petition the government are secure. Black students, who were less likely than other groups to view free speech rights as secure in 2016, have not shown meaningful change in the past four years. Perceptions that free press guarantees are secure have fallen significantly more among Democratic (25 percentage points) than among independent (10 points) and Republican students (8 points).

Students make little distinction in the security of each First Amendment freedom today

Currently, there is not a great deal of separation in college students' views about the security of each of the First Amendment guarantees, ranging from a low of 59% for freedom of speech to a high of 67% for freedom of religion.

Students at HBCUs are less likely than college students nationwide to say each of the five freedoms is secure, except for one — freedom of the press. Roughly equal percentages of HBCU students and total U.S. students say this freedom is secure.

Partisan students' views of the five First Amendment freedoms also differ significantly. Democrats (63%) and independents (59%) are more likely than Republicans (52%) to say freedom of speech is secure. But Republicans are the most likely to say each of the other freedoms is secure.

FIGURE 3

Student Perceptions of First Amendment Freedom Security

■ % Very secure/Secure ■ % Threatened/Very threatened

Freedom of speech

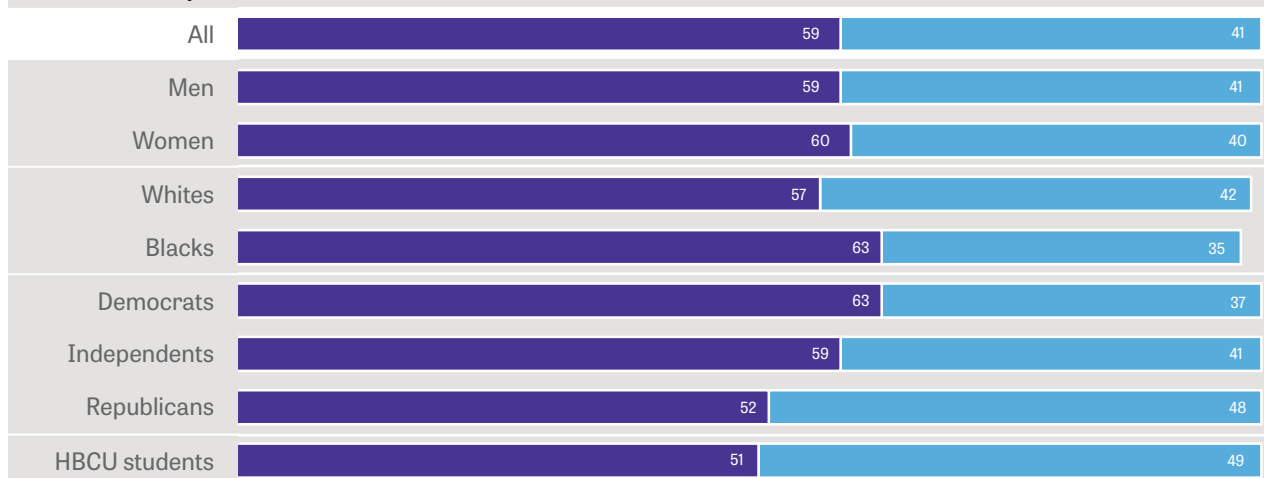
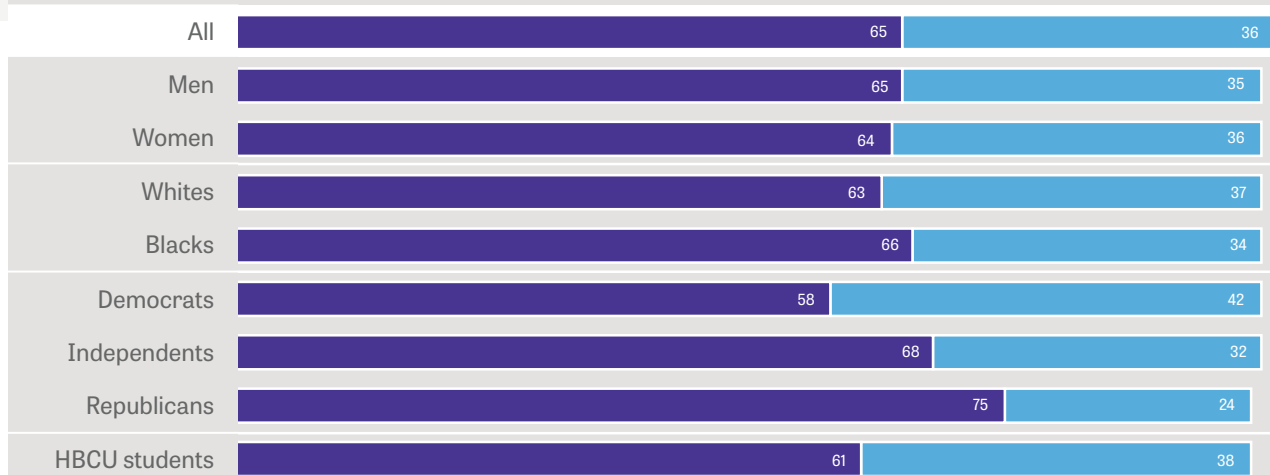


FIGURE 3

Student Perceptions of First Amendment Freedom Security

Freedom of the press



Freedom for people to assemble peacefully

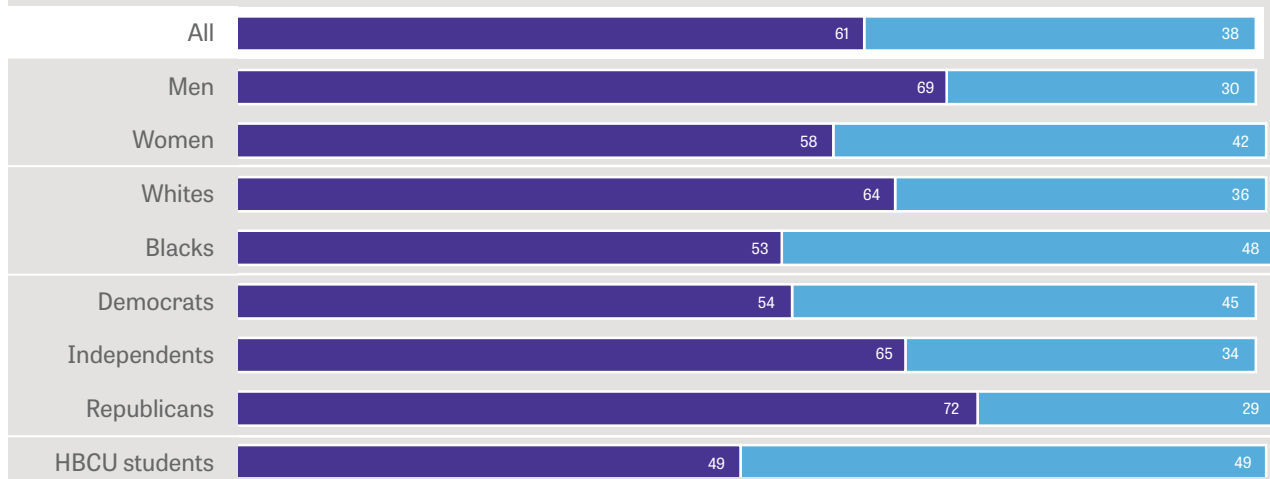
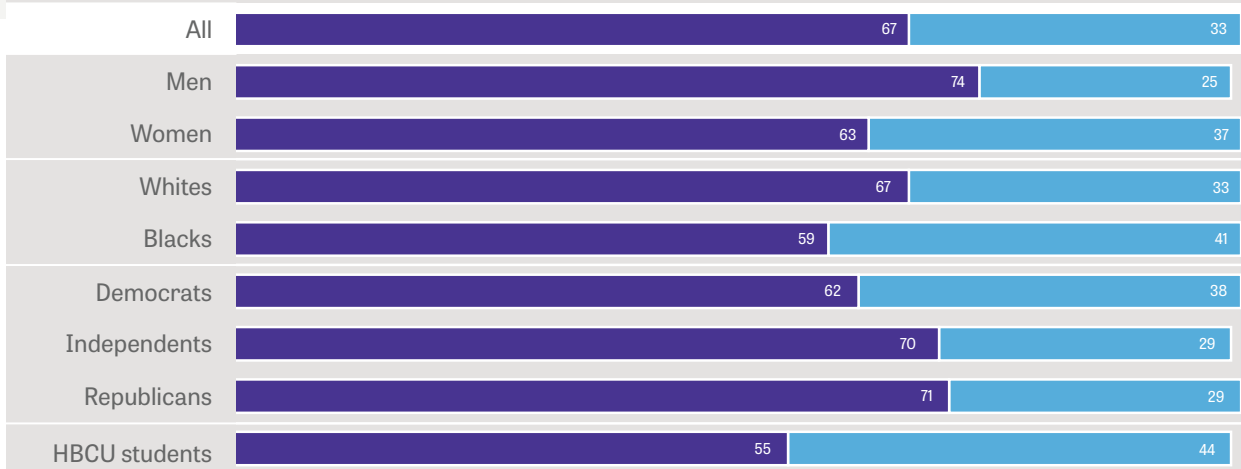


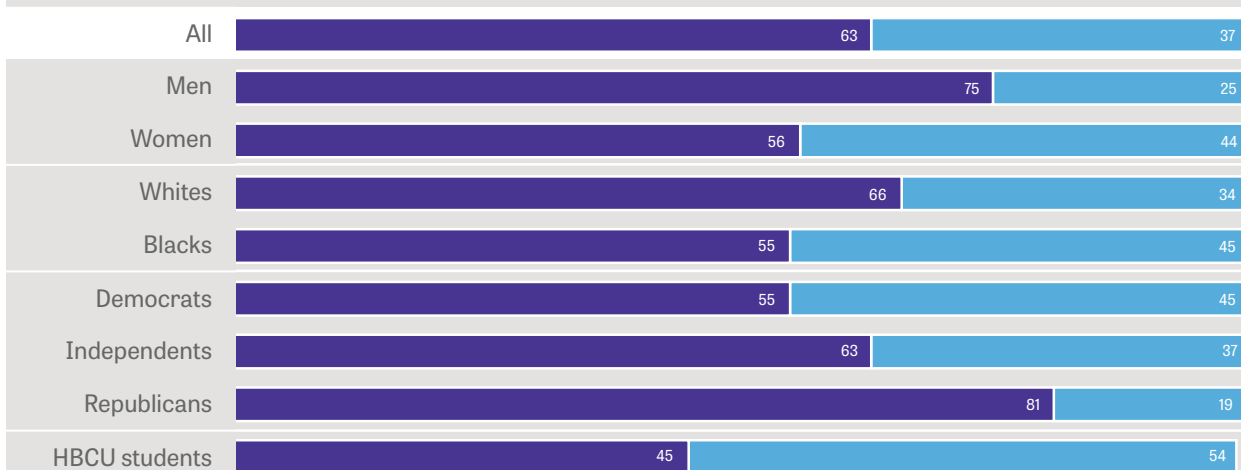
FIGURE 3

Student Perceptions of First Amendment Freedom Security

Freedom of religion



Freedom to petition the government, meaning presenting requests to the government without fear of punishment



Note: "No answer" percentages not shown.

Men and women, as well as blacks and whites, differ significantly in the extent to which they view the security of freedom of assembly, freedom of religion and freedom to petition the government, with female and black students less likely to perceive these freedoms as secure. These groups do not show meaningful differences in their views of the security of free speech and a free press.

FIRST-YEAR FEMALE STUDENT:

"I feel like [free expression] needs to be more emphasized on college campuses so that people can understand what it actually means."

College students' understanding of First Amendment protections varies

To gauge college students' understanding of the First Amendment's reach as interpreted by the courts over the years, the Knight-Gallup survey included two sets of questions about how the amendment is applied in society. Each set was asked of a different half of the total sample.

One set of questions asked students whether four different institutions can restrict speech. Majorities of students correctly say private employers can restrict speech, but government and public institutions, such as libraries, cannot. Slightly less than half, however, know that social media platforms can restrict free speech.

FIGURE 4

Student Understanding of Institutions' Ability to Restrict Speech

As you may know, the First Amendment protects citizens from actions institutions might take to restrict their free speech. Based on what you know or have read, please indicate whether each of the following institutions can or cannot restrict speech protected by the First Amendment, or if you are unsure.

■ % Can restrict speech ■ % Cannot restrict speech ■ % Unsure

(Institution can restrict speech)



(Institution cannot restrict speech)



Note: "No answer" percentages not shown.

Students who identify as Republicans are more likely than their Democratic and independent counterparts to know that private employers can restrict free speech. At the same time, students who identify as Democrats are more likely than Republican and independent students to correctly say social media platforms can restrict free speech.

The second battery of questions asked whether the First Amendment protects four specific examples of expression. Most students correctly say a public high school student wearing an armband to protest U.S. involvement in foreign wars is protected by the First Amendment, and child pornography is not. Yet, they largely do not know that hate speech is protected but a professional athlete kneeling in protest during the playing of the national anthem is not. In fact, 72% of students incorrectly believe a professional athlete protesting the national anthem is a protected form of expression.

FIGURE 5

Student Understanding of Protected Forms of Speech

Based on what you know or have read, according to legal rulings, is each of the following protected or not protected by the First Amendment, or are you unsure?

■ % Protected ■ % Not protected ■ % Unsure

(Protected under First Amendment)

A public high school student wearing an armband to protest U.S. involvement in foreign wars



Hate speech



(Not protected under First Amendment)

A professional athlete kneeling in protest during the playing of the national anthem



Child pornography



Note: "No answer" percentages not shown.

Republican students are twice as likely as Democratic students to know that hate speech is protected (48% vs. 23%). Students at HBCUs are more likely (31%) than college students generally (14%) to know that a professional athlete kneeling in protest during the national anthem is not protected.

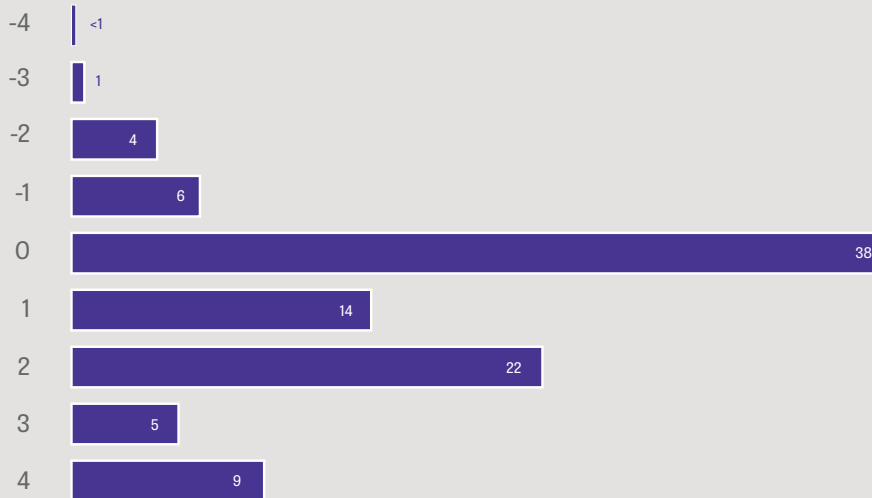
Across the two half-samples, 9% of students correctly answered all four knowledge items they were asked. On a computed knowledge scale ranging from -4 (answering all four items incorrectly) to +4 (answering all four items correctly), the average score across both samples was +1.²

² Respondents received 1 point for each correct answer and -1 point for each incorrect answer. If they said they were unsure, they received 0 points for the item.

FIGURE 6

Student Scores on First Amendment Knowledge Scale

% Of respondents with the knowledge score



Note: Scale ranges from -4 to 4 based on the number of correct answers (out of four) each student gave.

Majority of college students back the federal government denying funds to schools that do not protect free speech

In the two years since Knight and Gallup conducted their last college student survey, one of the major policy developments touching on the First Amendment was the Trump administration's March 2019 executive order³ to ensure that colleges receiving federal funding uphold federal laws and campus policies that protect free expression on its campus. By a 17 percentage-point margin, college students favor the federal government being able to deny federal funds to colleges if the government does not believe the college is adequately protecting free speech rights on campus (58% vs. 41%).

Except for black students, at least slim majorities of most major demographic segments of students support government denial of funds to colleges when it perceives free speech rights are not being protected. Broad majorities of Republican, white and male students favor this policy.

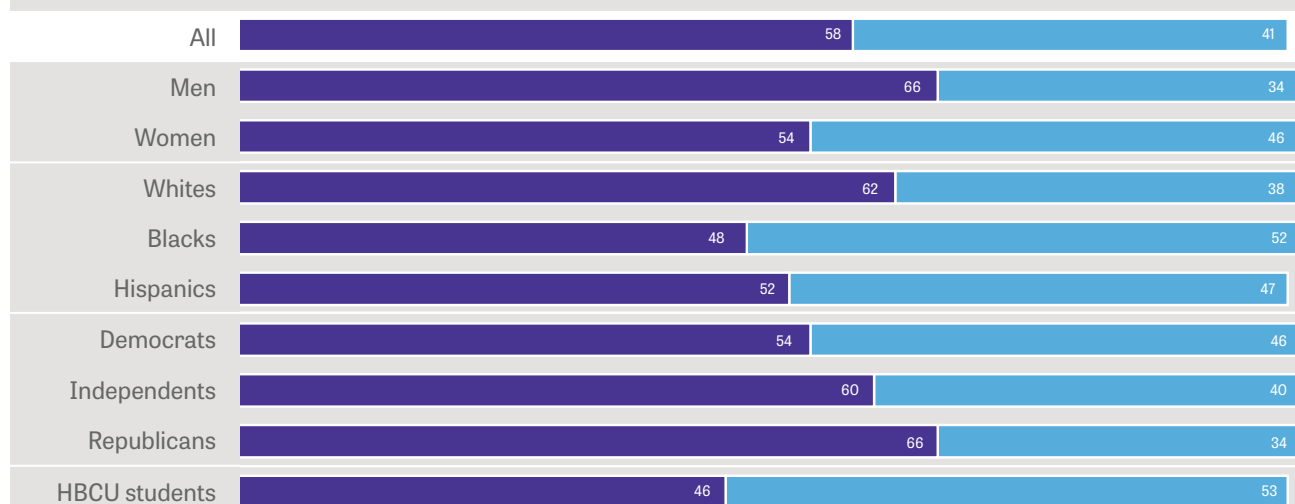
3 Trump orders colleges to back free speech or lose funding. (2019, March 22). AP NEWS. <https://apnews.com/7b50a833699d4ccbae38450fff9c1524>

FIGURE 7

Student Opinions on Denying Federal Funds to Colleges That Do Not Protect Free Speech Rights

As you may know, many colleges receive funds from the federal government. Do you think the federal government should or should not be able to deny those funds to a college if it believes that college is not adequately protecting free speech rights on its campus?

■ % Yes, should be able to ■ % No, should not be able to



Note: "No answer" percentages not shown.

Students generally see themselves, professors as better at listening to differing viewpoints than Americans overall

More than three-quarters of college students rate themselves as doing a good job of seeking out and listening to different viewpoints, and 62% believe their professors do so as well. Students are much less likely to say their parents (48%) and fellow students (45%) do, and just 17% say the same of Americans overall.

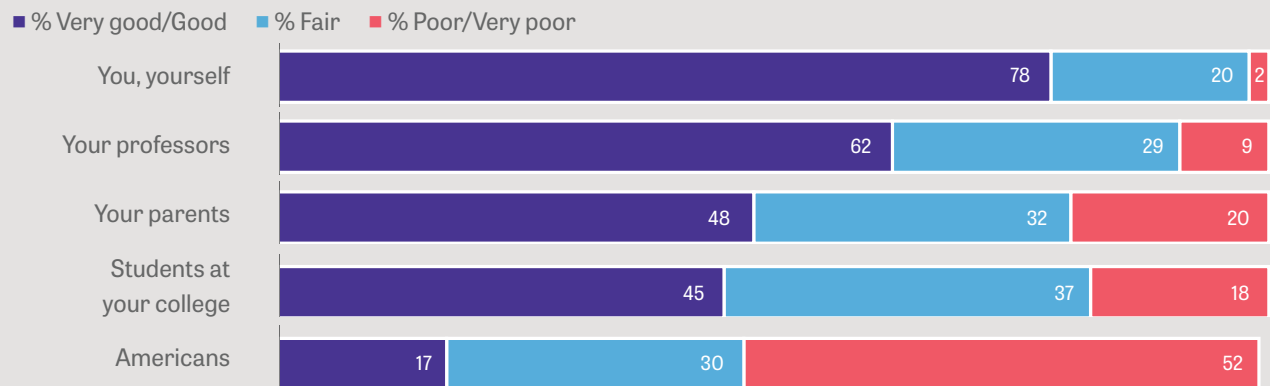
FIRST-YEAR FEMALE STUDENT:

"I think it starts with the teacher — leaders that people trust. I can think of a few in particular who a lot of the students like, and so if they were able to make [listening to and empathizing with other people] a norm in their classrooms — then I think that would spread throughout the school."

FIGURE 8

Student Ratings of Willingness to Consider Different Viewpoints

Generally speaking, how would you rate the job each of the following do at seeking out and listening to viewpoints differing from their own — very good, good, fair, poor, or very poor?



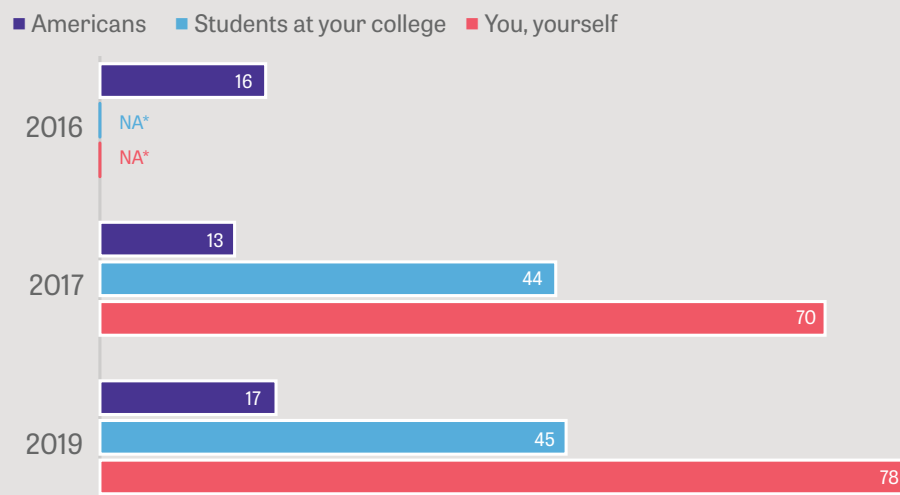
Note: Due to rounding, percentages may total 100% +/- 1%.

Past surveys have asked college students to evaluate how well they themselves, students at their college and Americans overall do in seeking out different viewpoints. Their responses have largely been similar over time.⁴

FIGURE 9

Student Ratings of Willingness to Consider Different Viewpoints, 2016-2019

(% Very good/Good job of seeking out and listening to differing viewpoints)



Note: NA="Not asked."

⁴ The percentage rating "you, yourself" as good at listening to differing viewpoints showed a significant mode difference in the 2019 web (78%) and 2019 phone (66%) surveys. Because of this, the 70% to 78% difference between the 2017 data (collected by phone) and 2019 data (collected by web) should not be considered a meaningful increase.

2 Campus Climate, Diversity and Free Expression

College students favor a campus environment that exposes students to a range of speech

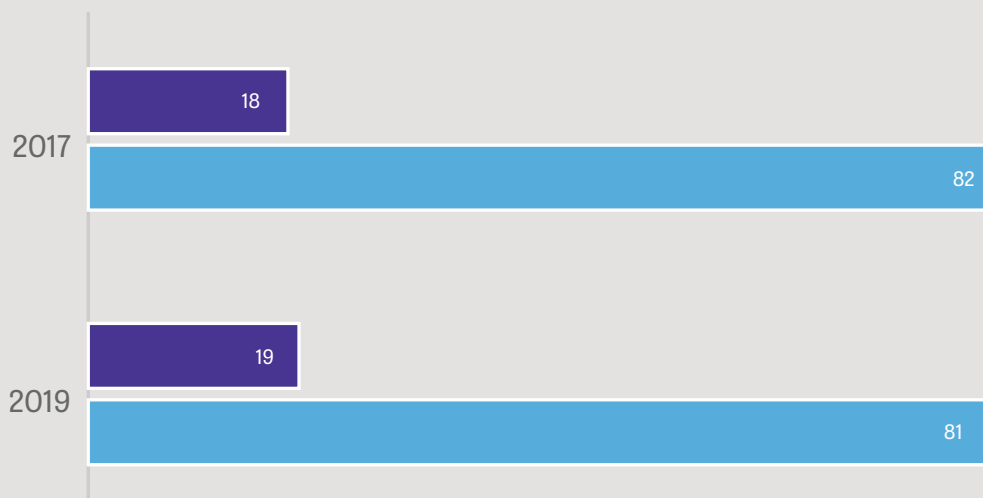
Students believe colleges should promote goals of free expression over those that attempt to protect students from certain kinds of speech. Specifically, 81% of college students say it is more important for colleges to expose students to all types of speech, including offensive or biased speech, while 19% believe it is more important to protect students by prohibiting certain types of speech. These views are essentially unchanged from 2017 (82% and 18%, respectively).

FIGURE 10

Student Preference for Campus Environment, 2017-2019

If you had to choose, do you think it is more important for colleges to protect students by prohibiting speech they may find offensive or biased, or allow students to be exposed to all types of speech even if they may find it offensive or biased?

■ % Protect students/Prohibit certain speech ■ % Expose students to all type of speech



FIRST-YEAR FEMALE STUDENT WHO BELIEVES IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO PROTECT STUDENTS:

"It's a college campus, so it's meant for a safe place for you to be learning. And you can't have a ... good learning experience if you're constantly feeling threatened or attacked."

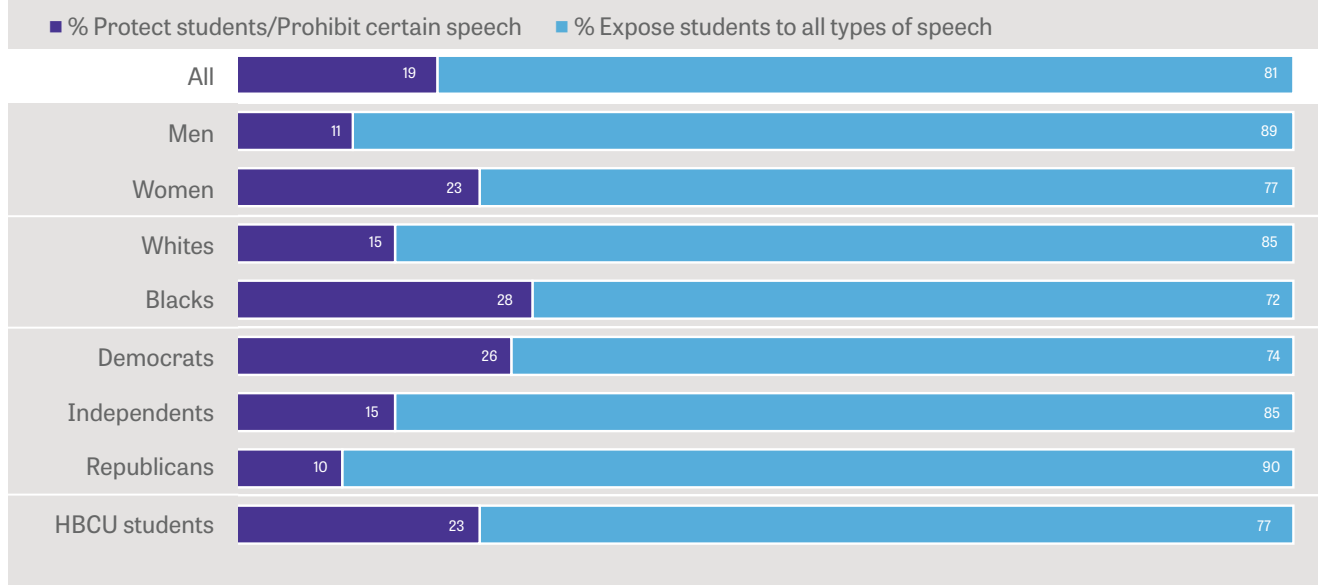
Students from all demographic and attitudinal groups prefer an open campus environment to one that protects them; however, female, Democratic, black and Asian students are somewhat less likely than other subgroups to do so.

- Female students are twice as likely as males (23% vs. 11%) to prefer that colleges protect students by prohibiting speech.
- Twenty-six percent of Democratic students, compared with 15% of independents and 10% of Republicans, favor a protective environment.
- Black and Asian students (both 28%) are more likely than white (15%) and Hispanic students (19%) to want colleges to put greater emphasis on protecting students.

The demographic differences in the current survey are similar to those from the 2017 study.

FIGURE 11

Student Preference for Campus Environment



Most college students think the First Amendment protects people like them, but women and minorities are less likely to do so

By and large, U.S. college students agree that the First Amendment protects people like themselves, as 44% “strongly agree” and 43% “somewhat agree,” but the results differ significantly among demographic groups.

Male students are much more likely than females to agree strongly (55% vs. 39%) that the First Amendment protects them. Likewise, more white students agree strongly (53%) than do black (25%) or Hispanic students (39%). Just one-quarter of students at HBCUs “strongly agree” that the First Amendment protects people like them.

Despite these differences, strong majorities in each demographic group agree at least somewhat that people like themselves are protected by the First Amendment.

FOURTH-YEAR FEMALE STUDENT AT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY:

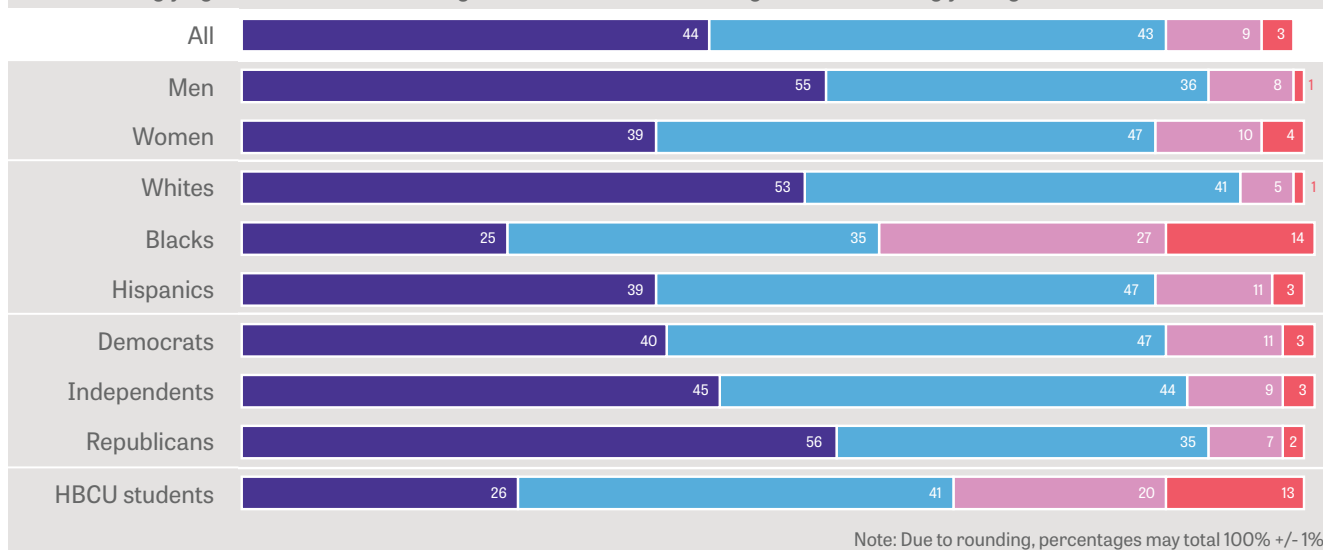
"I don't know why we spend so much time trying to distance ourselves from those that don't think the same as us. I get that there's very serious issues where you are a victim in a sense of being the minority. We need to be able to communicate in a way that's effective and includes everybody, even when we don't agree. Because we don't have to."

FIGURE 12

Student Perceptions of First Amendment Protection

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The First Amendment protects people like me.

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Somewhat agree ■ % Somewhat disagree ■ % Strongly disagree



College students value inclusion and diversity; acknowledge tensions with free speech rights

Sixty-nine percent of college students rate an inclusive society that is welcoming to diverse groups as “extremely important” to our democracy, essentially the same percentage that say free speech rights are “extremely important” (68%). Whereas opinions about the importance of free speech rights vary little by subgroup, there are large subgroup differences in the perceived importance of inclusiveness. Specifically, 81% of Democratic students,

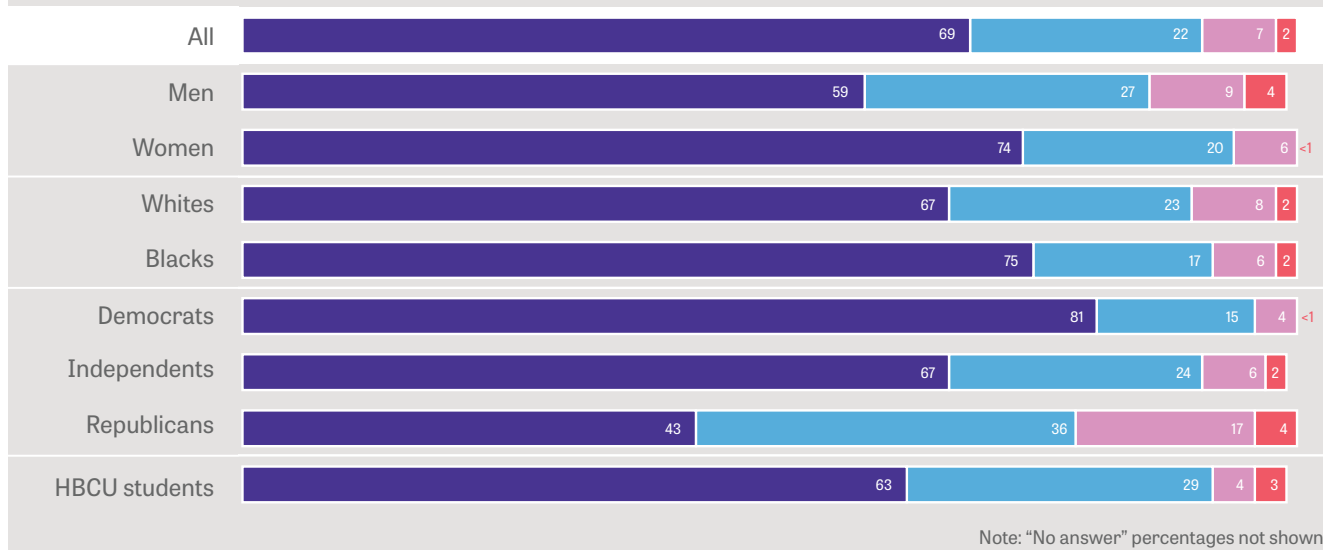
compared with 43% of Republican students, say inclusion is “extremely important” for society. Female students regard inclusion as more important than males do.

FIGURE 13

Student Views on the Importance of Diversity & Inclusion

How important do you consider an inclusive society that is welcoming to diverse groups to be in our democracy — extremely important, very important, moderately important, or not that important?

■ % Extremely important ■ % Very important ■ % Moderately important ■ % Not that important



Even though college students value free speech and diversity as equally important goals, they acknowledge that the two goals can come into conflict. Twenty-seven percent believe diversity and inclusion “frequently” come into conflict with free speech rights. Forty-nine percent say such conflict happens “occasionally,” 19% say it “rarely” happens and 5% say it “never” happens.

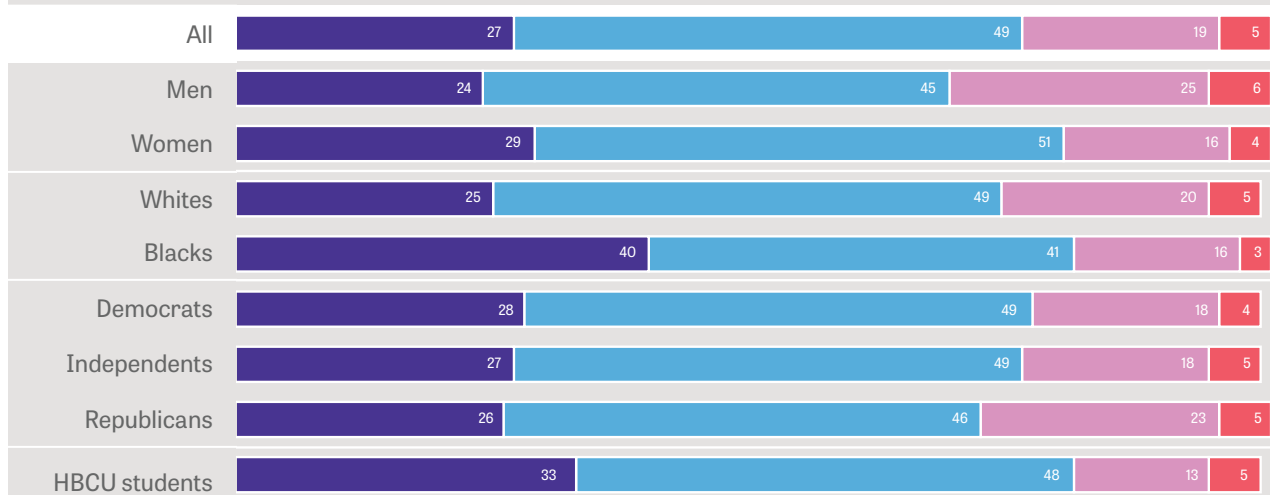
Black students are more likely than other students to report the two goals conflict “frequently,” with 40% saying this. About a quarter of Hispanic (27%), Asian (27%) and white students (25%) hold this view.

FIGURE 14

Student Perceptions of Conflict Between Diversity & Inclusion and Free Speech

In your view, how often do diversity and inclusion come into conflict with free speech rights?

■ % Frequently ■ % Occasionally ■ % Rarely ■ % Never



Note: Due to rounding, percentages may total 100% +/- 1%.

One-third of college students have felt uncomfortable, and 1 in 8 unsafe, because of things they have heard on campus

Asked to reflect on their own experiences, 38% of college students say they have felt uncomfortable on campus because of something someone said in public that referred to their gender, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation, whether or not it was directed at them. In the 2017 survey, 25% of students said this had happened to them.⁵

FOURTH-YEAR FEMALE STUDENT:

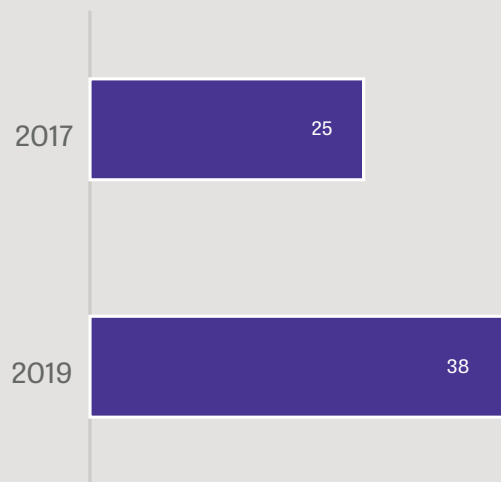
“I did not feel unsafe. I felt conflicted, to be honest. Because I love freedom of speech — I think we all should have it — we should all be able to speak our minds. But at the same time, I have to understand that because I feel that way, there are going to be those people that have different opinions and want to share them.”

⁵ The size of the increase since 2017 may be overstated by the change in survey mode from phone to web. The 2019 phone survey also showed an increase from 2017, but to 32% rather than 38%.

FIGURE 15

Percentage of Students Who Have Felt Uncomfortable Because of Something Said, 2017-2019

Have you, personally, ever felt uncomfortable in a class, living area, public space or other part of campus because of something someone said in reference to your race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation, whether or not it was directed at you?



In the current study, 44% of Asian, 41% of black, 41% of female and 42% of Democratic students have felt uncomfortable on campus because of things they have heard. Notably, HBCU students (25%) are less likely than other subgroups to have had this experience.

MALE FIRST-YEAR STUDENT WHO FELT UNCOMFORTABLE ON CAMPUS:

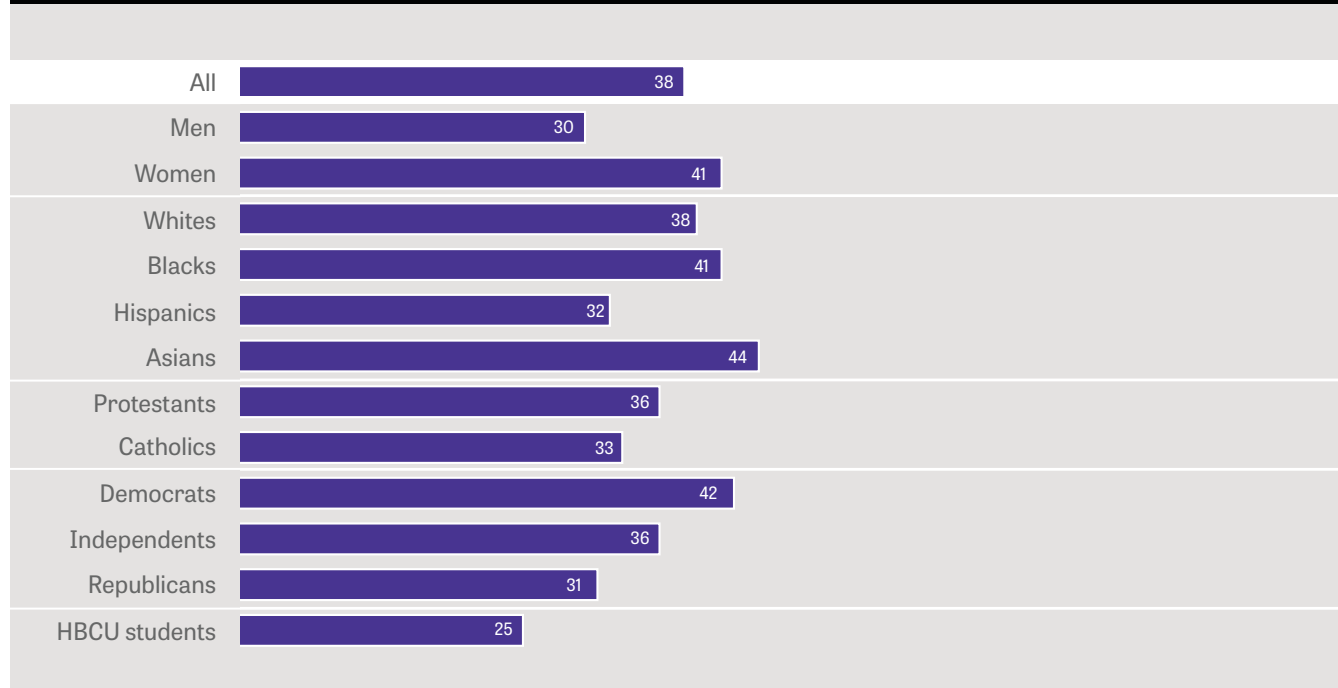
“I am gay, so I think that most of the times it’s never really in terms of what a student will say openly in class — it’s more side comments that you would hear students make more than professors or students making direct comments. That would be the situations that I’d say I’ve probably faced the most.”

MALE FOURTH-YEAR STUDENT WHO FELT UNSAFE ON CAMPUS:

“And I think even, like, in the Pride Club that we were in and started, I mean, it was definitely a common concern we’ve all faced. And even ... when our bulletin boards were defaced — it just — it felt weird, but also, like, this unease.”

FIGURE 16

Percentage of Students Who Have Felt Uncomfortable Because of Something Said



In addition to their background characteristics, two other factors are related to students' likelihood of having felt uncomfortable on campus — their class year and the diversity of their campus. Third- and fourth-year students (40%) are significantly more likely than first- and second-year students (34%) to report feeling uncomfortable because of comments they have heard on campus, which could merely be a function of having been on campus longer. A larger gap exists among those who describe their campus as being “not very diverse” or “not diverse at all” (49%) as opposed to those whose campus is “very” or “somewhat diverse” (35%).

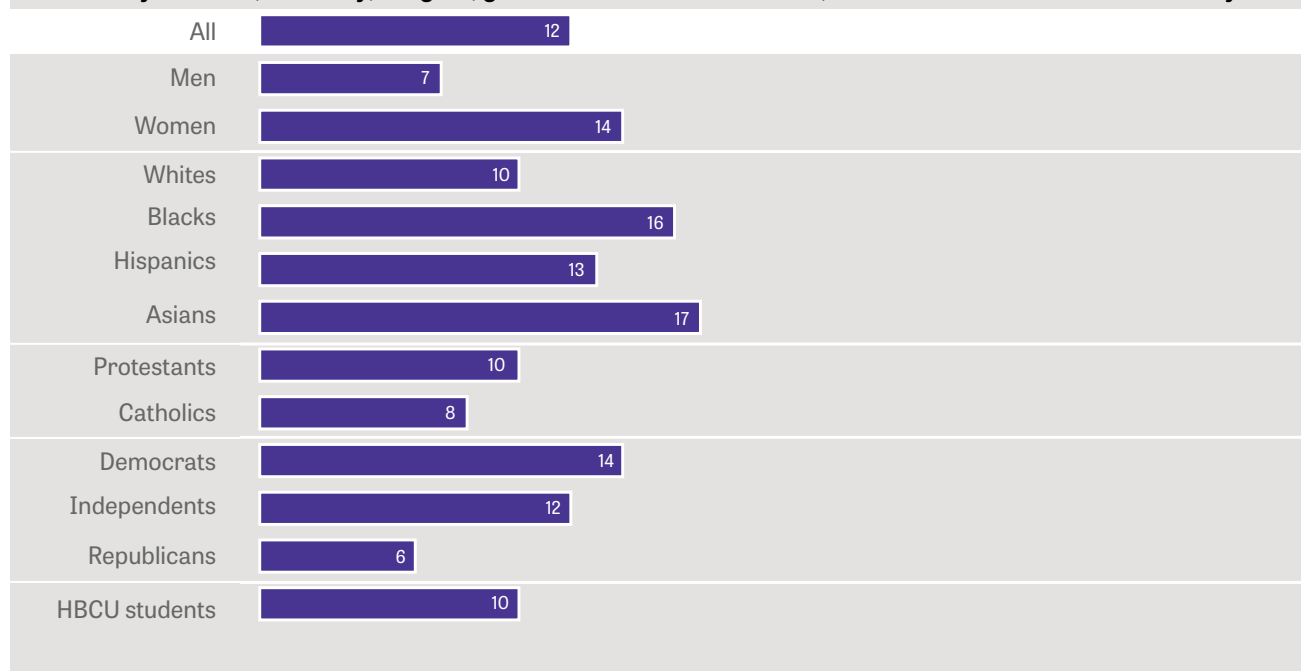
Students who have felt uncomfortable on campus are most likely to say the comments referenced their race (52%), including at least three-quarters of blacks, Hispanics and Asians. Meanwhile, 43% of students who have felt uncomfortable because of comments say the remarks referred to their gender. Fewer students report being offended by comments about their religion (33%) or sexual orientation (27%). Some students volunteered that comments about their political beliefs or economic class and status made them uncomfortable.

Just under one-third of students who report feeling uncomfortable on campus — equivalent to 12% of all college students — say they have felt unsafe at some point during college because of something someone said. This group includes 14% of female and 7% of male students, and 17% of Asian, 16% of black, 13% of Hispanic and 10% of white students overall.

FIGURE 17

Percentage of Students Who Have Felt Unsafe Because of Something Said

Have you ever, personally, felt unsafe on campus because of something someone said in reference to things such as your race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation, whether or not it was directed at you?



College students oppose limits on political speech but favor limits on biased expression that targets minority groups

The difficulty of balancing free speech rights with diversity or other goals becomes clear when students are asked whether colleges should be able to restrict certain types of speech. Their opinions on permissible speech restrictions are sometimes at odds with their abstract preference for colleges to promote free expression, particularly when the speech is intended to injure.

Seventy-eight percent of college students believe colleges should be able to restrict the use of slurs and other language that is intentionally offensive to certain groups. The current figure is up from 73% in the 2017 survey and

69% in 2016. Relatedly, 71% favor the prohibition of costumes that stereotype certain racial or ethnic groups. As with slurs, more favor restrictions on stereotypical costumes than did so in 2017 (60%) and 2016 (63%).

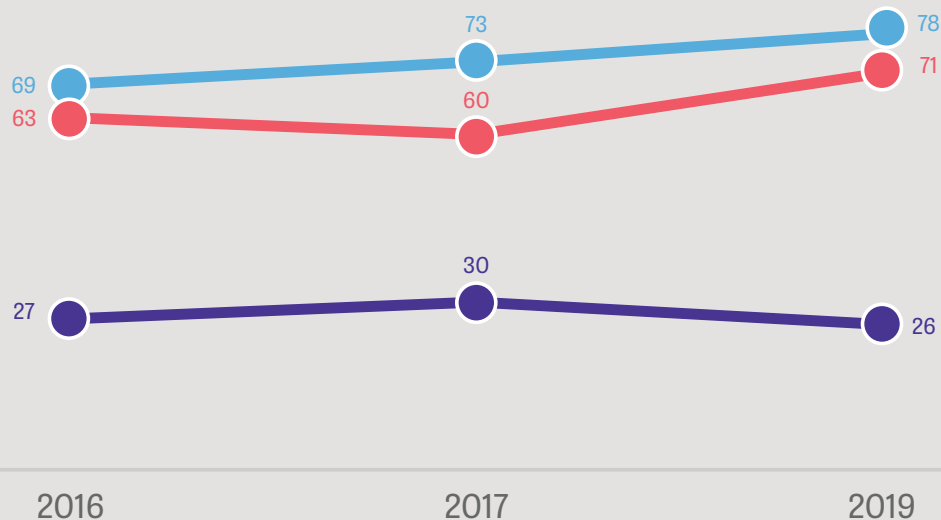
Students do not, however, believe colleges should be able to restrict political views that are upsetting or offensive to other groups. The 26% in favor of such restrictions is similar to the rate in past surveys.

FIGURE 18

Student Support for College Restrictions on Speech, 2016-2019

Do you think colleges should or should not be able to restrict each of the following types of speech or expression on campus? (% Yes, should be able to)

■ Political views ■ Slurs ■ Stereotypical costumes



Democratic students are more likely than independent and Republican students to support restrictions on these three types of speech. The biggest difference concerns restrictions on stereotypical costumes, which 82% of Democrats support, while Republicans are evenly divided in their support and opposition. Female and black students are more likely to support these speech restrictions than male and white students, respectively.

FIRST-YEAR MALE STUDENT:

"I think that there is a certain line in which using slurs and derogatory terms becomes more so hate speech and ... it can be threatening to certain people or certain groups. And I think at that point, that crosses a line ... that those words and things aren't being used in a way to enhance ... the educational process."

FIGURE 19

Student Support for College Restrictions on Speech

■ % Yes, colleges should be able to restrict ■ % No, colleges should not be able to restrict

Using slurs and other language on campus that is intentionally offensive to certain groups



Wearing costumes that stereotype certain racial or ethnic groups

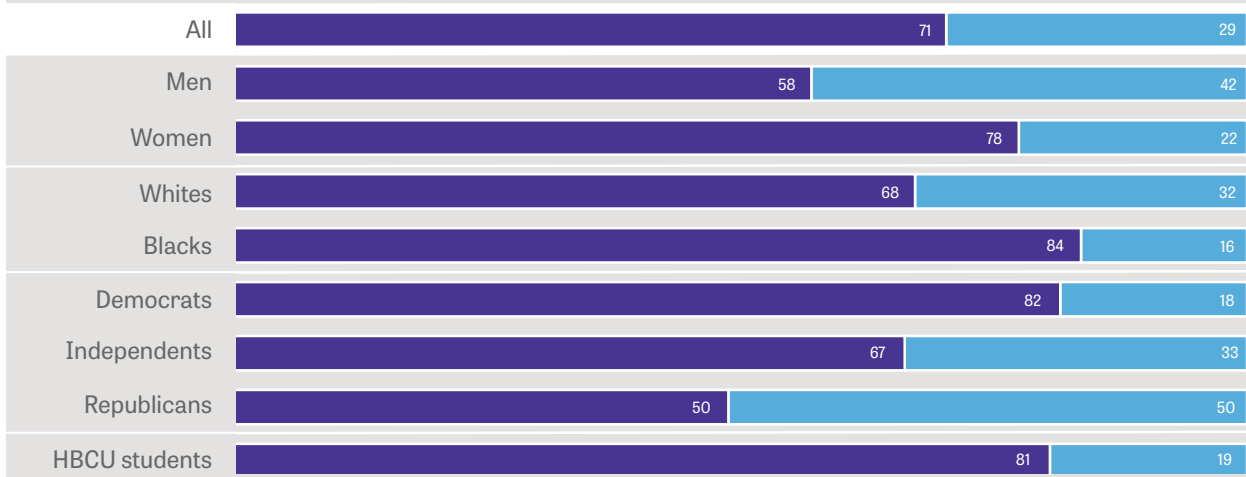
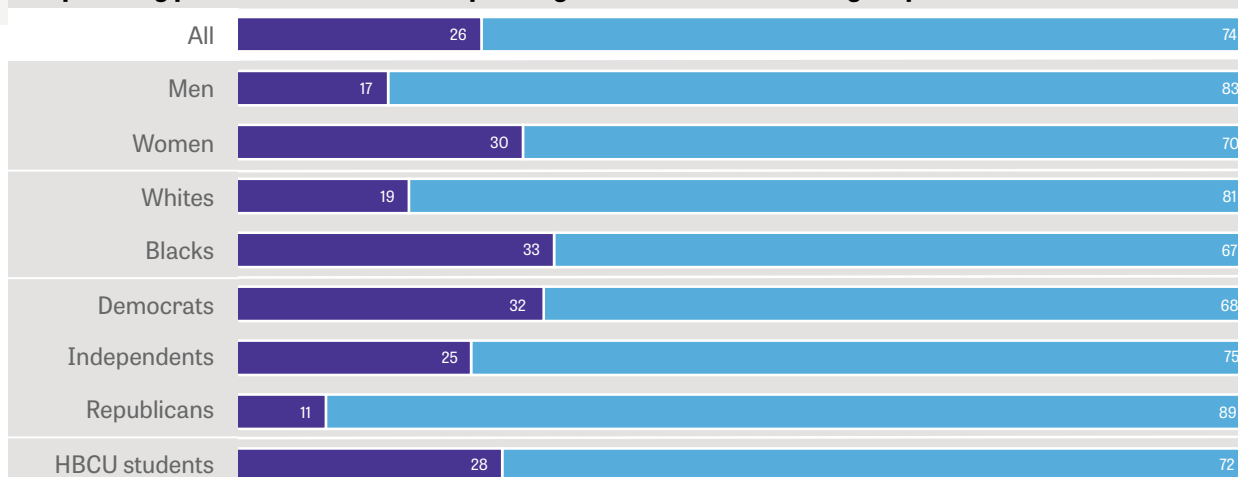


FIGURE 19

Student Support for College Restrictions on Speech

Expressing political views that are upsetting or offensive to certain groups



Since 2016, most subgroups show meaningful increases in support for restrictions on slurs and stereotypical costumes — Republican students being a notable exception.

FIGURE 20

Changes in Student Support for College Restrictions on Speech, 2016-2019

(% Yes, colleges should be able to restrict)

	Slurs		Stereotypical costumes	
	2016	2019	2016	2019
Men	61	69	54	58
Women	76	83	70	78
Whites	67	75	62	68
Blacks	79	86	77	84
Democrats	77	87	72	82
Independents	61	74	55	67
Republicans	65	62	56	50
HBCU students	68	77	71	81

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A separate question in the survey asked students whether they believe colleges should be able to prohibit each of six specific examples of expression. These views are generally in line with college students' desire to restrict hateful speech but permit political speech.

College students are most likely to believe colleges should restrict the use of an offensive racial slur to refer to people of color, with 88% in favor of doing so. They divide evenly as to whether colleges should be able to restrict students from wearing clothing that displays the Confederate flag or displaying a pornographic poster in a dorm room.

Students generally would not support colleges preventing students from starting a pro-gun rights student group on campus, passing out pamphlets with a Christian message or displaying a poster supporting a presidential candidate in a dorm room window.

FIGURE 21

Student Support for College Restrictions on Specific Types of Speech

Below are a few specific examples of some things you might see students do on a college campus. Do you think colleges should or should not be able to restrict each of the following on campus?
(% Yes, should be able to)



Female, nonwhite and Democratic students tend to be more supportive of restrictions on speech. The differences are largest with respect to wearing clothing depicting the Confederate flag, which shows a 42 percentage-point gap between Democratic (68%) and Republican (26%) students, and roughly 20-point differences by gender and race. The only action Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say colleges should restrict is displaying a pornographic poster.

FOURTH-YEAR FEMALE STUDENT COMMENTING ON WEARING
CLOTHING WITH CONFEDERATE FLAG:

"I feel like out of the miniscule things that our campus should restrict — yes, the Confederate flag. I don't think we should be spreading that. You're talking about the majority of people it's offending. Why make them feel uncomfortable about their campus when you just want to walk around with a sign from the 1800s?"

THIRD-YEAR MALE STUDENT COMMENTING ON DISPLAYING
A PORNOGRAPHIC POSTER IN A DORM ROOM:

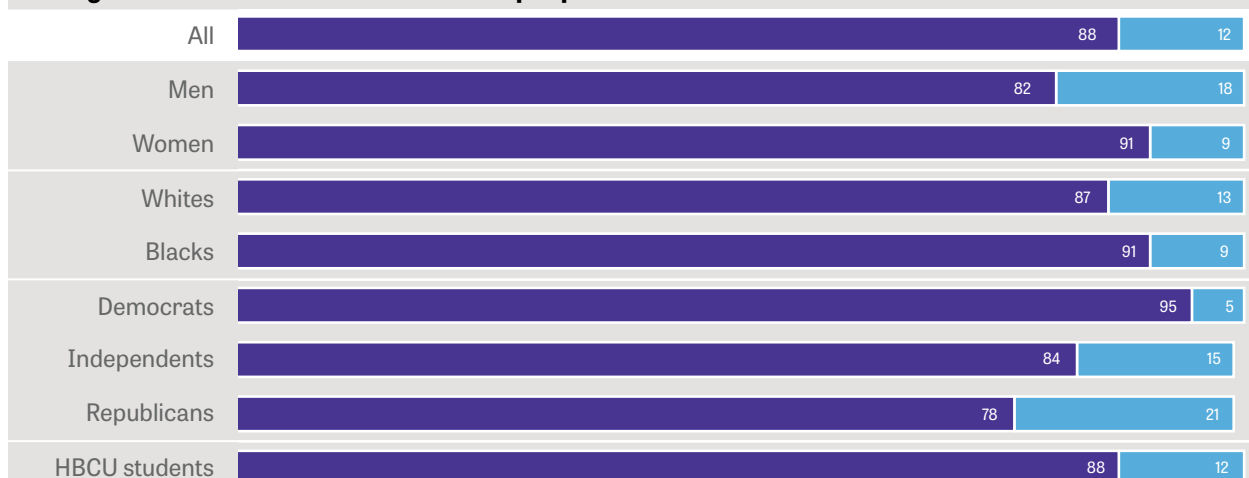
"The dorm is more of a more private setting where I feel you could do a bit more than you would publicly. So, as long as it's not publicly displayed I think is fine. It's not really affecting anyone else, so, unless there's a problem with the roommate. But if both roommates are fine with it, then yeah, go for it."

FIGURE 22

Student Support for College Restrictions on Specific Types of Speech, by Subgroup

■ % Yes, colleges should be able to restrict ■ % No, colleges should not be able to restrict

Using an offensive racial slur to refer to people of color



Wearing clothing that displays the Confederate flag

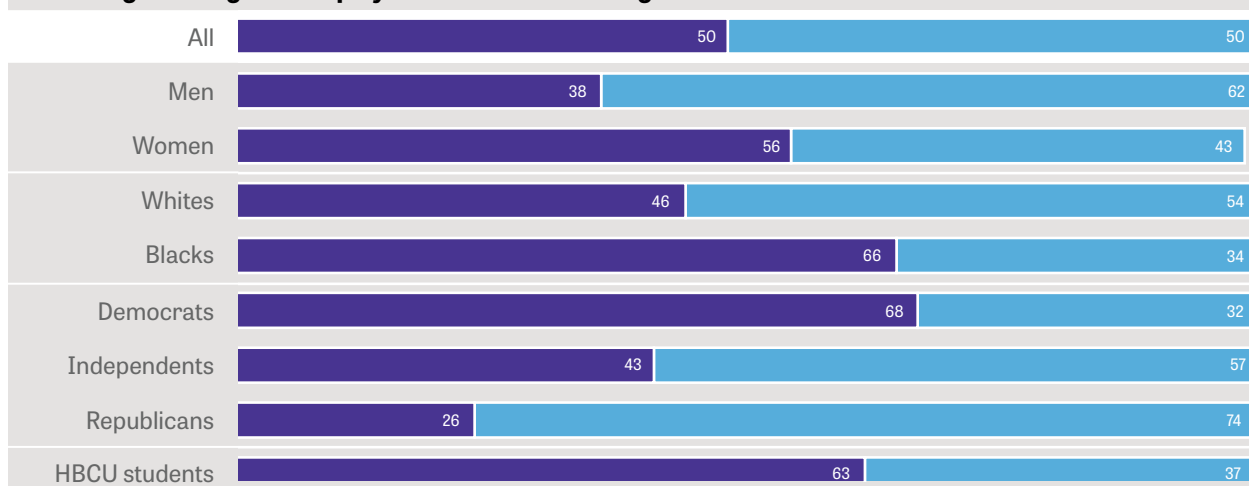
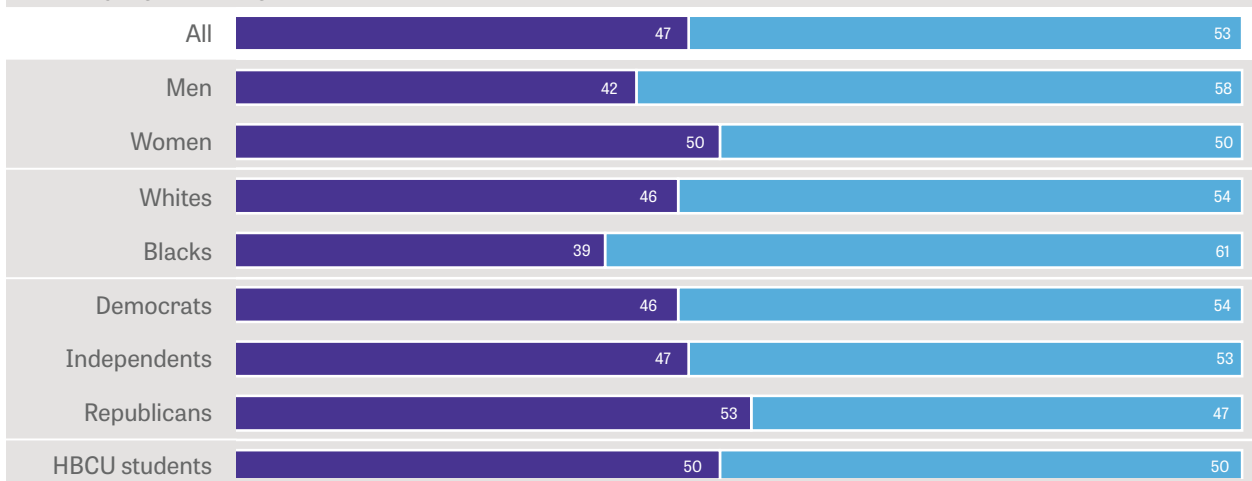


FIGURE 22

Student Support for College Restrictions on Specific Types of Speech, by Subgroup

Displaying a pornographic poster in a dorm room



Students starting a campus group interested in defending Americans' gun ownership rights

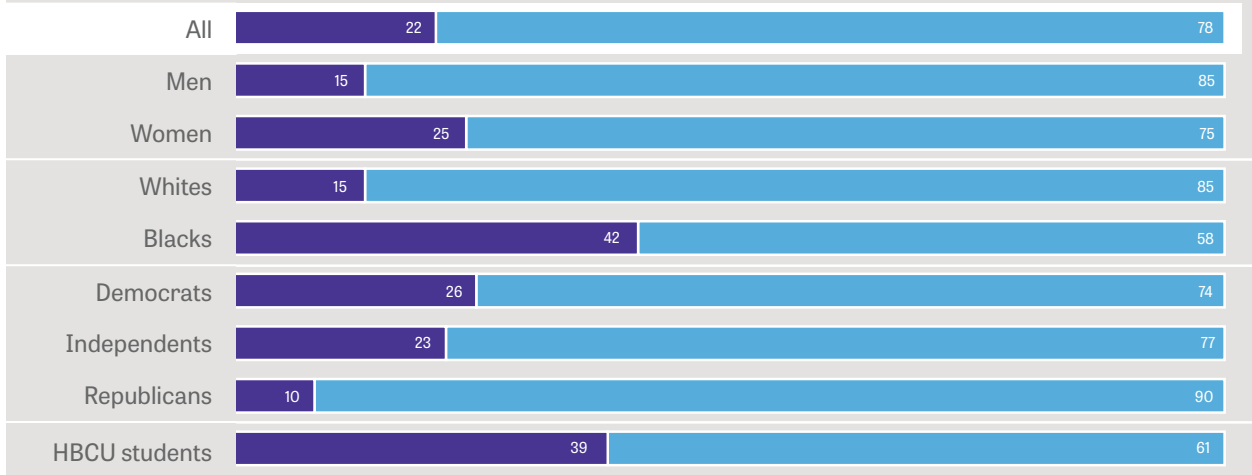
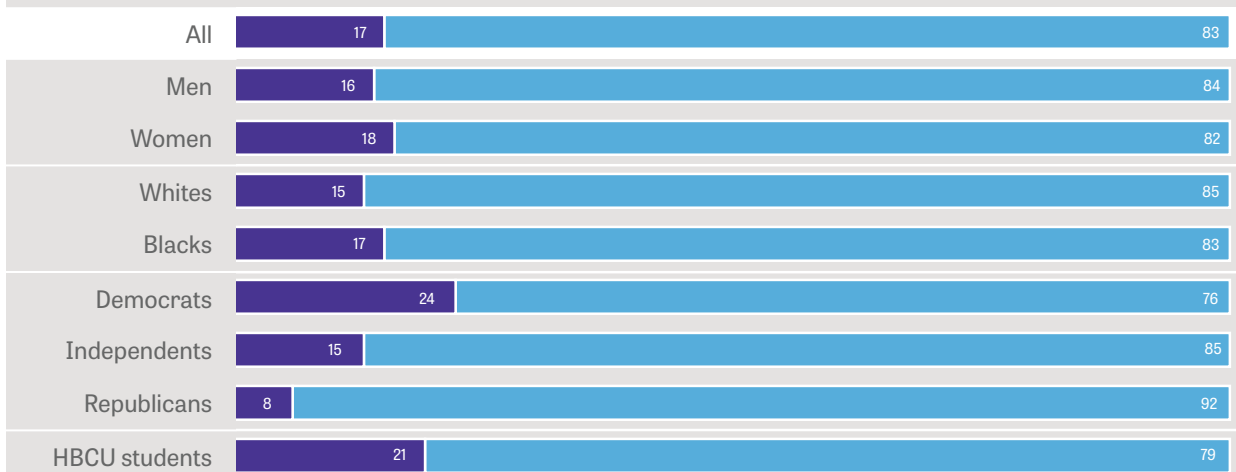


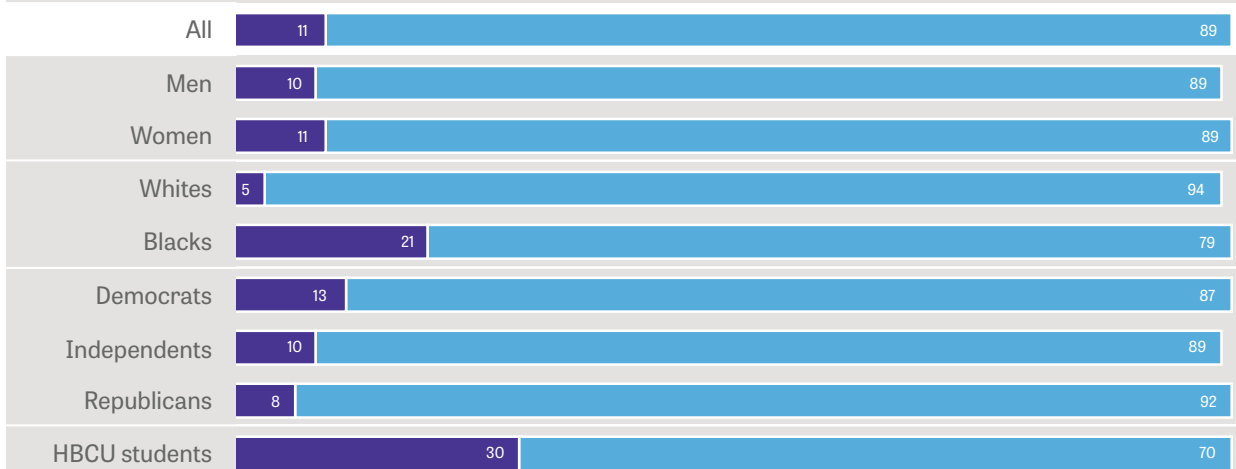
FIGURE 22

Student Support for College Restrictions on Specific Types of Speech, by Subgroup

Passing out pamphlets with a Christian message



Displaying a poster expressing support for a presidential candidate in a dorm room window



Note: Due to rounding, percentages may total 100% +/- 1%.

3 Balancing Free Speech and Diversity on Campus

Students favor campus free-speech zones and safe spaces; they are divided on speech codes

College students largely favor two college policies that have implications for free speech: establishing free-speech zones (81%) and providing safe spaces for students (78%). Free-speech zones ensure students can express their views, but critics see limiting that speech to certain areas of campus as an undue restriction. Critics also view safe spaces as a way for students to avoid hearing views with which they disagree.

Many colleges have speech codes, which are designed to limit biased speech on campus. Perhaps reflecting the tension between favoring an open campus environment and wanting limits on hateful speech, college students are divided in their views of speech codes — 48% are in favor, and 52% are opposed. Students attending HBCUs are more inclined to favor (59%) than oppose (40%) speech codes.

Student subgroups more inclined to endorse restrictions on speech — such as women, blacks and Democrats — are more likely to favor speech codes. Still, among these groups, support is only slightly above the majority level.

In addition to speech codes, there have been First Amendment flashpoints around invited speakers on campus in recent years, with opposition to certain speakers leading colleges to cancel those events. College students lean in favor of canceling speeches when there are concerns about possible violent protests (61% in favor vs. 39% opposed), but they lean against disinviting speakers in situations when some students perceive the speaker's message as offensive or biased (42% vs. 58%).

FIGURE 23

Student Approval of Campus Free-Speech Policies

Do you favor or oppose each of the following actions taken by colleges?

■ % Favor ■ % Oppose

Instituting speech codes, or codes of conduct that restrict potentially offensive or biased speech on campus that would be permitted in other public places

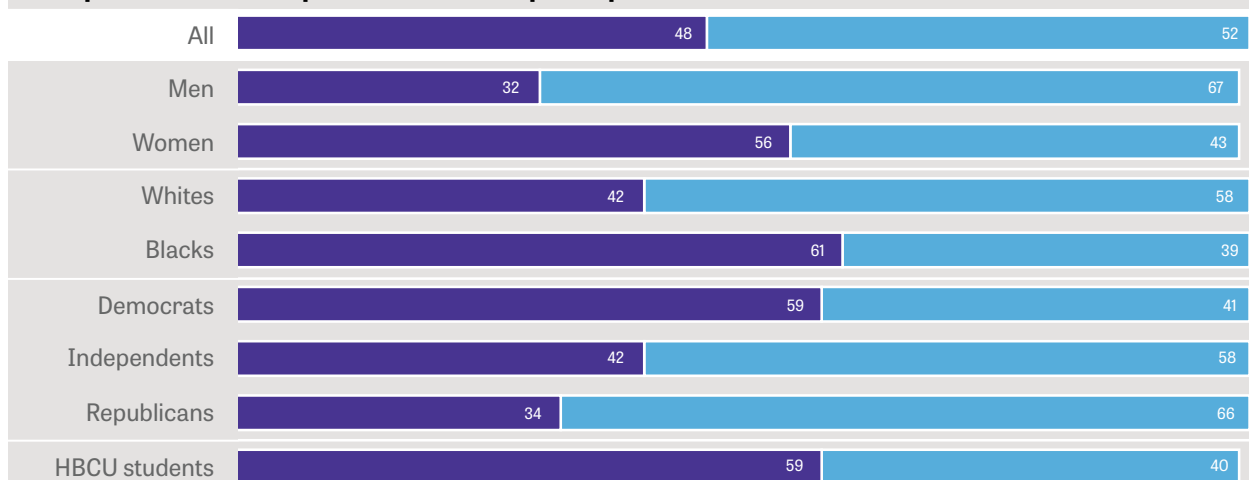
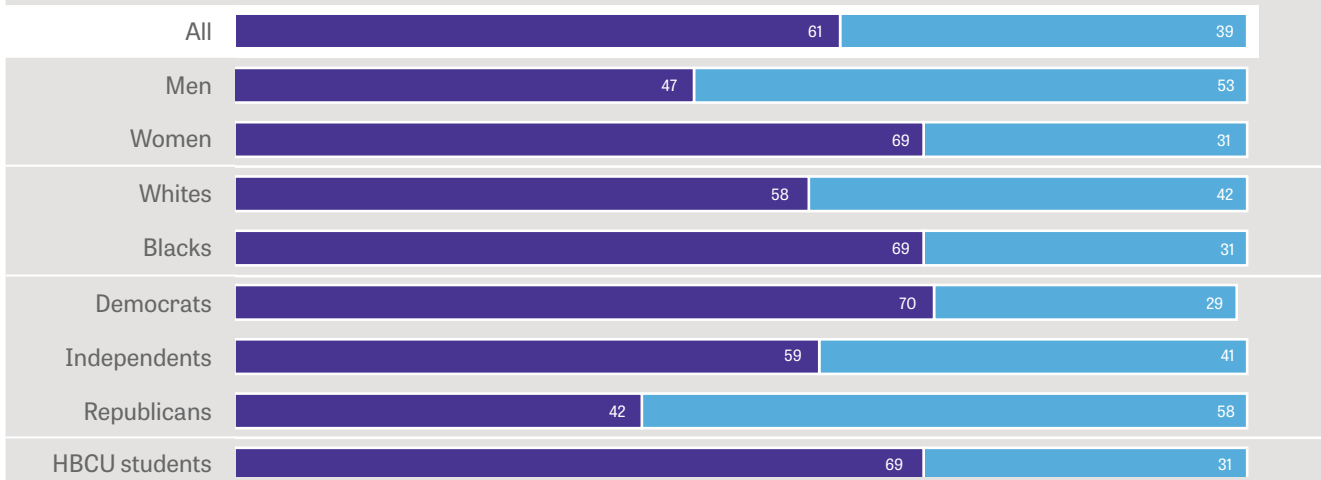


FIGURE 23

Student Approval of Campus Free-Speech Policies

Canceling planned speeches because of concerns about the possibility of violent protests



Disinviting speakers because some students perceive their message as offensive or biased against certain groups of people

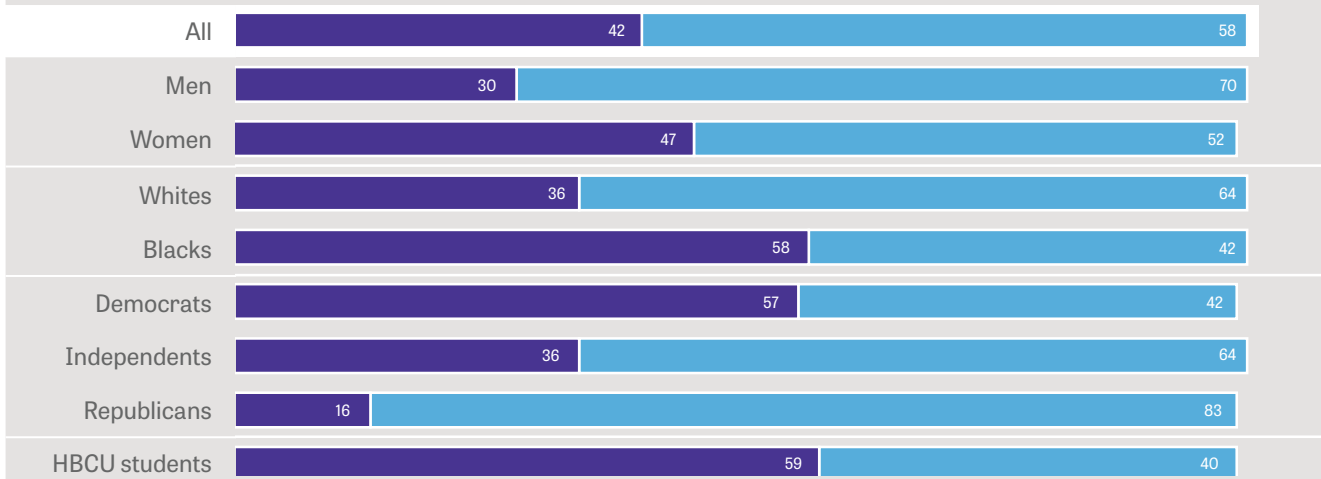
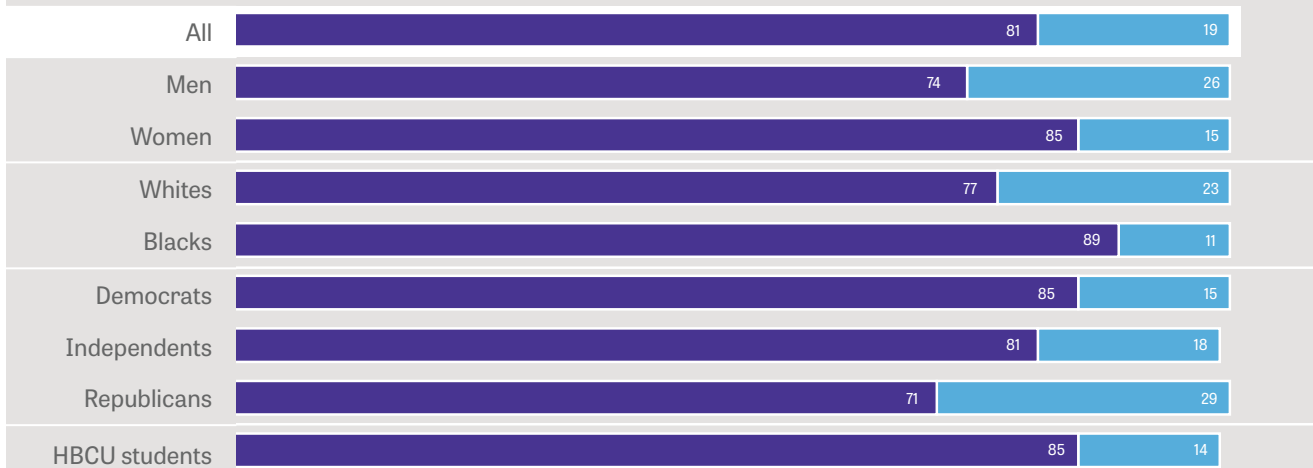


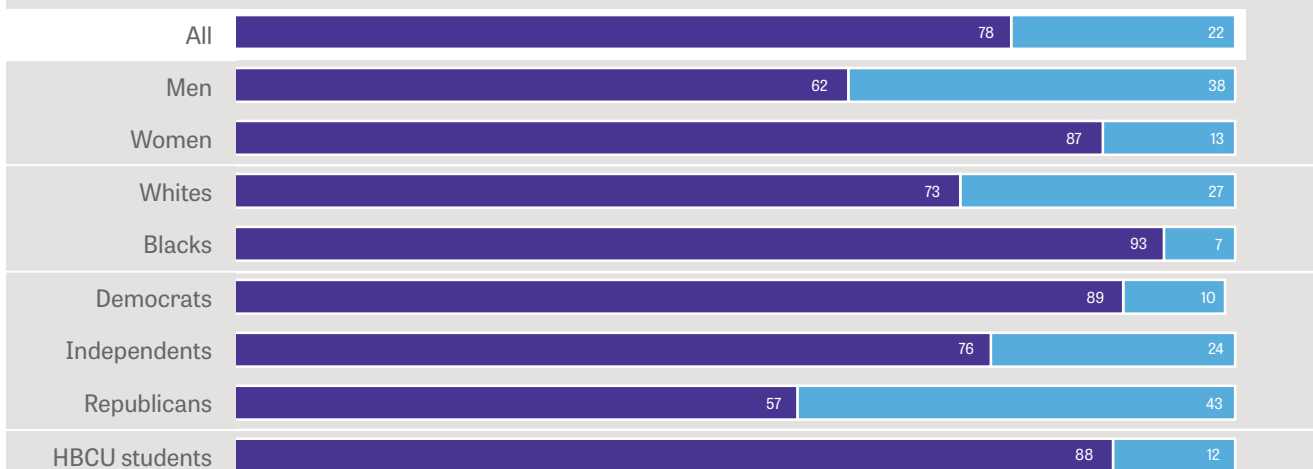
FIGURE 23

Student Approval of Campus Free-Speech Policies

Establishing a free-speech zone, a designated area of campus in which protesting or distributing literature is permitted, usually with pre-approval



Providing safe spaces, or areas of campus that are designed to be free from threatening actions, ideas or conversations



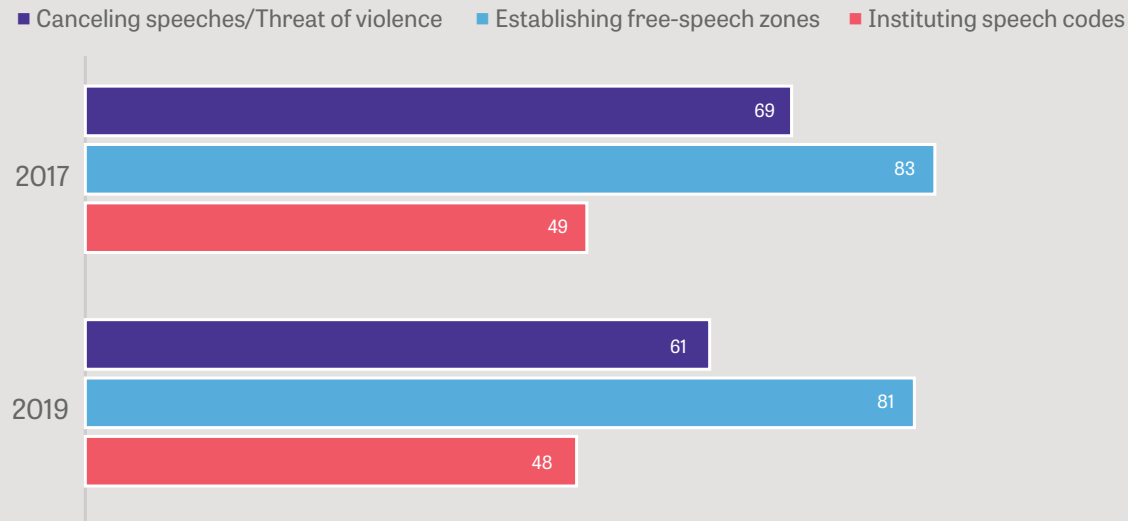
Note: "No answer" percentages not shown.

Compared with 2017, when these items were first asked, fewer students say they favor canceling speeches because of concerns about the possibility of violent protests (69% in 2017 vs. 61% in 2019). Opinions about speech codes and free-speech zones are similar to what they were in 2017.⁶

6 Question wording changes on the items asking about safe spaces and disinviting speakers because of student opposition complicate comparisons to 2017 results.

FIGURE 24

Percentage of Students Who Favor Campus Free-Speech Policies, 2017-2019



Students oppose violence, shouting down speakers as means of preventing expression

Asked about various actions students could take to express their views or counter the opinions of others, students believe boycotts of campus events or vendors, distributing pamphlets on controversial issues, protesting speakers and sit-ins are acceptable actions for students to take at least some of the time. Majorities say it is never acceptable for students to deny the media access to cover a campus protest or event (52%), to shout down speakers (61%) or to engage in violence to stop a speech, protest or rally (87%).

FIGURE 25

Student Opinions on Acceptable Student Actions to Express or Deter Opinions

Do you think each of the following actions that could be taken by college students are always acceptable, sometimes acceptable, or never acceptable?

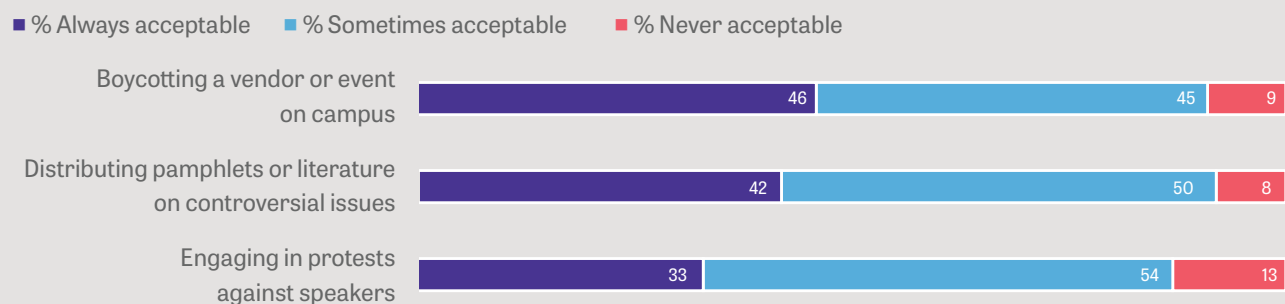
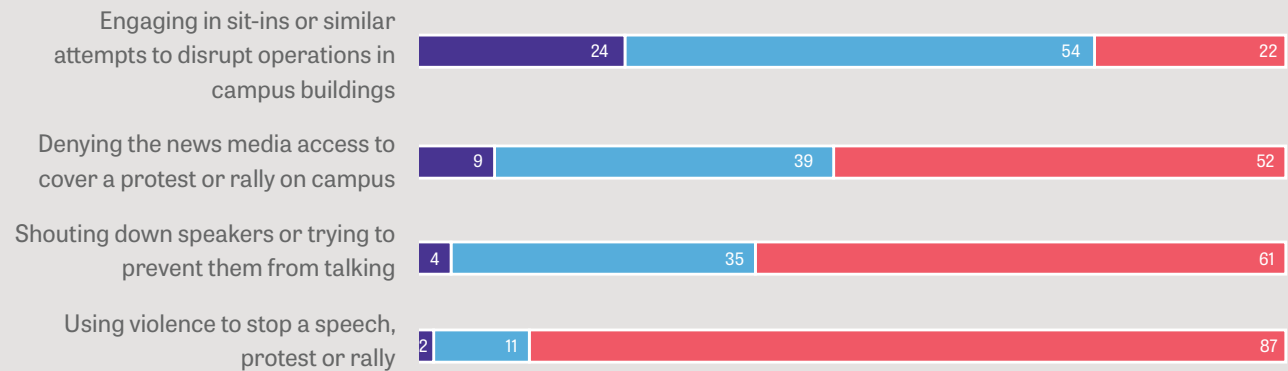


FIGURE 25

Student Opinions on Acceptable Student Actions to Express or Deter Opinions



FOURTH-YEAR FEMALE STUDENT WHO THINKS IT IS SOMETIMES ACCEPTABLE TO SHOUT DOWN SPEAKERS:

“When it is a speaker that is known to incite hate and ... rage against ... a certain group. So, if it was a speaker that is completely against the LGBTQ community to the point that they’re telling people, ‘Oh, you should hate these people. You should do XYZ to these people whenever you see them.’ That’s not acceptable and that’s something that should be shut down. That’s not something that should ever be allowed to go on.”

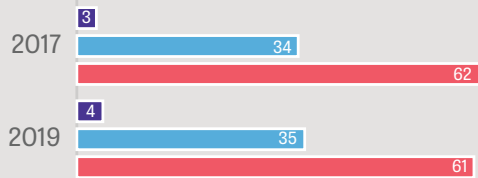
More students today say it is “always” or “sometimes” acceptable for students to deny the news media access to cover campus protests or rallies (48%, up from 39%) and to engage in sit-ins (78%, up from 67%) than did so in 2017, when the question was first asked. The percentages finding the other activities acceptable are similar to what they were in the prior survey.

FIGURE 26

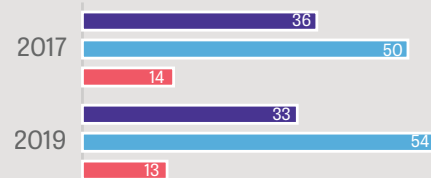
Student Opinions on Acceptable Student Actions to Express or Deter Opinions, 2017-2019

■ % Always ■ % Sometimes ■ % Never

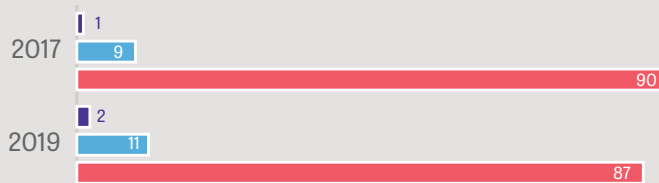
Shouting Down Speakers



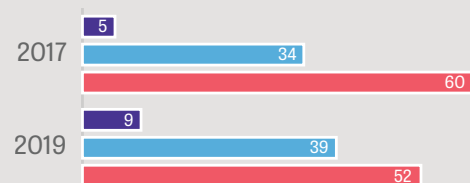
Protesting Speakers



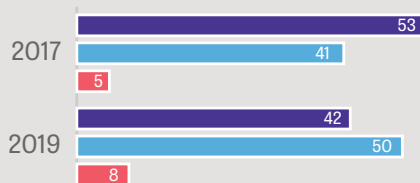
Using Violence



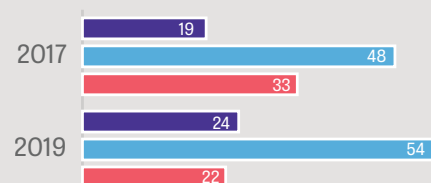
Denying News Media Access



Distributing Pamphlets/Literature



Sit-ins



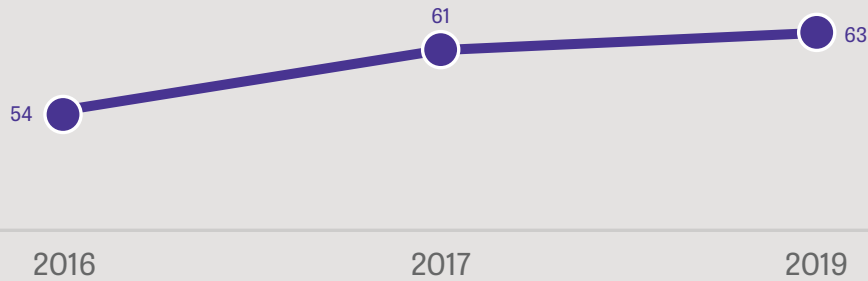
Students still see campus climate as deterring expression

Sixty-three percent of college students say the climate on their campus prevents some people from saying things they believe because others might find them offensive. This percentage is similar to 2017 but remains up from 54% in 2016.

FIGURE 27

Student Views of Campus Climate, 2016-2019

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. (% Strongly agree/Agree)



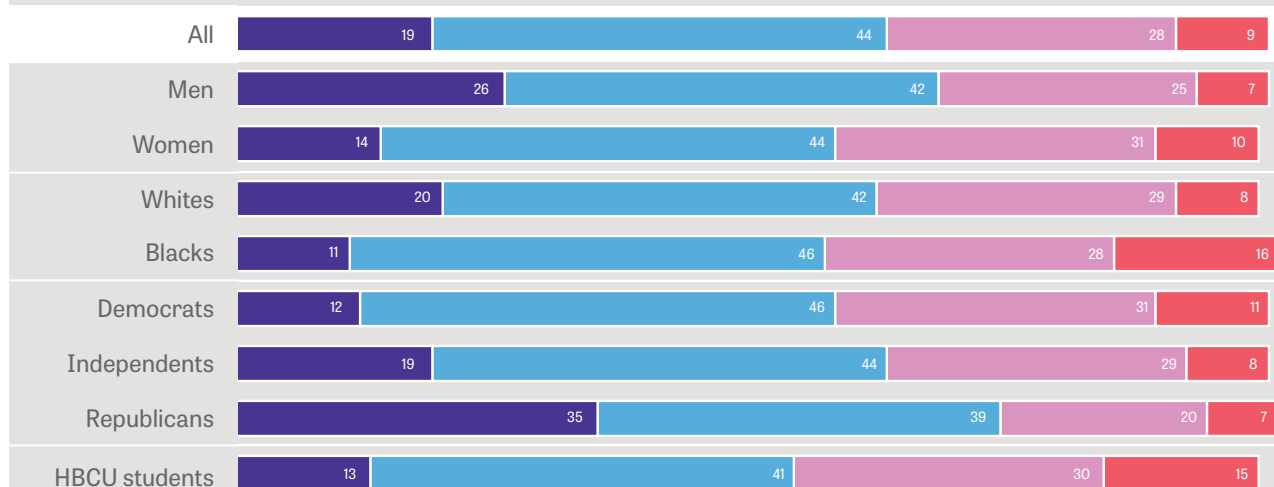
Republican students are more likely than other groups to see the climate on their college campus as deterring speech — 74% agree this occurs. But majorities of Democrats and other subgroups also share this view. The increase in this view between the 2016 and 2017 surveys is apparent among nearly all subgroups of college students.⁷

FIGURE 28

Student Views of Campus Climate

The climate on my campus prevents some people from saying things they believe because others might find them offensive.

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Somewhat agree ■ % Somewhat disagree ■ % Strongly disagree



Note: "No answer" percentages not shown.

⁷ Knight Foundation & Gallup, Inc. (2017). *Free expression on campus: What college students think about First Amendment issues*. (p.15). https://knightfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Knight_Foundation_Free_Expression_on_Campus_2017.pdf

**THE FIRST AMENDMENT ON CAMPUS 2020 REPORT:
COLLEGE STUDENTS' VIEWS OF FREE EXPRESSION**

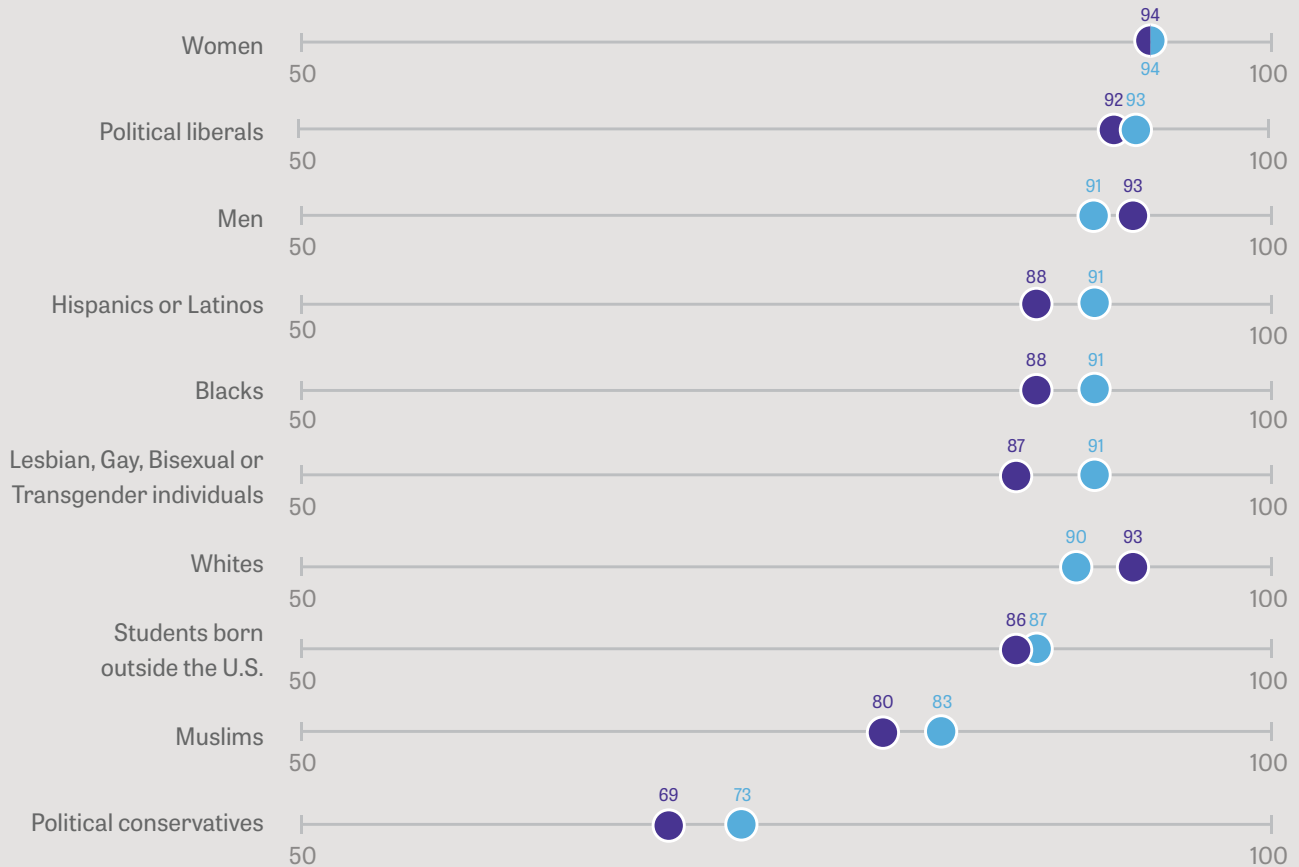
Even as they see the campus climate acting as a deterrent to expression, college students believe most campus groups can freely and openly express their views. There is, however, variation in the extent to which students think certain groups are able to voice their opinions. While at least 9 in 10 students believe female, politically liberal, male, Hispanic, black, LGBT and white students can freely express their views, fewer say this about international (87%), Muslim (83%) and politically conservative students (73%). These percentages are all essentially the same as those measured in the 2017 survey.

FIGURE 29

Perceptions That Student Groups Can Freely and Openly Express Their Views, 2017-2019

On your college campus, do you think members of each of the following groups are, or are not, able to freely and openly express their views? (% Yes, are able to)

■ 2017 ■ 2019



Less than half of self-identified conservatives (49%) believe conservative students can speak freely and openly on their campus — the primary reason political conservatives lag other groups on this measure. But liberals (82%) and moderates (74%) are also less inclined to think conservative students can openly express their views than other groups.

FIGURE 30

Perceptions That Student Groups Can Freely and Openly Express Their Views, by Political Ideology

(% Yes, are able to)

	Liberals	Moderates	Conservatives
Political liberals	92	94	96
Political conservatives	82	74	49
Women	92	95	96
Men	97	90	82
Whites	97	88	79
Blacks	87	93	98
Hispanics or Latinos	87	93	96
Students born outside the U.S.	82	88	95
Muslims	78	84	90
LGBT individuals	86	93	98

The large disparity in conservative-liberal views on whether conservative students can freely speak their mind is an extreme example of the pattern whereby members of a group tend to perceive their own group as less able to freely express their views than nonmembers do. Most of these differences are small and not statistically meaningful, but there is a meaningful difference between male (85%) and female (95%) students' opinions about whether male students can speak freely.⁸

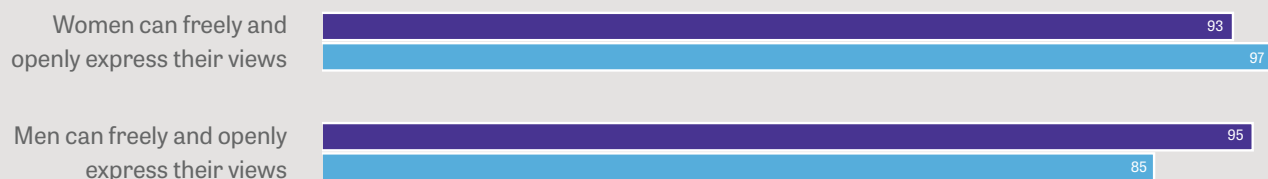
⁸ There are too few Muslim students in the survey to analyze Muslim opinions of whether Muslim students can freely and openly express their views on campus. The survey did not measure whether students were LGBT or born outside the U.S.

FIGURE 31

Perceptions That Student Groups Can Freely and Openly Express Their Views, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

Opinions on gender groups' ability to freely and openly express their views on campus, by gender

■ % Women ■ % Men



Opinions on racial and ethnic groups' ability to freely and openly express their views on campus, by race and ethnicity

■ % White ■ % Black ■ % Hispanic



Most students say they personally feel comfortable expressing dissenting opinions in class

Even as many U.S. college students believe their campus climate deters students from speaking their minds, the majority (61%) indicate they personally feel comfortable voicing disagreement with ideas expressed by their instructors or other students in class. However, only 20% say they are “very comfortable” doing so.

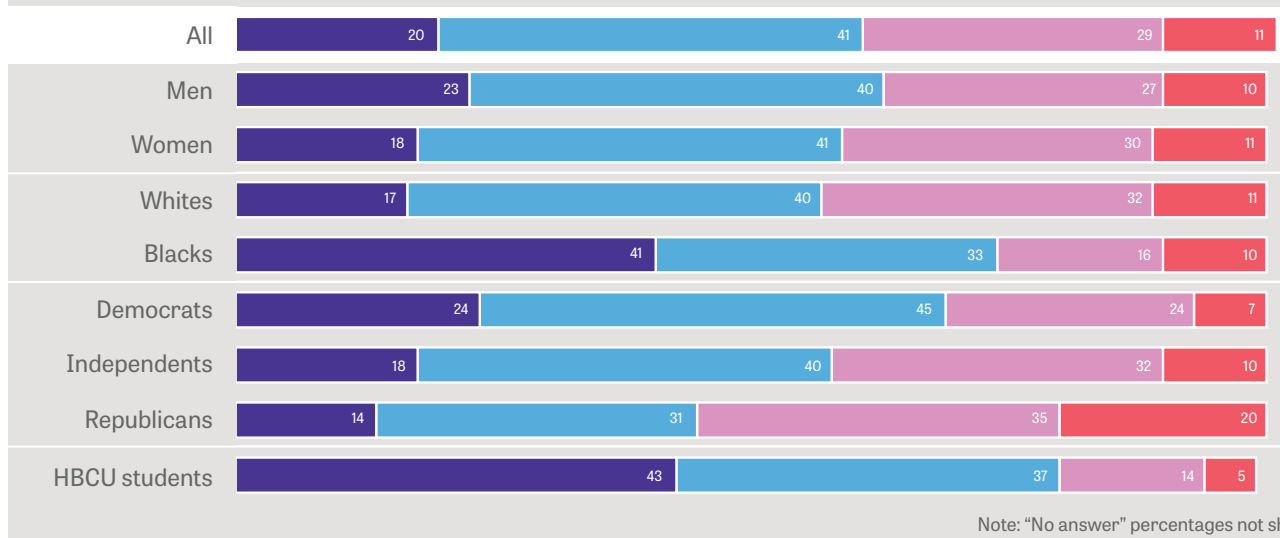
Black students, including those at HBCUs (80%) and those at non-HBCU colleges (71%), report being more comfortable voicing disagreement in class than other students. Democratic (69%) are more likely than independent (58%) and Republican students (45%) to feel comfortable. At the same time, male and female students are about equally likely to report feeling comfortable expressing dissenting opinions in class.

FIGURE 32

Student Level of Comfort With Expressing Dissenting Opinions

Thinking about discussions that take place in your classes, how comfortable do you feel voicing disagreement with ideas expressed by the instructor or other students?

■ % Very comfortable ■ % Somewhat comfortable ■ % Somewhat uncomfortable ■ % Very uncomfortable



Fifty-five percent of students who report feeling uncomfortable because of something they overheard on campus indicate they are comfortable voicing disagreement in class; 64% of students who say they haven't felt uncomfortable are comfortable expressing a dissenting opinion.

THIRD-YEAR MALE STUDENT WHO FEELS UNCOMFORTABLE

EXPRESSING DISSENTING VIEWS IN CLASS:

"I didn't say anything just because I didn't know the people in the class. But every single person who voiced their opinion were all on the opposite side of the discussion than I was. So I would have been the only person speaking, and I didn't know anyone or how they were going to take it because they were pretty intent on it."

FIRST-YEAR MALE STUDENT WHO FEELS COMFORTABLE
EXPRESSING DISSENTING VIEWS IN CLASS:

"I definitely feel very comfortable knowing that I can disagree with a person and I don't think that there would really be any consequences. I think that the university would support students speaking up for how they feel and being able to voice their disagreement."

FIRST-YEAR FEMALE STUDENT WHO FEELS UNCOMFORTABLE
EXPRESSING DISSENTING VIEWS IN CLASS:

"For me, it's still just kind of that fear of being judged because of my responses. So, the school definitely encourages students to speak up however they feel, however, there [are] still times in the back of my head that fear that someone or a group of people will definitely say something that will make me feel like I shouldn't have said anything at all."

4 Social Media and News

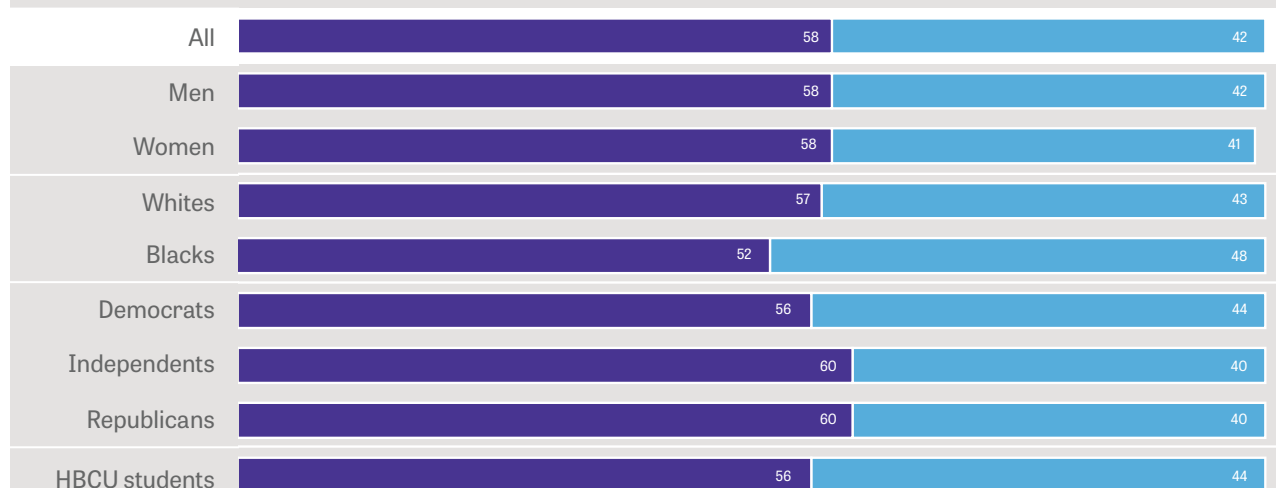
Technology is dramatically transforming the way people communicate, and much of the discussion that used to take place in-person has shifted to online forums. Reflecting these changes, students continue to report that most discussion of political or social ideas at their college takes place through social media (58%) rather than face-to-face on campus (42%). The figures are almost identical to those from the initial measurement in 2017 and vary little by subgroup.

FIGURE 33

Student Views on Where Political Expression Takes Place

Where do you think most expression and discussion of political or social ideas among students at your college takes place these days — face-to-face on campus in classrooms and public areas, or online through social media?

■ % Online through social media ■ % Face-to-face on campus



Note: "No answer" percentages not shown.

One in three (34%) college students say they post links to news stories "often" or "sometimes." This percentage is down, however, from 43% in 2017.

Thirty-six percent of college students say they discuss news with others on social media, essentially unchanged from 2017 (38%).

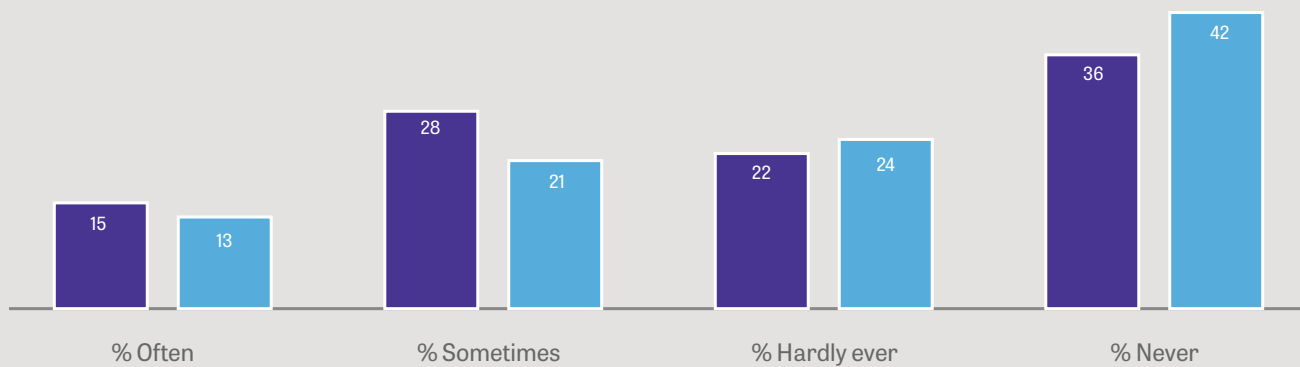
FIGURE 34

Student News Activities on Social Media, 2017-2019

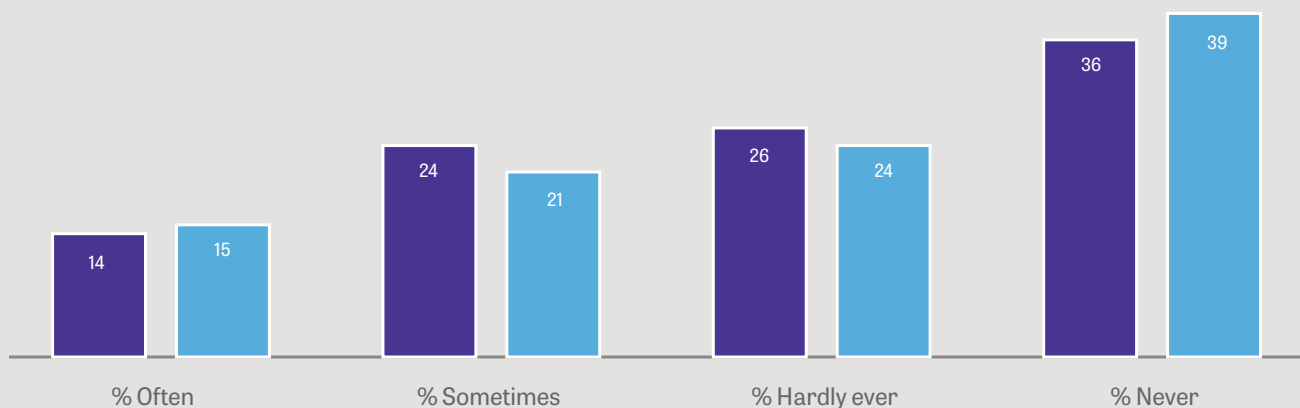
How often do you do each of the following on social media, including Facebook® and Twitter® — often, sometimes, hardly ever, or never?

■ 2017 ■ 2019

Post links to news stories



Discuss news with others on that site



HBCU students are much more likely to engage in both activities — 60% say they post links to news stories, and 68% say they discuss news with others on social media.

Social media is increasingly seen as uncivil

While social media provides a ready forum for people to express their views, there are significant downsides. For example, college students increasingly view the dialogue that occurs on social media as uncivil. The 29% of college students who “strongly agree” or “agree” that the dialogue that occurs on social media is usually civil is down from 41% in 2016 and 37% in 2017.

Additionally, 81% of students agree that it is too easy for people to say things anonymously on social media. Most students agree that social media can stifle free expression both because too many people block those with whom they disagree (60%) and because people are afraid of being attacked or shamed (58%). Both figures are up about 10 percentage points from 2016, but stable since 2017.

FIRST-YEAR FEMALE STUDENT DESCRIBING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS WHERE
PRODUCTIVE DISCUSSION DOES AND DOES NOT TAKE PLACE:

"[On] Twitter ... you don't have to follow someone to see what they're tweeting. It's much more open. People feel more exposed. Like, if I tweet this, literally anyone can see it. Versus ... Facebook ... you have to be friends with the person. So, I think a lot of times Twitter people are more likely ... to be willing to have a discussion whereas Facebook it's kind of like, 'hey, I thought you were my friend — why do you disagree with me?'"

FOURTH-YEAR FEMALE STUDENT DISCUSSING WHETHER SOCIAL
MEDIA STIFLES EXPRESSION OR PROMOTES IT:

"I feel like it's somewhere in the middle. Because social media gives people the courage to speak out [on things] that they will never say in person. However, I feel like society now — you can't say what you want to say without there being some sort of criticism. And if you don't say it in the right way then it can ruin your life — it could ruin your career — you could get death threats towards you all because of a difference of opinion."

FIGURE 35

Student Views of Social Media, 2016-2019

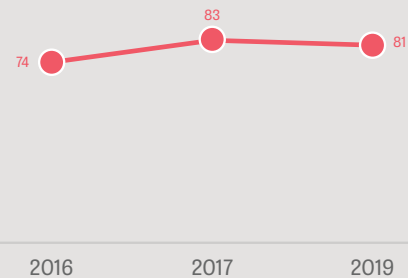
Thinking generally about how people interact on social media, do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements?

(% Strongly/Somewhat agree)

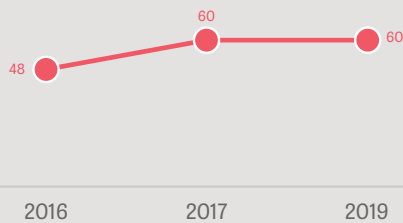
Dialogue is usually civil



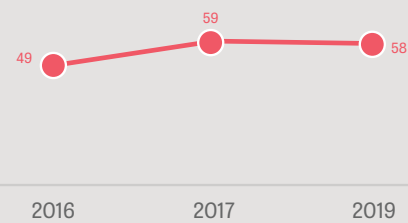
Too easy to say things anonymously



Stifles expression; People block views



Stifles expression; People afraid of being attacked



Republican students are more likely than Democratic students to believe social media stifles free expression. HBCU students, and black students more generally, are more likely than other groups to perceive the dialogue on social media as being civil.

SECOND-YEAR FEMALE STUDENT:

"I think people, in a lot of aspects, are scared to say things out loud in person. Being on social media can be kind of a way to do it where you're comfortable and not have to worry about anyone attacking you face-to-face. Just being able to ... put it out there without having to worry about any conflicts."

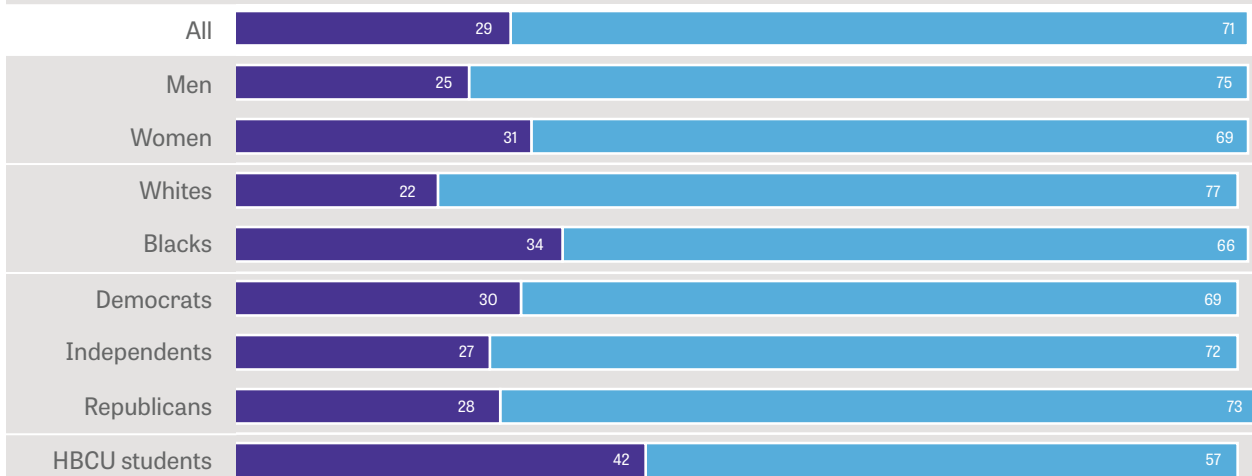
FIGURE 36

Student Views of Social Media

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?

■ % Strongly/Somewhat agree ■ Strongly/Somewhat disagree

The dialogue that occurs on social media is usually civil



It is too easy for people to say things anonymously on social media

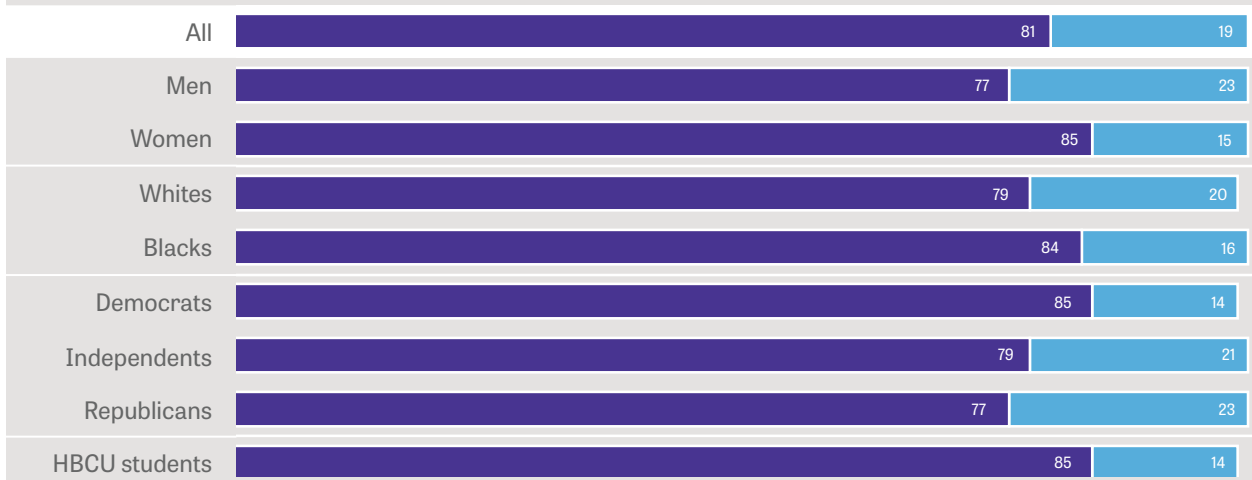
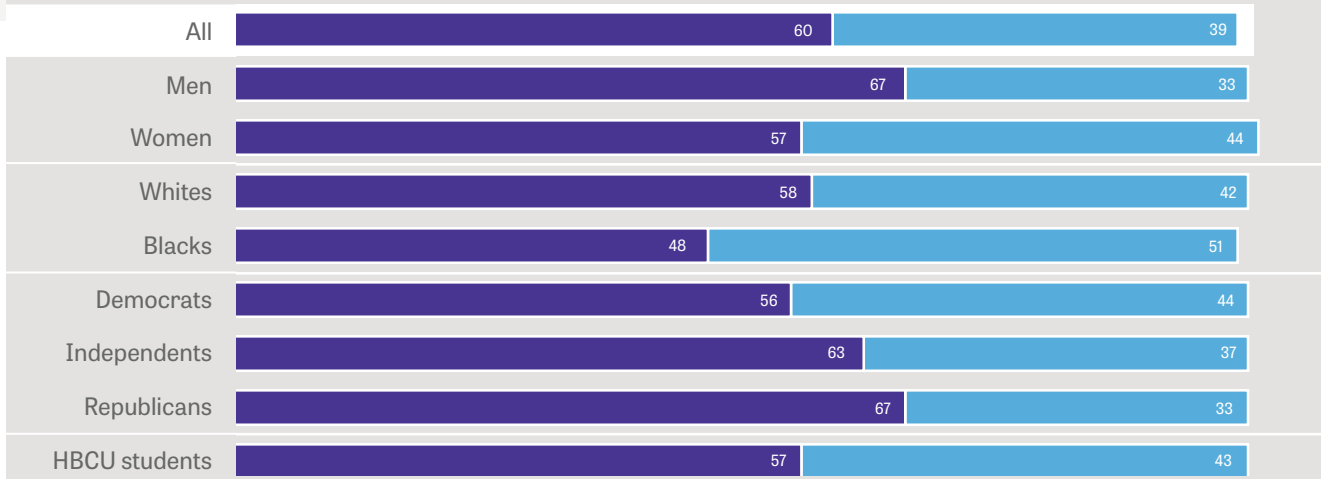


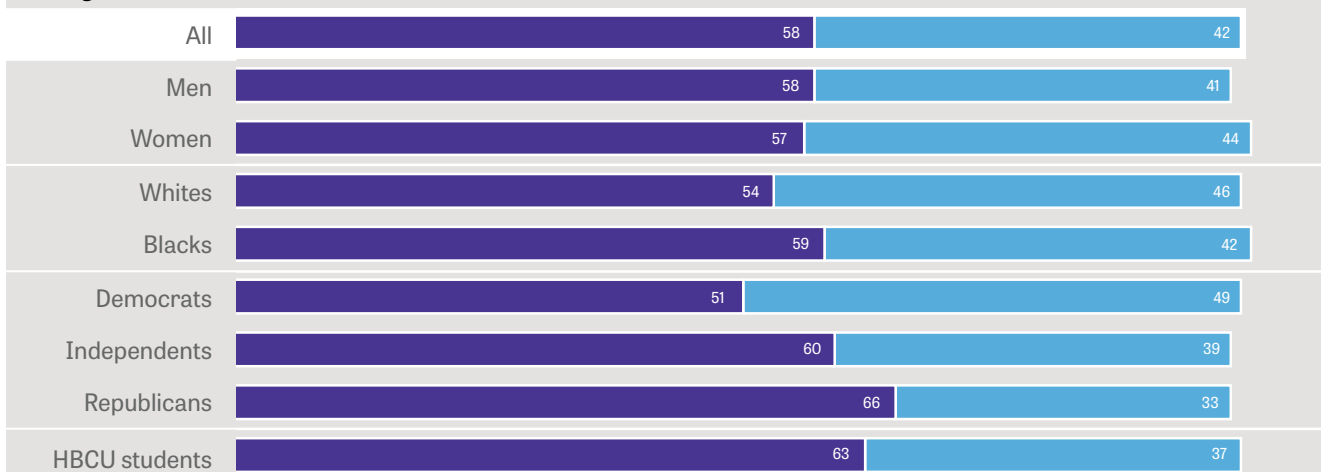
FIGURE 36

Student Views of Social Media

Social media stifles free expression because too many people block views they disagree with



Social media stifles free expression because people are afraid of being attacked or shamed by those who disagree with them



Note: "No answer" percentages not shown.

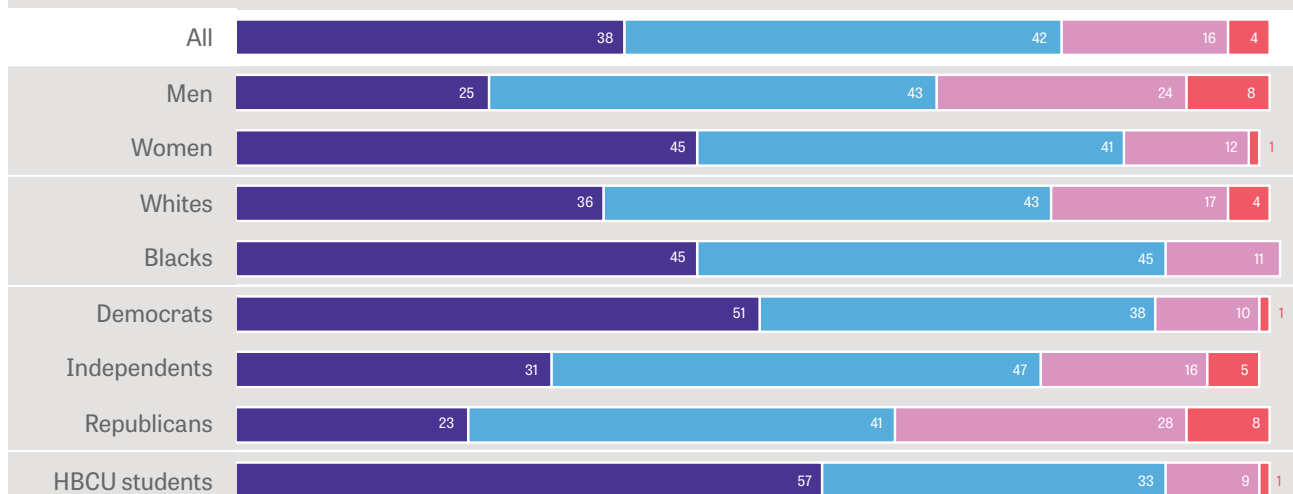
Thirty-eight percent of college students say hate speech is a "very serious" problem on social media, and 42% say it is a "somewhat serious" problem. The majority of HBCU students (57%) and Democratic students (51%) describe hate speech as a "very serious" problem. Female students are also more likely than most other subgroups to view hate speech as a serious problem, while male and Republican students are less likely to see it as "very serious" (though the majority of those groups believe it is at least a "somewhat serious" problem).

FIGURE 37

Student Views of Hate Speech on Social Media

Turning now to hate speech, meaning speech or writing that may be viewed as offensive or prejudiced against someone on the basis of their sex, race, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. In general, how serious of a problem do you think hate speech is on social media sites and apps like Facebook®, Twitter® and YouTube®?

■ % Very serious ■ % Somewhat serious ■ % Not very serious ■ % Not serious at all



Note: Due to rounding, percentages may total 100% +/- 1%.

When asked for their views on methods of addressing hate speech on social media, college students are most supportive of allowing individuals to take personal responsibility for what they post (77%); this approach appeals more to Republicans (89%) than to Democratic students (69%).

A majority of students (68%) also support the idea of social media companies aggressively removing content that violates their standards for what can be posted. Less than half of Republicans, 47%, favor this approach, compared to 80% of Democrats and 73% of women.

Students are disinclined to believe the government should allow individuals to directly sue social media companies for content that they believe causes them harm (36%). However, a majority of black students favor this approach.

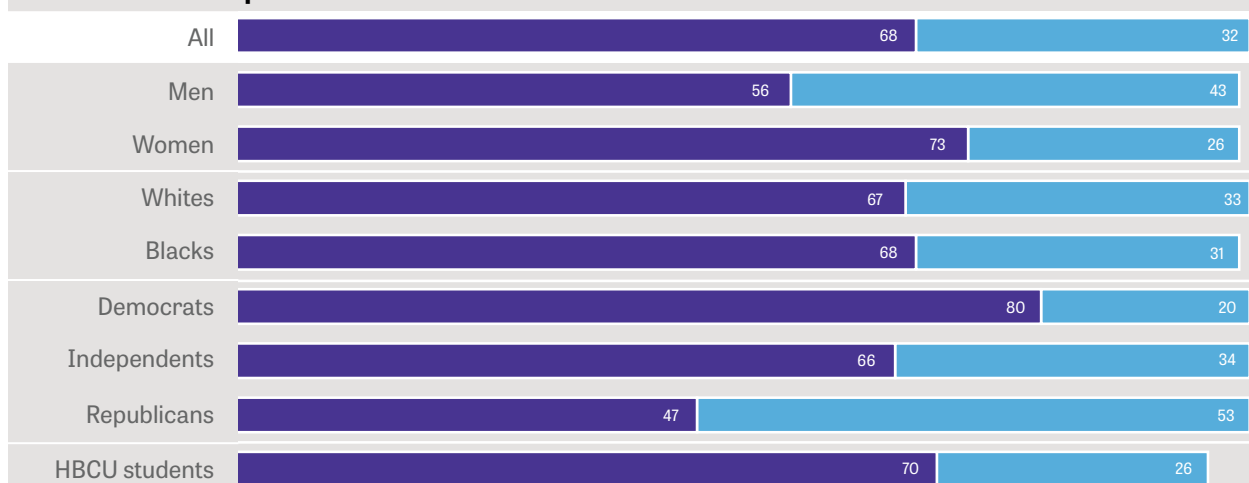
FIGURE 38

Student Support of Addressing Hate Speech on Social Media

Do you favor or oppose each of the following ways to address hate speech on social media sites and apps?

■ % Favor ■ % Oppose

Social media companies more aggressively removing content that violates their standards about what type of content can be posted



Government allowing people to directly sue social media companies for content that they believe causes them harm

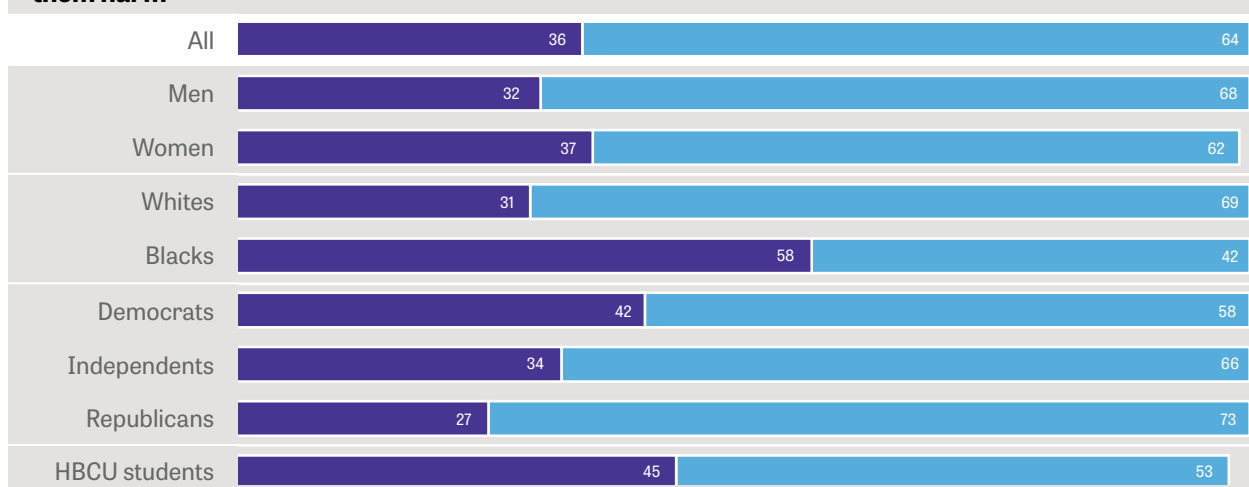


FIGURE 38

Student Support of Addressing Hate Speech on Social Media

Leaving it up to individuals who use the social media sites and apps to take personal responsibility for what they view and post on those sites



FOURTH-YEAR FEMALE STUDENT:

"I think it should be primarily the social media platforms that should be responsible. At the same time, I think the individual users should be more conscious of making statements. I think people should be free to say their hate speech, but in a private manner or in a way that's not, like, publicizing or advertising it, because it can interfere with other people's values. So, I think there, social media platforms should be making sure that nobody's posting things publicly that could offend others and the users should be using more discretion as far as making their posts."

Social media is a primary source of news for college students

College students are heavily reliant on social media for news about events and issues happening in their community, the United States and the world. Asked in an open-ended question format about where they get most of their news, two-thirds of students cite some form of social media — either in general or specifically (e.g., Twitter, Facebook or Instagram).

For example, 24% of college students mention Twitter, while 22% say “social media” in general, 11% mention Facebook and 9% Instagram. Six percent say they get news from Snapchat, and 6% from YouTube. All of these sources except Facebook are mentioned more often now than in 2016 — the last time Gallup asked the question. In that survey, just 5% mentioned Twitter by name, 16% said social media generally, 1% YouTube, and Instagram and Snapchat were not cited as news sources.

Television is another common news source, with 19% mentioning TV news generally, 13% CNN and 8% Fox News, in addition to other specific broadcast news channels named by smaller percentages of respondents. Significant percentages of students also cite word of mouth (12%) and personal networks of family members and friends (16%).

Trust in the news media is down slightly among college students

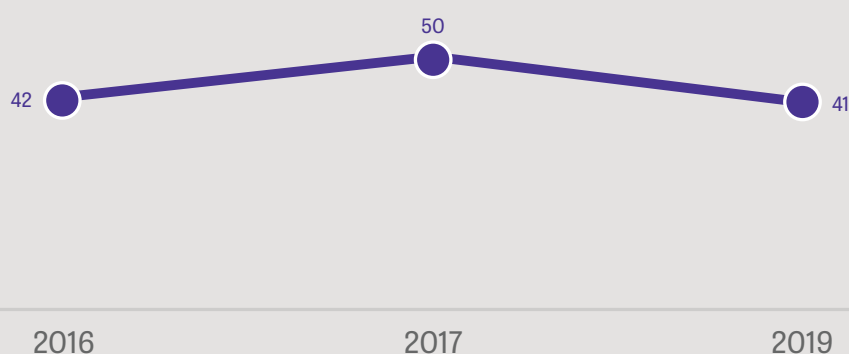
Forty-one percent of college students say they trust the news media to report the news accurately and fairly, similar to the 42% from the 2016 survey, but lower than the 50% measured in 2017. The latest reading is identical to a 2019 Gallup reading among U.S. adults.⁹

FIGURE 39

Student Trust in News Media, 2016-2019

How much do you trust the news media to report the news accurately and fairly?

(% A great deal/A fair amount)



Forty-nine percent of Democratic students trust the media, versus smaller proportions of independents (37%) and Republicans (27%). At the same time, HBCU students' trust in the media is 46%.

⁹ Brenan, M. (2019, September 26). *Americans' trust in mass media edges down to 41%*. Gallup.com. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/267047/americans-trust-mass-media-edges-down.aspx>

Conclusion

As found in the 2016 and 2017 Gallup-Knight Foundation surveys, college students today endorse First Amendment ideals of free expression, including dissenting political views. But they do not think those protections should be extended to hateful speech targeting minority groups. Students today are less inclined than their recent predecessors to view First Amendment freedoms as secure in society. Today's students are also more likely than those a few years ago to report feeling uncomfortable — if not unsafe — because of things others have said on campus.

Most students do agree that the First Amendment protects them, but the strength with which they hold that view varies by subgroup. Students who are less inclined to think the First Amendment protects them — namely, women, racial minorities and Democrats — are more willing to endorse campus policies that impose restrictions on speech.

These differences indicate that college students' backgrounds and experiences greatly shape their views of the limits of free speech. As such, colleges may find a one-size-fits-all approach to promoting free expression will likely leave many students unhappy with campus policies and possibly feeling marginalized on campus.

The challenge of achieving a balanced policy on free expression has become more complicated as technology has led to much campus expression shifting online, a place that students increasingly feel stifles expression rather than promotes it. As such, colleges that want to ensure all students have the opportunity to say what they think in a respectful environment need to take into account the virtual campus environment as well as the physical one.

Methodology

Results are based on web interviews with a random sample of 3,319 U.S. college students aged 18 to 24 who are currently enrolled as full-time students at four-year colleges, including an oversample of students at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Gallup selected a random sample of 333 U.S. four-year colleges, which included an oversample of 35 HBCUs, with enrollments of 500 students or more drawn from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Colleges 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 its students. Twenty-four colleges agreed to participate. The group of colleges included four HBCUs, 15 public and nine private institutions; three from the East, six from the Midwest, nine from the South and six from the West. Five colleges had enrollments of 10,000 students or more; four had enrollments between 5,000 and 10,000, and 15 had enrollments of less than 5,000.

Gallup used random samples of 50% of each college's student body (80% for HBCUs) for its web sample frame. The sample frame consisted of 37,944 college students from the 24 colleges. A total of 4,977 responded and were screened for eligibility, with 4,713 qualified, for a response rate of 12%. (3,319 completed the entire survey and were included in the final obtained sample.)

Web interviews were conducted Oct. 28-Dec. 19, 2019.

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, region of the country and HBCU status, 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 ± 2 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.

Percentages in the tables and graphs may not total 100% due to rounding.

The full questionnaire, topline results, detailed cross-tabulations and raw data may be obtained upon request.

A companion telephone survey was conducted to test for potential mode effects. The telephone data are not reported in the totals. This telephone survey data allowed Gallup analysts to determine which items from the web survey could be confidently trended to past telephone survey results. For the vast majority of questions, the web and phone results were comparable. If there were obvious mode (phone vs. web) differences in the 2019 survey responses, then 2019 web results are not trended to 2016-2017 telephone results for the same question. If there were no obvious mode differences, then 2019 web results are trended with 2016-2017 telephone results.

The telephone sample frame consisted of 41,476 college students from the 24 colleges. Gallup emailed each sampled student to complete an internet survey to confirm their eligibility for the study and to request a phone number where the student could be reached for a telephone interview. A total of 3,223 college students completed the web screener survey for a response rate of 8%. Of these, 1,979 students were eligible and provided a working phone number, and 1,000 completed the telephone survey. Telephone interviews were conducted Oct. 28-Dec. 19, 2019. The response rate for the phone survey was 53% using the American Association for Public Opinion Research's RR-III calculation. The combined response rate for the web recruit and telephone surveys was 4%.



ABOUT

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The Stanton Foundation

The Stanton Foundation was created by Frank Stanton, who is widely regarded as one of the greatest executives in the history of electronic communications and one of the television industry's founding fathers. The Foundation's interests include classic and 21st century First Amendment issues, and the larger challenge of the creation of a better-informed citizenry.

For more information, visit thestantonfoundation.org.

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