

GALLUP®

Free Expression on Campus: A Survey of U.S. College Students and U.S. Adults



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Free Expression on Campus: A Survey of U.S. College Students and U.S. Adults

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Study Overview

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees Americans freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press and the right to petition the government without retribution. The ways in which the First Amendment has been interpreted and applied over time have formed the contours of our modern society, determining the types of expression that American institutions and citizens will and will not defend, as well as the role of the press and media in supporting an informed society.

Today, some of these basic rights are the subject of significant debate — particularly on college campuses. Numerous college protests last fall focused on the boundaries of appropriate behavior and speech regarding issues of race, reflecting student concerns about a negative social climate for members of minority groups. These protests and the broader discussion of these issues on college campuses have not escaped the attention of many Americans — 61% of U.S. adults and 71% of college students report hearing a “great deal” or “fair amount” about the protests. Those protests brought fundamental issues concerning the First Amendment into clear relief — most notably, when students and a professor at the University of Missouri attempted to prevent members of the press from covering one of their protests.

To better understand the emerging discussion on college campuses about the First Amendment, free expression and diversity on campus, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation partnered with the Newseum Institute to support a nationally representative survey of U.S. college students. As part of the study, Gallup also posed a subset of the same questions to a large, nationally representative sample of U.S. adults and a smaller representative sample of U.S. Muslims. This report details the findings of those surveys.

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.

Executive Summary

U.S. college students have complex and, in some ways, conflicting views on the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment. On one hand, they are highly confident that First Amendment rights are secure, even more so than the U.S. adult population as a whole. On the other hand, many are also comfortable shuttering free speech and impeding a free press under certain circumstances.

This study sought to better understand how U.S. college students interpret their First Amendment rights, their views of how to balance those rights against other considerations, the impact of their college environment on their views, and the ways in which social media and the press influence expression.

Among the key findings:

Students Far More Positive Than U.S. Adults About Security of First Amendment Rights, but Race a Key Factor for Assembly

- U.S. college students are highly confident about the security of each of the five First Amendment rights, particularly freedom of the press (81%), freedom to petition the government (76%) and freedom of speech (73%).
- While majorities of U.S. adults also believe these rights are secure, their confidence greatly lags behind college students'. This is especially pronounced for freedom of speech (56% among U.S. adults vs. 73% among college students), freedom of the press (64% vs. 81%) and freedom to petition the government (58% vs. 76%).
- Race is significantly related to perceptions concerning freedom of assembly. Non-Hispanic black college students are much less likely than non-Hispanic white college students to believe the right of people to assemble peacefully is secure, at 39% vs. 70%, respectively.
- Adults are far more likely to perceive a decline in free speech rights, with 40% saying the ability to exercise free speech is weaker today than 20 years ago, compared with 22% of college students saying the same.

Students Support Free Speech and Press Rights in Principle, but Many, Especially Blacks and Women, Are Willing to Entertain Significant Restrictions

- By 78% to 22%, more students say colleges should expose students to all types of speech and viewpoints than say colleges should prohibit biased or offensive speech in the furtherance of a positive learning environment. They are more likely than U.S. adults (66%) to say this.

- Students do appear to distinguish controversial views from what they see as hate. They believe colleges should be allowed to establish policies restricting language and behavior that are intentionally offensive to certain groups, but not the expression of political views that may upset or offend members of certain groups.
- There is a real perception that campuses are not fully open environments. A slight majority of students, 54%, say the climate on their campus prevents some people from saying what they believe because others might find it offensive.
- When it comes to a free press, 70% of college students and 76% of U.S. adults say students should *not* be able to prevent the press from covering protests on college campuses.
- But students are divided when evaluating certain specific reasons to curtail press access, with nearly half saying the following reasons are legitimate to do so: The people at the protest or public gathering believe reporters will be biased (49%); the people at the protest say they have a right to be left alone (48%); and the people at the protest want to tell their own story on the Internet and social media (44%).
- Black and female college students are more likely than other key subgroups to find each of the reasons as compelling enough to justify denying reporters access to a protest — with solid majorities endorsing each of these reasons.

College Students Generally Positive About Racial Climate on Campus

- Nearly three in four students describe the racial climate on their campus as excellent (26%) or good (48%). Only 6% say their campus' racial climate is poor.
- Both blacks and whites are mostly positive about the racial climate on their campus, although whites (76%) are more likely than blacks (62%) to rate it positively. Hispanics (75%) and Asians (70%) are also more positive than blacks.
- Blacks are more than twice as likely as whites to say the racial climate on their campus is poor (13% vs. 5%, respectively).

Students Critical of U.S. for Lack of Religious Accommodation; Adults Divided

- The majority of college students, 56%, believe the U.S. is not accommodating enough to people who practice different religions, while most U.S. adults believe society is about right (40%). Nearly a quarter of adults believe the U.S. is too accommodating (23%).
- Forty-four percent of U.S. Muslims say U.S. society is about right in how it accommodates different religions, while 42% say it is not accommodating enough. Another 12% say it is too accommodating.

College Students Do Not Trust the Press; Many Look Elsewhere for News

- The majority of college students, 59%, have little or no trust in the press to report the news accurately and fairly.
- Just half of students say they would look to a traditional news organization first to get an accurate picture of what is happening in the U.S. and the world on issues they care about. The rest would seek an alternative news source, including 26% who would consult their social media network and 20% who would go to newer, digital-only news sources such as BuzzFeed, Mic or Huffington Post.
- Still, nine in 10 college students say a free press is at least as important to democracy today as it was 20 years ago, if not more so.

Social Media Gets Mixed Reviews for Constructive Dialogue; Society at Large Gets Low Marks

- College students and U.S. adults agree: Americans do not do a good job of seeking out and listening to different views. Only 16% of students and 24% of adults say Americans do a good job of this; 50% and 39%, respectively, say Americans do a poor job.
- Views on social media are mixed. On the positive side, at least eight in 10 college students agree that people use social media to effectively express their views and that social media allows people to have control over their story.
- At the same time, less than half agree that the dialogue that occurs on social media is usually civil, and 74% agree that it is too easy to say things anonymously in this space.
- Students are divided on whether social media stifles free expression because people can block those whose views they disagree with or because people are afraid of being attacked online by those who disagree with them.

Detailed Findings

I. College students are more confident than U.S. adults about the security of First Amendment rights.

Even as college campuses wrestle with free speech policies designed to protect students from offensive or hurtful language, large majorities of college students consider each of the U.S. Constitution’s five First Amendment rights to be “secure.” Students are most confident about freedom of the press, with 81% declaring this right secure.

Students are also widely upbeat about people’s ability to petition the government and their freedom of speech, with roughly three-quarters saying each of these rights is secure. Somewhat fewer consider freedom of religion (68%) and freedom of assembly (66%) to be secure.

While majorities of U.S. adults believe all five First Amendment rights are secure, they are far less positive, particularly about freedom of the press, freedom of speech and freedom to petition the government. Close to four in 10 U.S. adults believe each of these rights is threatened, including 42% who say this about freedom of speech.

There is relatively little difference between the rights U.S. adults view as the most and least secure, with freedom of the press at the top, at 64%, and freedom of speech at the bottom, at 56%.

Do you think each of the following rights is very secure, secure, threatened or very threatened in the country today? How about ... ?

	College students	U.S. adults	Muslims
Freedom of the press	81	64	73
Freedom to petition the government	76	58	71
Freedom of speech	73	56	71
Freedom of religion	68	60	60
Freedom to assemble peacefully	66	60	71

For the most part, the views of U.S. Muslims are similar to those of college students; however, Muslims are less confident than students about freedom of the press and freedom of religion. The 60% of Muslims believing freedom of religion is secure is on par with U.S. adults.

Blacks Less Confident About Right to Assemble Peacefully

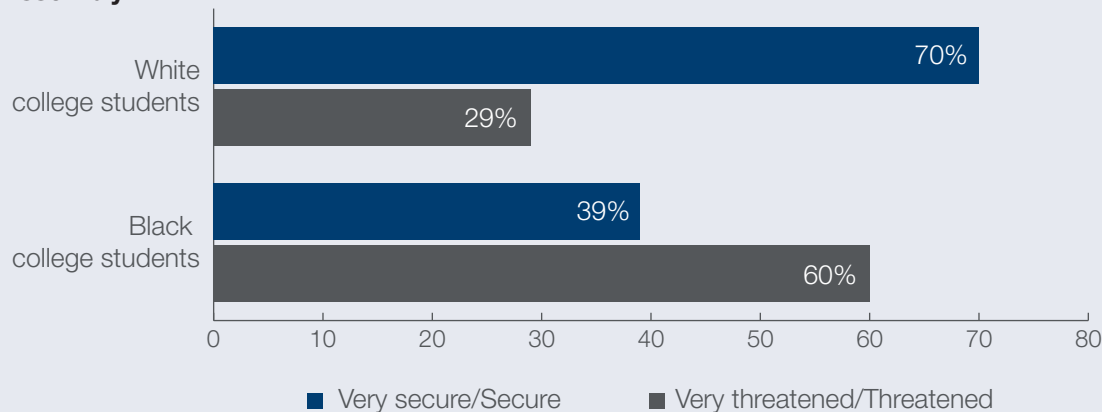
Non-Hispanic black students are less likely than non-Hispanic white students to believe all five freedoms are secure. However, the racial gap is markedly wider for freedom of assembly: 70% of whites versus only 39% of blacks consider this right secure.

College women are less confident than college men about the security of freedom of religion (61% vs. 75%, respectively) and freedom of assembly (58% vs. 74%), but they have similar views on the other First Amendment rights.

Partisan differences in views of the security of First Amendment freedoms are relatively minor among college students. Democratic students are slightly more likely than their Republican counterparts to believe freedom of speech is secure (74% vs. 66%, respectively), while Republican students are more likely to believe freedom of assembly is secure (76% vs. 60%). But there are essentially no partisan differences on the remaining three freedoms.

Do you think each of the following rights is very secure, secure, threatened or very threatened in the country today? How about ... ?								
Among college students								
	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Freedom of the press								
% Very secure/Secure	81	82	80	82	73	83	78	83
% Very threatened/Threatened	18	17	19	17	27	17	21	16
Freedom to petition the government, meaning presenting requests to the government without fear of punishment								
% Very secure/Secure	76	79	73	78	69	75	76	78
% Very threatened/Threatened	23	20	27	22	31	25	23	21
Freedom of speech								
% Very secure/Secure	73	73	71	74	61	74	74	66
% Very threatened/Threatened	27	26	29	26	38	26	26	34
Freedom of religion								
% Very secure/Secure	68	75	61	69	57	66	71	66
% Very threatened/Threatened	33	25	39	31	43	34	29	34
Freedom for people to assemble peacefully								
% Very secure/Secure	66	74	58	70	39	60	69	76
% Very threatened/Threatened	34	26	42	29	60	40	31	24

Black College Students Less Positive Than White College Students About Freedom of Assembly



Similar to the racial differences found among college students, the poll finds non-Hispanic black adults far less confident than non-Hispanic white adults about freedom of assembly: 45% vs. 62%, respectively. Blacks also lag in confidence about freedom of the press — 58% vs. 66% — but have views similar to whites on all other freedoms.

In contrast to muted party differences in perceptions of First Amendment rights among students, the poll finds deep partisan divides among U.S. adults, with Democrats much more likely than Republicans to say each freedom is secure. The largest difference is seen for freedom of religion: 75% of Democrats versus 43% of Republicans consider this right secure. Large partisan divides also exist for freedom of speech and freedom to petition the government. Smaller gaps are seen for freedom of the press and freedom of assembly — the only two freedoms that the majority of Republicans think are secure. While these partisan gaps may reflect substantive differences in the way Republicans and Democrats view current issues concerning each First Amendment right, it is also possible that having a Democratic president is a factor.

Do you think each of the following rights is very secure, secure, threatened or very threatened in the country today? How about ... ?

Among U.S. adults

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Muslims
Freedom of the press									
% Very secure/Secure	64	65	63	66	58	76	61	59	73
% Very threatened/Threatened	33	32	34	32	39	22	37	38	24
Freedom for people to assemble peacefully									
% Very secure/Secure	60	63	57	62	45	67	60	55	71
% Very threatened/Threatened	39	36	41	37	49	31	39	43	29
Freedom of religion									
% Very secure/Secure	60	61	59	58	63	75	63	43	60
% Very threatened/Threatened	38	37	39	41	35	24	36	56	40
Freedom to petition the government, meaning presenting requests to the government without fear of punishment									
% Very secure/Secure	58	59	58	59	58	73	56	49	71
% Very threatened/Threatened	39	39	39	39	41	24	42	49	26
Freedom of speech									
% Very secure/Secure	56	56	56	57	53	73	53	45	71
% Very threatened/Threatened	42	43	42	43	45	26	46	55	28

Students and U.S. Adults See Different Trajectories for Free Speech

When asked how Americans’ ability to exercise their free speech rights has changed over the past 20 years, college students are more likely to say free speech rights are stronger (50%) than weaker (22%). By contrast, U.S. adults are more likely to believe they are weaker (40%) than stronger (31%).

U.S. Muslims are divided — 37% believe free speech rights are stronger now, while 33% say they are weaker.

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?

	College students	U.S. adults	Muslims
% Stronger	50	31	37
% About the same	27	27	27
% Weaker	22	40	33

Far more U.S. adults (40%) than college students (22%) believe Americans' ability to exercise their free speech rights is weaker today than it was 20 years ago.

Attitudes about the trend in free speech rights differ by race and party identification among U.S. adults. Roughly four in 10 blacks (42%) and Democrats (44%) believe free speech is stronger today than it was 20 years ago, outweighing the 33% and 21%, respectively, saying free speech is weaker. By contrast, 45% of whites and 56% of Republicans believe free speech is 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?

Among U.S. adults

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Muslims
% Stronger	31	30	32	26	42	44	30	19	37
% About the same	27	26	28	28	22	34	23	24	27
% Weaker	40	42	39	45	33	21	44	56	33

Racial and political differences are far more muted at the college level, where pluralities of whites (46%) and Republicans (44%) join majorities of blacks (53%) and Democrats (57%) in saying free speech is stronger today.

Reflecting the more Democratic orientation of college women (50% of college women identify as Democratic, compared with 39% of college men), college women are more positive than college men about the trend in free speech. Fifty-five percent of college women versus 44% of college men say free speech is stronger 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?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% Stronger	50	44	55	46	53	57	44	44
% About the same	27	29	25	29	17	25	30	25
% Weaker	22	27	18	25	27	17	26	30

College Students Give Themselves High Marks for Respecting Free Speech Rights

Respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of U.S. adults, and separately the percentage of college students, who respect free speech for all Americans. While the results are generally positive, they leave room for improvement.

On average, U.S. adults think 60% of Americans and 60% of college students respect free speech for all. No meaningful differences among U.S. adults are seen in these ratings by gender or race. Republicans are less inclined than Democrats to think college students respect free speech. U.S. Muslims are especially positive about college students' commitment to free expression.

Just your best guess, what percentage of [RANDOM ORDER: U.S. adults; college students] do you think respect freedom of speech for all Americans? (Open-ended)

Among U.S. adults									
	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Muslims
Rating of U.S. adults									
Mean (%)	60	61	59	61	60	63	59	59	63
Rating of college students									
Mean (%)	60	59	61	60	65	69	59	54	74

College students, on average, also think roughly six in 10 U.S. adults — 63% — respect free speech for all Americans. But they rate themselves better, with an average 71% saying college students respect free speech for all.

Notably, black college students are less likely than white college students to think U.S. adults respect free speech, but they have similar views of college students' respect for free speech.

Just your best guess, what percentage of [RANDOM ORDER: U.S. adults; college students] do you think respect freedom of speech for all Americans? (Open-ended)

Among college students								
	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Rating of U.S. adults								
Mean (%)	63	65	60	65	54	63	62	64
Rating of college students								
Mean (%)	71	72	70	72	69	74	70	67

II. College students are supportive of First Amendment rights in the abstract, but many are comfortable with certain restrictions on those rights.

A key aspect of recent debate has been a perceived conflict between encouraging free expression and fostering a learning environment where students feel safe, respected and included. College students strongly believe that creating an open learning environment should take precedence over creating a positive learning environment that attempts to protect students from hearing offensive or biased speech.

When asked to choose, 78% of college students believe colleges should strive to create an open learning environment that exposes students to all types of speech and viewpoints, even some that are biased or offensive toward certain groups of people. Just 22% believe colleges should create a positive learning environment for all students that would be achieved in part by prohibiting certain speech or the expression of views that are offensive or biased against certain groups of people.

Large majorities of all college student subgroups say openness should take precedence, but certain student segments are more inclined to hold that view, including men, whites, Republicans and independents. Students at private (80%) and public institutions (77%) differ little in their preference for an open college 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]?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% Open environment/ Allow offensive speech	78	83	72	80	70	72	81	84
% Positive environment/ Prohibit certain speech	22	16	28	20	30	28	18	15

Despite college students’ clear preference for an open environment, they are willing to restrict some speech — particularly speech that intentionally seeks to hurt or offend. Roughly two-thirds of college students say colleges should be allowed to establish policies that restrict slurs and other language that is intentionally offensive to certain groups (69%), as well as the wearing of costumes that stereotype certain racial or ethnic groups (63%). However, college students mostly reject the idea that colleges should be able to restrict speech expressing political views that may upset or offend members of certain groups. Just 27% say colleges should be able to limit such speech, while 72% say they should not.

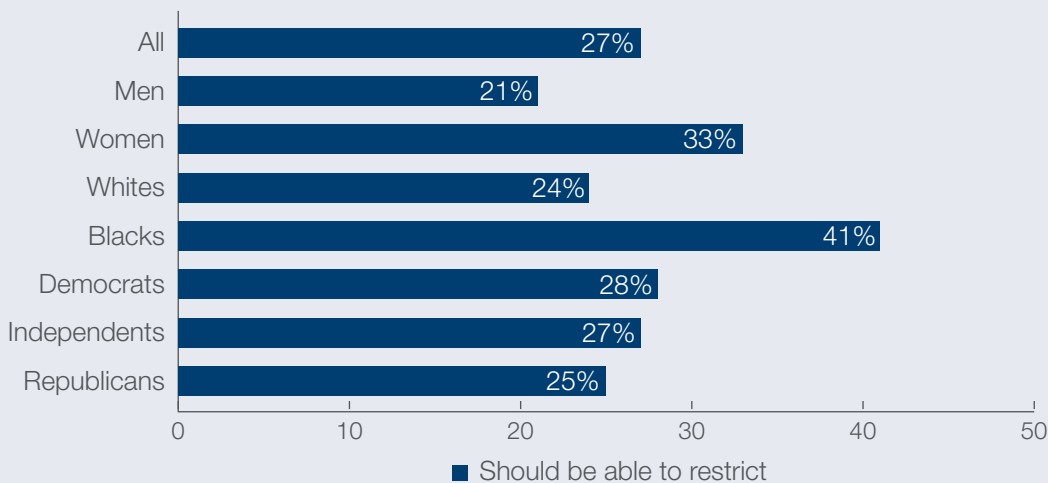
Do you think colleges should or should not be able to establish policies that restrict each of the following types of speech or expression on campus? How about ... ?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Expressing political views that are upsetting or offensive to certain groups								
% Should be able to restrict	27	21	33	24	41	28	27	25
% Should not be able to	72	78	67	76	59	72	73	75
Using slurs and other language on campus that is intentionally offensive to certain groups								
% Should be able to restrict	69	61	76	67	79	77	61	65
% Should not be able to	31	39	24	33	21	23	39	35
Wearing costumes that stereotype certain racial or ethnic groups								
% Should be able to restrict	63	54	70	62	77	72	55	56
% Should not be able to	37	45	29	37	23	28	45	43

Black college students (41%) are more inclined than white college students (24%) to support restrictions on the expression of potentially offensive political views, but the majority of blacks still oppose such limits. Republicans, Democrats and independents are about equally likely to oppose limits on offensive political speech. A majority of all key subgroups of students favor restrictions on racial slurs and offensive costumes, with blacks, women and Democrats especially likely to support such restrictions.

Support for Campus Policies Restricting Expression of Political Views That Are Upsetting or Offensive to Certain Groups, Among Subgroups of College Students



U.S. adults, like college students, share a disproportionate preference for an open college environment, but they tilt slightly less strongly than college students in the direction of creating an open environment (66%) as opposed to a positive one (28%). U.S. Muslims and blacks also favor an open environment, but by smaller margins. Democrats, Republicans and independents have similarly strong preferences for open environments on college campuses.

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]?

Among U.S. adults

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Muslims
% Open environment/ Allow offensive speech	66	69	63	70	61	66	70	66	56
% Positive environment/ Prohibit certain speech	28	24	32	24	36	30	24	29	39

Students, U.S. Adults Support Press Access to Campus Protests in Principle, but Students Willing to Entertain Restrictions

Protests at the University of Missouri touched off a national debate in 2015 when protesters attempted to block press access to one of their events. And last November, at Smith College in Massachusetts, protesters made press access contingent on reporters expressing support for movement objectives.

In principle, however, college students do not condone attempts to deny press access to campus protests: 70% say students should not be able to prevent reporters from covering protests held on college campuses, while 28% think they should.

As you may know, student protesters on some campuses attempted to prevent members of the media from reporting on their protest. Do you think students should or should not be able to prevent reporters from covering protests held on college campuses?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% Yes, should	28	19	37	24	32	29	29	25
% No, should not	70	79	62	74	67	69	70	74

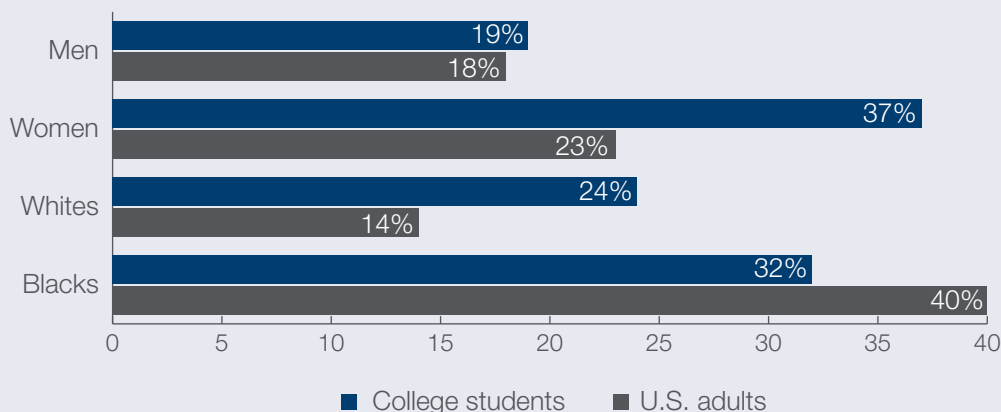
U.S. adults largely agree with college students, as 76% reject the idea that students should be able to prevent reporters from covering campus protests. Only 21% of U.S. adults believe students should be able to do so. U.S. blacks are far more sympathetic to protesters’ prerogative in this regard, with 40% saying students should be able to block press access to campus protests — but a majority of blacks, 57%, still disagree.

As you may know, student protesters on some campuses attempted to prevent members of the media from reporting on their protest. Do you think students should or should not be able to prevent reporters from covering protests held on college campuses?

Among U.S. adults

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Muslims
% Yes, should	21	18	23	14	40	25	21	12	26
% No, should not	76	79	74	83	57	72	76	85	71

Percentage Saying Students Should Be Able to Prevent Reporters From Covering Campus Protests



However, as in the case of free speech, college students are much more supportive of free press rights in the abstract than in specific situations in which those rights may be put to the test. Close to half cite each of the following as a legitimate reason for people attending a protest or public gathering to deny press access to the event: The protesters believe the press will be unfair in its reporting (49%); the protesters assert they have a right to be left alone (48%); and the protesters want to tell their own version of the story on the Internet and social media (44%).

Black and female college students are more likely than other key subgroups to find each of the reasons as compelling enough to justify denying reporters access to a protest — with solid majorities endorsing each of these reasons.

Forty-nine percent of college students think that believing the press will be unfair in its reporting is a legitimate reason for protesters to deny the press access to an event.

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 ... ?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
The people at the protest or public gathering say they have a right to be left alone.								
% Yes, legitimate reason	48	37	59	44	61	51	45	48
% No, not	51	62	41	55	39	49	54	52
The people at the protest or public gathering want to tell their own story on the Internet and social media.								
% Yes, legitimate reason	44	35	53	40	54	47	41	43
% No, not	56	65	47	60	46	53	59	57
The people at the protest believe the press will be unfair to them in its reporting.								
% Yes, legitimate reason	49	36	62	46	66	52	49	42
% No, not	50	64	38	53	33	47	51	58

III. College students are generally positive about the racial environment on their campus.

To better understand students' perceptions of their campus' climate, the survey also probed how students view their college or university in terms of diversity, student behavior and administration. A diverse campus appears to be the norm for most college students, as two-thirds describe their college as highly (32%) or somewhat diverse (35%) in terms of race and ethnicity. Just 6% say their campus is not diverse at all.

Black and white college students, and male and female students, are very similar in their views of campus diversity. Republicans tend to perceive their campus as more racially and ethnically diverse than Democrats and independents do.

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

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% Highly diverse	32	31	32	31	30	25	32	47
% Somewhat diverse	35	35	35	34	35	36	36	28
% Not very diverse	28	27	28	29	26	30	27	21
% Not diverse at all	6	7	6	6	9	8	4	3

Perceptions of campus diversity also vary to some degree by institution type. Seventy-seven percent of those attending private colleges say their student body is at least somewhat racially diverse, compared with 62% of those attending public colleges. Students at small/medium-sized institutions — defined as those with enrollment of less than 10,000 students — are more likely to believe their campus is diverse (76%) than those attending large colleges (63%).

Amid a college landscape that offers considerable diversity, most college students today report a positive racial climate on their campus. Nearly three in four describe the racial climate on their campus — how students of different races interact with and treat one another — as excellent (26%) or good (48%). Only 6% say the racial climate on their campus is poor.

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?

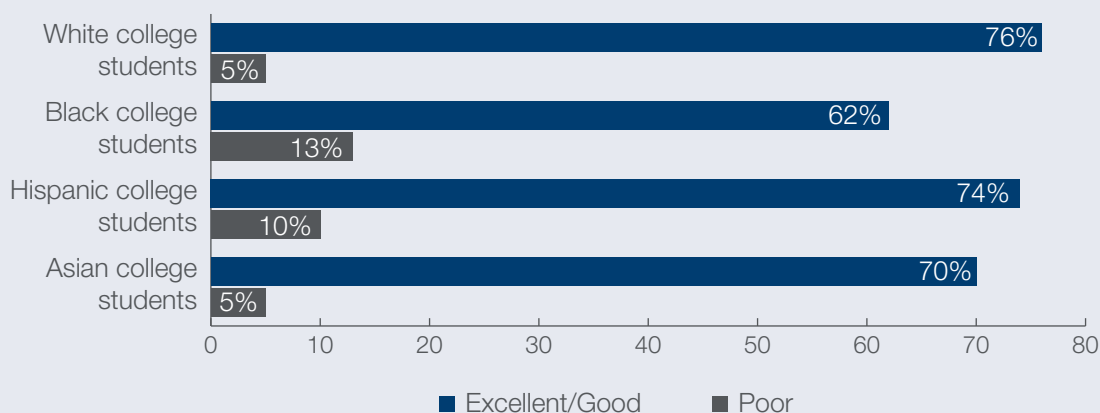
Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% Excellent	26	28	23	27	21	22	24	37
% Good	48	46	50	49	41	45	51	48
% Only fair	20	19	21	20	26	25	18	14
% Poor	6	6	6	5	13	7	6	2

Both blacks and whites are mostly positive about the racial climate on their campus, although whites (76%) are more likely than blacks (62%) to rate it positively. Hispanics (74%) and Asians (70%) are also more positive than blacks about the racial climate at their college.

Blacks are more than twice as likely as whites to say the racial climate on their campus is poor (13% vs. 5%, respectively). As last fall's protests made clear, racial strife is not confined to the University of Missouri. At the same time, it does not appear to be the norm on campuses nationwide.

Ratings of Campus Racial Climate, by Race/Ethnicity



Students' views of the quality of race relations on campus are related to their perceptions of how racially and ethnically diverse their student body is. Whereas 87% of those who believe their campus is "highly diverse" rate the racial climate positively, only 34% of those who say their campus is "not diverse at all" do. Students at private (74%) and public colleges (73%) rate the racial climates on their respective campuses the same.

Offensive Speech Uncommon on Campuses

Most college students say they rarely (47%) or never (22%) hear people at their college making insensitive comments about someone’s race, ethnicity or religion. Just 6% say they frequently hear disrespectful, inappropriate or offensive comments made on campus, while another 25% say they hear such comments occasionally.

Black students are more likely than white students to say they hear such comments at least occasionally (38% vs. 29%, respectively). Thirty-five percent of Hispanic students and 32% of Asian students report hearing offensive comments at least occasionally.

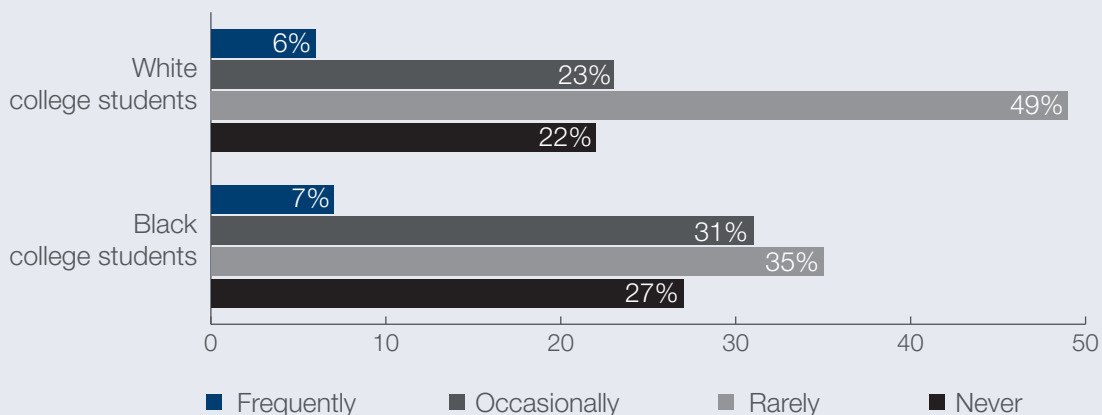
How often do you hear someone at your college making disrespectful, inappropriate or offensive comments about someone’s race, ethnicity or religion — frequently, occasionally, rarely or never?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% Frequently	6	6	5	6	7	5	7	3
% Occasionally	25	22	28	23	31	26	25	25
% Rarely	47	50	43	49	35	45	45	51
% Never	22	21	24	22	27	23	22	21

Those who rate the racial climate on their campus more negatively also report hearing offensive remarks on a more frequent basis. Seventy-four percent of those who describe the racial climate on their campus as poor say they hear offensive comments made at least occasionally. That compares with just 11% of those who rate the racial climate on their campus as excellent.

How Often Students Hear Inappropriate or Offensive Comments on Campus About Race/Religion/Ethnicity



Students Believe Steps Taken to Discourage Offensive Expression Are Appropriate, but Admit They May Stifle Expression

Some colleges have enacted policies such as speech codes to govern student behavior, conduct and speech. From a broad perspective, students view the steps their college has taken to discourage offensive speech as appropriate. Roughly seven in 10 college students say their institution has been “about right” in adopting policies designed to discourage offensive speech and behavior. Those who take issue with their institution’s actions in this regard are much more likely to say the policies do not go far enough (20%) than to say they go too far (7%).

Race plays a significant role in these perceptions. A substantial minority of black college students, 41%, say their college’s policies in this area have not gone far enough. Half of those who rate the racial climate on their campus as poor believe their college’s attempts have 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, has your school [ROTATED: gone too far, been about right (or) not gone far enough] in this area?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% Gone too far	7	11	3	8	3	3	9	13
% Been about right	71	73	69	77	54	69	72	73
% Not gone far enough	20	14	26	15	41	26	17	13

Students at private versus public institutions do not differ in their views on school policies designed to limit potentially offensive behavior. However, students at large colleges (68%) are less likely than those at small/medium-sized colleges (80%) to believe their school’s policies have been about right. Twenty-two percent of students at large institutions say policies have not gone far enough, while 8% say they have gone too far.

While such policies are designed to reduce or eliminate offensive speech, they may also have the effect of discouraging expression. More college students agree (54%) than disagree (46%) that the climate on their campus prevents some people from saying things they believe because others might find them offensive. Students who identify politically as Republicans are more inclined to agree with this statement than those who identify as Democrats or independents.

A slight majority of college students — 54% — agree that the climate on their campus prevents some people from saying things they believe because others might find them offensive.

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.

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% Strongly agree/ Somewhat agree	54	54	53	51	50	54	49	62
% Strongly disagree/ Somewhat disagree	46	45	47	49	50	45	51	38

Although students at private (56%) and public (53%) institutions are about equally likely to agree this occurs, students at private colleges are more likely to strongly agree: 21% vs. 13%.

Students Rate College Presidents Positively for Balancing Diversity and Speech Rights

Students were also asked how well university executives are doing in balancing matters of inclusion and free expression. College students nationwide are twice as likely to say their president responds appropriately to student concerns about diversity and the racial climate on their campus as to say he or she does not (34% vs. 17%, respectively). Roughly half of college students say such concerns have not been an issue on their own campus. These attitudes are largely similar by subgroup.

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?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% Responds appropriately	34	35	33	34	34	36	33	34
% Does not respond appropriately	17	17	16	14	20	21	14	9
% Not an issue on campus	48	46	49	50	46	41	51	56

The vast majority of students believe their president or chancellor values racial and ethnic diversity (88%) as well as free speech (88%). Black students (81%) are slightly less likely than white students (90%) to believe their president values racial diversity. Nearly all Republican students, 96%, believe their college president values racial and ethnic diversity. Key subgroups show little difference in their perceptions of whether their college president values free speech.

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

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% Yes, does	88	88	87	90	81	84	88	96
% No, does not	11	10	12	8	19	15	10	3

Do you believe the president or chancellor of your college values free speech, or not?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% Yes, does	88	86	90	90	85	87	87	90
% No, does not	10	12	8	8	12	10	11	9

Protests on Diversity More Common Than Those on Free Speech

College campuses have traditionally been a place where protests occur to raise awareness of issues that adversely affect the student body, as well as the United States and the world more generally. As occurred last fall, protests on one campus may spark protests about the same issue on other campuses.

Fifty-four percent of college students report there have been protests on matters of diversity and inclusion on their campus this academic year, and 12% say they personally attended one of those protests. Black students (19%) are more likely than white students (10%) to say they took part in those protests, but whites are more likely to report protests happened on their campus. Democrats are more likely than Republicans both to report protests occurred and to say they took part.

Far fewer college students, 22%, say protests on free speech issues have occurred on their campus this academic year, and only 3% report taking part in those protests.

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: Demonstrations or protests regarding issues of diversity and inclusion; Demonstrations or protests regarding free speech] (If “yes”) Did you personally attend that type of demonstration or protest, or not?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Demonstrations or protests regarding issues of diversity and inclusion								
% Took place and attended	12	11	13	10	19	18	8	6
% Took place, did not attend	42	46	39	42	24	43	41	42
% Did not take place	44	41	46	46	56	38	48	51
Demonstrations or protests regarding free speech								
% Took place and attended	3	4	3	2	3	4	3	2
% Took place, did not attend	19	19	19	17	17	20	18	19
% Did not take place	73	74	73	76	76	72	75	74

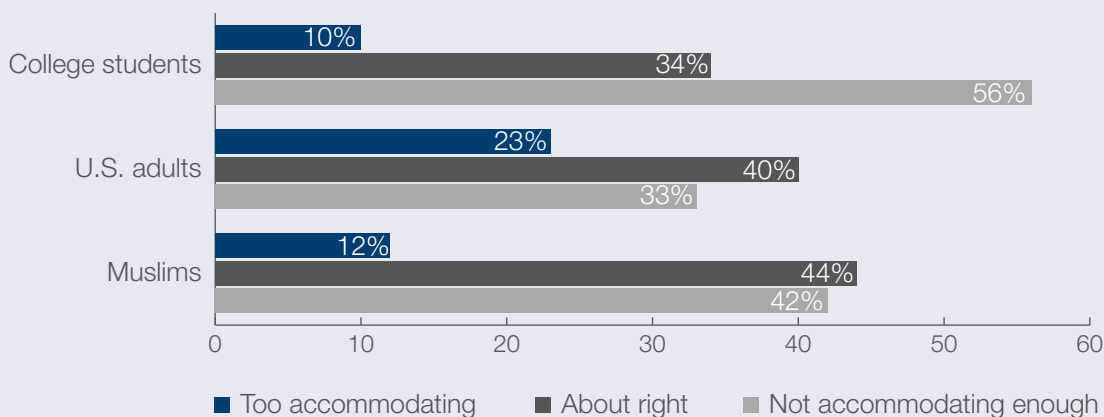
IV. College students and U.S. adults see the country differently in terms of how the U.S. accommodates different religions, with students much more critical.

Debates about cultural sensitivity toward religious minorities have been intensifying in the United States. When asked about how the U.S. accommodates different religions, the views of college students versus those of U.S. adults differ markedly.

A majority of college students, 56%, believe the U.S. is not accommodating enough to people who practice different religions, while a plurality of U.S. adults believe society is about right (40%). Nearly a quarter of adults believe the U.S. is too accommodating (23%).

Notably, U.S. Muslims express less concern than college students about how religious groups are treated in society. About as many Muslims say U.S. society is about right in this regard (44%) as say it is not accommodating enough (42%), with another 12% saying it is too accommodating.

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?



On college campuses, whites and blacks generally agree that society is not sufficiently accommodating of different religious groups. College women are slightly more likely than college men to say society is not accommodating enough (61% vs. 50%, respectively). A bigger difference exists by party affiliation, as 66% of Democrats and 54% of independents say society is not accommodating enough, compared with 33% of Republicans. While only 18% of Republican students think society is too accommodating of religious groups, a plurality — 49% — say it is about right.

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?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% Too accommodating	10	12	8	8	5	7	9	18
% About right	34	38	30	36	35	26	37	49
% Not accommodating enough	56	50	61	55	60	66	54	33

Among U.S. adults, Democrats, blacks and women lean strongly toward believing society is not accommodating enough to different religions rather than being too accommodating. Whites, men and independents show a clear belief that the level of accommodation is about right. Republicans are the only group that is more likely to think the country is too accommodating rather than not accommodating enough: 38% vs. 18%, respectively.

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?

Among U.S. adults

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Muslims
% Too accommodating	23	26	20	27	12	12	22	38	12
% About right	40	43	37	42	36	38	41	43	44
% Not accommodating enough	33	27	39	28	47	48	33	18	42

V. College students have low trust in the press, and nearly half would turn first to nontraditional news sources to inform themselves of what is happening in the world.

As shown earlier, college students believe free press rights are secure in this country, and they believe — at least in principle — that the press should not be denied access to campus protests. But that does not mean college students necessarily have a positive view of how the press reports the news. In fact, just 42% say they have either a “great deal” or “fair amount” of trust in the press to report the news accurately and fairly, while 59% say they do not have much or any trust in the press.

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?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% A great deal	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	2
% A fair amount	39	39	38	39	35	40	39	35
% Not much	49	47	49	47	51	47	47	55
% Not at all	10	11	9	10	10	9	12	9

These figures are very similar to U.S. adults’ trust in the “mass media” in recent national polls. In a September 2015 Gallup poll, [40% of U.S. adults](#) said they have a great deal or fair amount of trust in the mass media to report the news “fully, accurately and fairly.”

In contrast to what is found [among U.S. adults](#), college students who identify politically as Republicans have similar levels of trust as those who identify as Democrats.

With limited trust in the mainstream press, and a growing number of alternative information sources, there is a legitimate question as to where people go when they want to learn the truth about what is happening in the world. This study finds a slim majority (51%) of college students saying they would look to a traditional news organization first to get an accurate picture of what is happening in the U.S. and the world on issues they care about. But that leaves nearly half who would seek an alternative news source, including 26% who say they would look at posts written by those they follow on social media and 20% who would consult newer, digital-only news sources such as BuzzFeed, Mic or Huffington Post.

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 [RANDOM ORDER: 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]?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% Traditional news organization	51	55	49	56	27	47	53	63
% Newer, digital-only news source	20	16	24	17	36	25	18	13
% Items posted on social media	26	26	25	25	33	26	26	22

There are significant racial differences in where college students would turn to get an accurate portrayal of the news. Whites (56%) are more than twice as likely as blacks (27%) to say they would rely on traditional news organizations. Blacks are slightly more likely to say they would consult a digital-only news source (36%) or social media (33%) than a traditional news organization.

To some degree reflecting these racial differences, Republicans (63%) are more likely than Democrats (47%) to say they would rely on traditional news organizations to get an accurate picture of what is happening in the world.

When asked from which sources they get most of their news, college students are most likely to give nonspecific sources such as “the Internet” (38%), “social media” (16%), “TV news” (14%) and “newspapers” (10%). The most common specific sources mentioned are Facebook (10%), CNN (9%), *The New York Times* (7%) and Twitter (5%).

Still, a Free Press Seen as No Less Important to Democracy

Despite their lack of trust in the press to be accurate and fair, and with many college students going outside of traditional news organizations to get news, relatively few college students view a free press as less important to democracy now than it was in the past. Just 10% say a free press is less important to democracy than it was 20 years ago. The remainder divide evenly between saying a free press is more important (46%) or just as important (44%) as it was two decades ago.

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]?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% More important	46	47	45	44	56	49	46	40
% Just as important	44	45	43	47	35	43	46	43
% Less important	10	8	11	9	9	8	8	15

Black college students (56%) are more likely than white college students (44%) to believe a free press is more important to democracy today than it was in the past.

Student-Run Media Seen as Important for Keeping Students Apprised of Events, Less Important for Open Exchange of Ideas

Student-run media organizations, either in the form of a newspaper or website, are present at nearly every college — 94% of students surveyed say their college has some form of student-run media. At least seven in 10 college students whose campus has some form of student-run media see it as having at least a somewhat important role in keeping students up to date on what is happening on campus, keeping students informed about policies or issues that affect them, and creating a place for the open exchange of ideas. Of these, students see student-run media as playing its most important role in keeping students up to date on events happening on campus — 44% view this as a very important role of their student newspaper or website. Roughly half of that percentage, 24%, believe student-run media plays a critical role in serving as a forum for an exchange of ideas.

(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 ... ?

Among college students whose college has student-run media

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Creating a place for an open exchange of ideas on campus								
% Very important	24	17	31	22	33	26	23	24
% Somewhat important	46	48	45	47	37	44	50	46
% Not too important	27	33	22	29	23	27	27	29
Keeping students up to date on events happening on campus								
% Very important	44	35	53	42	63	44	45	43
% Somewhat important	40	46	35	41	26	41	40	40
% Not too important	14	18	11	15	11	14	14	17
Keeping students up to date on key policies or issues that affect them								
% Very important	32	28	36	31	32	33	30	32
% Somewhat important	46	47	44	46	41	44	50	41
% Not too important	21	23	18	22	20	19	19	27

VI. College students see many virtues in the role social media plays in encouraging free speech, but also have concerns about how it is used.

Given the prevalence of speech and expression occurring on social media — particularly among younger Americans — the survey explored perceptions about behaviors on social media. The poll asked students and U.S. adults alike how they handle posts written by people they disagree with. Overall, the responses of college students and U.S. adults are similar. However, college students are slightly more likely than U.S. adults to say they at least *read* posts with contrary views: 81% vs. 74%, respectively. On the other hand, U.S. adults are slightly more likely than college students to say they read and sometimes *respond to* such posts: 28% vs. 23%, respectively.

U.S. Muslims report a slightly higher propensity to engage with people they disagree with on social media — 33% say they do this — but the overall percentage who at least read opposing posts is in line with U.S. adults and students, at 78%.

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?

	College students	U.S. adults [^]	Muslims [^]
% Read and sometimes respond	23	28	33
% Read but don't respond	58	46	45
% Ignore them	13	18	12
% Block or unfollow them	5	6	8

[^] U.S. adult and Muslim results based on those who use social media at least occasionally

Modest differences exist in how various student subgroups handle divergent views on social media. The most significant is by race, with black students more likely than white students to say they sometimes respond to people they disagree with on social media: 34% vs. 23%, respectively. Additionally, Republican students are a bit less likely than Democrats and independents to say they respond.

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?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
% Read and sometimes respond	23	24	21	23	34	25	23	17
% Read but don't respond	58	57	59	59	51	57	58	62
% Ignore them	13	14	11	12	12	11	14	13
% Block or unfollow them	5	2	8	4	3	6	3	6

Among U.S. adults, no meaningful differences in social media behavior are seen by gender, race or party identification — except for the slightly higher proportion of U.S. Muslims who are inclined to respond to people they disagree with.

(Asked of those who use social media frequently or occasionally) 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?

Among U.S. adults who use social media at least occasionally

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Muslims
% Read and sometimes respond	28	29	27	30	30	29	29	26	33
% Read but don't respond	46	45	46	44	45	47	44	48	45
% Ignore them	18	19	17	18	16	15	19	19	12
% Block or unfollow them	6	5	7	6	7	6	7	4	8

Despite these similarities among U.S. adults, there are differences by age. The peak years for engaging with opposing views appears to be from age 30 to 64. Nearly a third of U.S. adults in this age range say they read and sometimes respond to social media posts written by people they disagree with. Adults aged 18 to 29 and those aged 65 and older who use social media are less likely to say they ever respond, at 20% and 24%, respectively. And adults aged 65 and older are the most likely of any age group to say they ignore or block/unfollow such people.

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?

Among U.S. adults who use social media at least occasionally

	18 to 29	30 to 49	50 to 64	65+
% Read and sometimes respond	20	32	31	24
% Read but don't respond	58	43	39	41
% Ignore them	17	16	20	22
% Block or unfollow them	5	6	6	10

College Students See Positive and Negative Aspects of Social Media in Promoting Expression

Students are positive about the role of social media as a way to express oneself, but are divided about the chilling effects of certain social media behaviors and phenomena. At least eight in 10 college students agree that people use social media to effectively express their views (88%) and that social media allows people to have control over their story (86%). At the same time, less than half (41%) agree that the dialogue that occurs on social media is usually civil, and 74% agree it is too easy to say things anonymously in this space.

College students are divided as to whether social media stifles free expression in two different ways: About half agree that it stifles free expression because people can block those whose views they disagree with (48%) and because people are afraid of being attacked online by those who disagree with them (49%).

The racial differences seen on these items are modest, but suggest that black students are slightly more positive than white students about the role social media plays in giving people a voice. At the same time, blacks are more likely to agree social media stifles free expression.

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 ... ?

Among college students

	All	Men	Women	Whites	Blacks	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
People use social media to effectively express their views and be heard.								
% Strongly agree/Somewhat agree	88	86	90	87	93	89	87	89
% Strongly disagree/Somewhat disagree	13	14	10	13	7	11	13	11
Social media allows people to have more control over their story.								
% Strongly agree/Somewhat agree	86	84	88	87	95	89	85	84
% Strongly disagree/Somewhat disagree	13	15	12	13	5	11	15	16
It is too easy for people to say things anonymously on social media.								
% Strongly agree/Somewhat agree	74	68	82	73	80	76	72	77
% Strongly disagree/Somewhat disagree	25	32	18	27	20	24	27	23
Social media stifles free expression because people are afraid of being attacked or shamed by those who disagree with them.								
% Strongly agree/Somewhat agree	49	48	51	45	54	46	51	53
% Strongly disagree/Somewhat disagree	51	51	49	55	46	54	49	46
Social media stifles free expression because too many people block views they disagree with.								
% Strongly agree/Somewhat agree	48	48	47	44	54	41	52	51
% Strongly disagree/Somewhat disagree	53	52	53	55	46	59	47	49
The dialogue that occurs on social media is usually civil.								
% Strongly agree/Somewhat agree	41	39	42	40	36	37	42	45
% Strongly disagree/Somewhat disagree	60	61	58	60	64	63	58	55

Students and U.S. Adults Alike Give Americans Low Marks for Listening to Dissenting Views

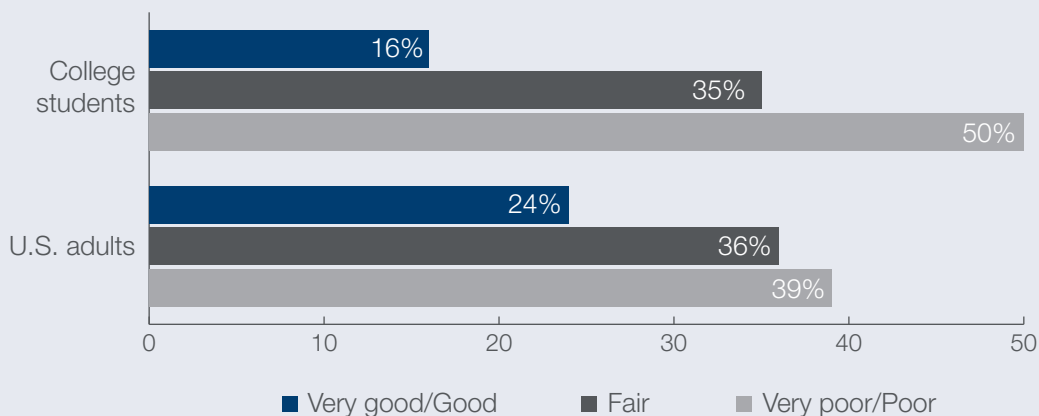
More generally, half of college students, 50%, believe Americans do a poor job of seeking out and listening to differing viewpoints; 16% say they do a good job.

U.S. adults are significantly less critical of the public on this point, with 39% saying Americans do a poor job abiding different viewpoints and 24% a good job. The views of Muslims on this are closer to U.S. adults, with 35% saying the public does a poor job and 23% a good job.

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?

	College students	U.S. adults	Muslims
% Very good	2	4	7
% Good	14	20	16
% Fair	35	36	41
% Poor	38	26	22
% Very poor	12	13	13

View of the Job Americans Do in Seeking Out and Listening to Dissenting Points of View



Conclusion

This study leaves little doubt that college students believe First Amendment rights remain strong in this country — but raises questions about how they interpret those rights. College students are more likely than the U.S. adult population overall to believe First Amendment rights are secure, and they tend to view their student cohort as more respectful of free speech than the broader population. They also believe First Amendment rights are stronger now than in the past, and believe a free press is more important to democracy today than it was 20 years ago, even as newer information sources challenge the press' once-dominant position as Americans' primary news source.

At the same time, students are willing to accept some limitations on free expression, particularly that which is done to intentionally hurt or stereotype members of certain groups. Most college students believe that the steps their school has taken to discourage certain kinds of speech are appropriate, even though more agree than disagree that such steps may create an environment that inhibits free expression. And, while students also mostly agree in the abstract that the press has a right to cover campus protests even over the objections of protesters, they are almost evenly divided on the legitimacy of specific reasons that protesters might want to block reporters.

Despite widespread awareness of ongoing debates on some campuses, college students, including a majority of black students, are generally positive about the racial environment at their school. They also report that hurtful or offensive comments are infrequently heard on campus, and they overwhelmingly believe their college's president values diversity as well as free expression.

The findings of this survey suggest that, while the core principles of the First Amendment and free expression are well-rooted in society, what those rights mean is up for debate in an era of changing media habits, new forms of technology-mediated conversation, and important national debates on race and diversity.

Methodology

This study includes a sample of U.S. college students, a sample of U.S. adults and a sample of U.S. Muslims.

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 to request a phone number where the student could be reached 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 ± 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Results for the **U.S. adult sample** are based on telephone interviews with a random sample of 2,031 U.S. adults, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. Interviews were conducted March 5-8, 2016, as part of the Gallup Daily tracking survey, with interviews conducted in Spanish for respondents who are primarily Spanish-speaking. The sample of U.S. adults included a minimum quota of 60% cellphone respondents and 40% landline respondents, with additional minimum quotas by region. Landline and cellular telephone numbers were selected using random-digit-dial methods. Landline respondents were chosen at random within each household on the basis of which member has the next birthday. The response rate for the Gallup Daily tracking survey was 9%.

Samples were weighted to correct for unequal selection probability, nonresponse and double coverage of landline and cell users in the two sample frames. They were also weighted to match the national demographics of gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education, region, population density and phone status (cellphone only, landline only, both, and cellphone mostly). Demographic weighting targets were based on the March 2015 Current Population Survey figures for the aged 18 and older U.S. population. Phone status targets were based on the January-June 2015 National Health Interview Survey. Population density targets were based on the 2010 census. For results based on this sample of U.S. adults, the margin of sampling error is ± 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Results for the **U.S. Muslim sample** are based on telephone interviews with a random sample of 250 U.S. adults, aged 18 and older, who identified their religion as Muslim. All respondents had previously been interviewed for the Gallup Daily tracking survey in 2014 and 2015. Re-contact interviews were conducted March 4-10, 2016. The sample was weighted on region, gender and education to ensure it is representative of U.S. Muslims, based on Gallup Daily tracking estimates of the U.S. Muslim population. For results based on this sample of U.S. Muslims, the margin of sampling error is ± 8 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The response rate for the Muslim sample was 22%.

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 crosstabulations and raw data may be obtained upon request.

About

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