

BUCKNELL INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY
PERCEPTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION SURVEY—TOPLINE RESULTS

Survey Conducted by YouGov, July 25- August 1, 2017
N=1200

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OVERALL PERCEPTIONS

Overall, if you had to give college education a grade in the United States, what would that grade be?

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
A	11	16	11	6
B	32	42	24	30
C	33	29	36	35
D	16	11	20	19
F	7	2	8	10
DK/No Answer	1	2	1	0

Overall, if you had to give K-12 education a grade in the United States, what would that grade be?

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
A	8	11	4	5
B	26	35	25	20
C	38	31	45	42
D	20	18	18	24
F	7	3	7	10
DK/No Answer	1	2	0	0

CAMPUS POLITICS AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Please tell me which of these statements comes closer to your own opinion.

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
In order to promote intellectual engagement, colleges should never prohibit speech.	78	71	85	80
In order to keep students from feeling unsafe, colleges should have the right to prohibit certain kinds of speech.	22	29	15	20

Please tell me which of these statements comes closer to your own opinion.

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
College teachers should be able to discuss whatever ideas they want in their classrooms.	49	59	35	47
Colleges should have the right to restrict the teaching of certain radical ideas.	51	41	65	53

Please tell me which of these statements comes closer to your own opinion.

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
College faculty generally try to get students to agree with their own political views.	44	30	63	50
College faculty generally try to inform students about multiple political perspectives.	56	70	37	50

Please tell me which of these statements comes closer to your own opinion.

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Colleges should have roughly equal numbers of liberals and conservatives on their faculty.	37	35	48	34
Colleges should hire faculty without regard for political perspective.	63	65	52	66

Universities oftentimes place restrictions on how or when controversial voices are allowed to speak on campus. Do you think that colleges should restrict speech that... (response options: feel that colleges should be able to restrict, feel that colleges should not be able to restrict, don't know)

Percent saying "colleges should be able to restrict"

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Some people perceive as offensive to racial minorities	46	62	31	37
Some people perceive as sexist	42	55	35	35
Challenges the dominant perspective on campus	29	35	25	26
Makes certain students feel uncomfortable or unsafe	49	59	47	38
Threatens violence against others	86	85	85	87

Please tell me whether you agree, neither agree nor disagree, or disagree with each statement.

% saying “agree”

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
College students today are too easily offended.	61	42	85	67
Colleges should provide “safe spaces” for students who are made uncomfortable by people speaking on campus.	38	57	22	28
State governments should have a say in deciding what courses should be taught at their state’s Universities.	31	28	40	33
Fraternities and sororities are a positive influence on college campuses.	18	24	20	16
Student activists and protestors cause more trouble than they’re worth.	46	32	71	46
Fraternities and sororities cause more trouble than they’re worth.	50	54	51	48
College professors are too liberal.	40	20	72	46
Providing life tenure to faculty is an important part of protecting freedom of expression at Universities.	27	44	17	14
Faculty who receive life tenure tend to become lazy and out of touch.	47	36	59	53

Some state policymakers are considering a bill to mandate more political balance among faculty that teach at their states’ Universities. Under this bill, universities would be told to take into account the political affiliation of applicants for faculty jobs, and to hire roughly equal number of Democratic and Republican faculty. Would you favor or oppose this piece of legislation?

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Strongly favor	12	10	20	11
Favor	16	15	17	16
Neither favor nor oppose	33	32	30	33
Oppose	15	18	15	13
Strongly oppose	23	24	17	26

RACE, DIVERSITY, AND THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

How important should each of these factors be when college admissions offices are deciding what students should be admitted to their college or University? (*very important, somewhat important, not very important, not important at all*)

% saying "very important" or "somewhat important"

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Having strong high school grades	90	92	91	92
Having high SAT or other test scores	83	84	90	82
Having the ability to pay the college's full tuition	55	58	66	50
Having a strong record of service to the community	53	53	42	44
Coming from a low income family	49	62	34	46
Being the first person in their family to go to college	49	60	36	52
Excelling in sports or other activities	47	53	42	44
Coming from an underrepresented racial or ethnic minority group	43	59	28	35
Having parents who are alumni of the college	27	30	34	20

Please tell me which of these statements comes closer to your own opinion.

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Prestigious colleges should strive to enroll more racially and ethnically diverse student bodies.	25	42	10	19
Colleges should admit students without regard for race and ethnicity.	75	58	90	81

Please tell me which of these statements comes closer to your own opinion.

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Prestigious colleges should strive to enroll more low-income students.	34	49	22	29
Prestigious colleges should admit students without regard for their family's income.	66	51	78	71

Please tell me whether you agree, neither agree nor disagree, or disagree with each statement.

% saying "agree"

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Greater racial and ethnic diversity enhances the college experience.	63	79	36	50
Colleges today are too concerned with diversity.	36	24	80	49

Do you favor or oppose allowing the children of undocumented immigrants to attend state colleges at the lower tuition rate given to in-state residents?

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Strongly favor	11	19	1	9
Favor	15	24	10	6
Neither favor nor oppose	24	27	14	21
Oppose	12	13	13	12
Strongly oppose	38	17	62	51

THE PURPOSES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

When thinking about what students should be learning or doing in college, how important do you think each of these factors are to the overall college experience? (*Very important, somewhat important, not very important, not important at all*).

% saying "very important"

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Learning critical thinking skills	71	69	73	75
Preparing for a successful career	68	68	71	71
Learning to engage with current issues from a variety of perspectives	50	61	41	53
Developing emotional health	41	54	30	39
Learning to become more engaged in the community	33	50	18	30
Developing skills to fight for social justice	27	46	9	22
Developing an appreciation for art and literature	23	38	15	19
Having an enjoyable social experience	22	32	16	14

And of these factors, which is the *most important to the overall college experience*?

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Learning critical thinking skills	43	45	36	49
Preparing for a successful career	37	32	49	34
Learning to engage with current issues from a variety of perspectives	7	8	3	9
Developing emotional health	4	5	2	2
Learning to become more engaged in the community	3	3	3	2
Developing skills to fight for social justice	3	4	3	3
Developing an appreciation for art and literature	1	1	1	2
Having an enjoyable social experience	2	3	2	0

Please tell me whether you agree, neither agree nor disagree, or disagree with each statement.

% saying "agree"

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Colleges should encourage students to explore ideas for their own sake, even if they have no immediate practical value.	63	76	58	57
Colleges should invest more in science and engineering, and less in the traditional humanities.	53	52	55	52
Too many college students major in subjects that are irrelevant to everyday life.	61	53	83	63
Someone can learn just as well online as in a real-life classroom.	45	41	51	40

Imagine that you were in charge of a college or University, and were trying to decide how to prioritize what fields were most important to your school. Please rank these fields from most to least important to the type of University that you would like to have. You may think that all of these fields are important: we simply want to know which are most important to you. (5= Highest priority; 1= Lowest priority).

*Percent ranking each subject as the **highest priority**:*

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
English	36	38	35	35
Business Administration	31	26	34	34
Chemistry	21	19	20	25
Political Science	6	8	5	4
Gender Studies	5	9	5	2

*Percent ranking each subject as the **lowest priority**:*

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
English	8	10	5	4
Business Administration	8	11	4	6
Chemistry	7	13	3	4
Political Science	11	15	14	7
Gender Studies	65	50	74	78

How important is it that top American colleges and Universities today have... (Very important, somewhat important, not very important, not at all important) (very important, somewhat important, not very important, not important at all)

% saying "very important"

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
A strong record of placing students into good jobs	61	68	59	56
An academically strong business program	54	50	58	57
An academically strong biology department	50	54	44	58
Resources to help students succeed socially	38	52	26	33
Comfortable and well-appointed dorms	35	42	30	32
A racially and ethnically diverse student body	35	55	17	29
An academically strong philosophy department	29	32	21	29
A strong record of helping students engage in political and social activism	25	40	12	18
An academically strong gender studies department	19	35	4	10
A successful athletics program	13	17	10	7

SEXUAL ASSAULT AND DUE PROCESS

Please tell me whether you agree, neither agree nor disagree, or disagree with each statement.

<i>% saying "agree"</i>	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Students accused of crimes on college campuses should receive the same civil liberties protections from their colleges that they receive in the court system.	67	65	77	67
Students accused of sexual assault on college campuses should have right to cross-examine their accusers.	61	58	70	60
Students accused of sexual assault on college campuses should be punished only if there is clear and convincing evidence that they are guilty of a crime.	71	67	80	73
Students accused of sexual assault on college campuses should have the right to know the charges against them before being called to defend themselves.	81	80	91	81
Sexual assault is not a major problem on college campuses.	17	16	29	16

Please tell me which of these statements comes closer to your own opinion.

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Universities should take a leading role in investigating accusations of sexual assault on campus.	31	35	33	28
Allegations of sexual assault on campus should be primarily handled by the state or local police.	69	65	67	72

Please tell me which of these statements comes closer to your own opinion.

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Campus policies to investigate sexual assault should be designed to protect victims, even if it means some innocent people are punished for things they did not do.	49	56	44	45
Campus policies to investigate sexual assault should be designed to provide legal protections for accused students, even if it means some crimes go unpunished.	51	44	56	55

ATHLETICS

Please tell me whether you agree, neither agree nor disagree, or disagree with each statement.

% saying "agree"

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Student athletes should have the right to join labor unions if they so choose.	40	57	30	30
Student athletes who generate revenue for their Universities should be paid.	37	47	27	36

Please tell me which of these statements comes closer to your own opinion.

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Colleges today generally strike the right balance between academics and athletics.	32	35	33	25
Colleges today generally place too much emphasis on athletics.	68	65	67	75

DEBT, TUITION, AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

Over the past 20 years, do you think that the cost of college tuition has risen faster than the cost of most other goods and services, about the same as the cost of most other goods and services, or slower than the cost of most other goods and services?

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Tuition has risen faster	74	72	74	79
Tuition has risen at about the same rate	24	25	26	19
Tuition has risen slower	2	2	1	2

Please tell me whether you agree, neither agree nor disagree, or disagree with each statement.

% saying "agree"

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
American colleges provide adequate opportunities for students who grow up in poverty to improve their economic fate.	37	35	49	33
Colleges should be held financially responsible when former students default on their student loans.	24	27	25	20
Low income students are at a disadvantage on college campuses today.	47	56	30	47
College education is too risky an investment to be worth it.	23	25	21	19
Getting a college education is one of the most important steps in achieving the American Dream.	55	71	45	46

As you may know, under the current federal program to help pay for college, students get loans from banks and other financial institutions, with the government guaranteeing those loans. Would you favor or oppose a proposal to have the government provide loans to college students directly, which would increase the amount of money available for college loans?

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Strongly favor	19	29	10	19
Favor	35	40	38	26
Neither favor nor oppose	29	25	26	35
Oppose	6	4	8	7
Strongly oppose	10	2	18	13

POLITICAL PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Party Affiliation of Respondents

	All Respondents
Democrat	32
Republican	23
Independent	32
Other	2
Not Sure	11

Ideological Identification of Respondents

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Very liberal	8	18	0	5
Liberal	20	33	10	15
Moderate	39	34	20	52
Conservative	28	15	56	26
Very Conservative	5	1	14	2

Are you registered to vote?

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Yes	71	79	76	70
No	27	19	20	26
Don't know	4	2	5	5

Did you vote in the election on Tuesday, November 8, 2016?

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Yes	63	73	70	64
No /not registered	37	27	30	36

[[[OF VOTERS]]] Who did you vote for in the election for President?

	All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Hillary Clinton	47	86	4	35
Donald Trump	44	9	88	51
Other	9	5	8	13

METHODOLOGY

YouGov interviewed 1416 respondents who were then matched down to a sample of 1200 to produce the final dataset (800 gen pop cases, and college graduate oversample of 400 cases). The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, education, party identification, ideology, and political interest. The frame was constructed by stratified sampling from the full 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) sample with selection within strata by weighted sampling with replacements (using the person weights on the public use file). Data on voter registration status and turnout were matched to this frame using the November 2010 Current Population Survey. Data on interest in politics and party identification were then matched to this frame from the 2007 Pew Religious Life Survey.

The combined matched cases were weighted to the gen pop sampling frame using propensity scores. The matched cases and the frame were combined and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion in the frame. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, region, and ideology. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles. The weights were then post-stratified to a stratification on region, and a four-way stratification on gender, age, race, and education, to produce the final weight.