



TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Robert M. Schmidt

RE: National Undergraduate Study – Key Takeaways

Date: October 22, 2018

Below are the key takeaways from our fourth annual national survey of full-time undergraduates:

- ***On the First Amendment***--Undergraduates continue to overwhelmingly believe the First Amendment is an important amendment that still needs to be followed and respected rather than being outdated, 79% to 17%.
- ***Viewpoint Diversity Among Friends***--Like last year, a plurality of students, 46%, says they share the same opinions and political beliefs as their friends. Just 10% say they have different opinions than their friends and 41% say they have an equal amount of friends with similar and different opinions.
- ***On Reluctance to Share Opinions***--A majority, 53%, says they often feel intimidated sharing their ideas, opinions or beliefs in class because they were different than those of their professors. This is nine-points higher than last year and identical to 2016.
- ***On Changing Opinions***--Students are divided when it comes to the change in their own opinions, political beliefs and values since entering college, with 45% saying they have changed and 47% saying they haven't. Age is a driving factor on this, with 62% of freshmen saying they haven't, while 56% of seniors say they have. Furthermore, greater than half, 53%, say professors, peers or guest speakers on campus have changed their mind on an issue after they heard their perspective. Specifically, 27% said professors, 31% said peers and 20% said guest speakers.
- ***On Hate Speech***--Four in ten, 41%, agree that it's sometimes appropriate to shout down and disrupt a speaker on campus, which is similar to last year. A third of students, 33%, believe that physical violence can be justified to prevent a person from using hate speech or making racially charged comments.

- ***On Censoring Hate Speech***--Nearly six in ten, 59%, agree their school should forbid people from speaking on campus who have a history of engaging in hate speech, while 36% disagree. This is similar to last year. Comparatively, students are just about as likely to favor social media companies censoring hate speech as they are banning speakers on campus who engage in hate speech. Greater than six in ten, 62%, agree that social media companies should censor hate speech by shutting down the accounts of users who engage in hate speech.
- ***On Capitalism and Socialism***--Although capitalism is viewed more favorably than socialism, when students were given a choice, half say socialist principles have the potential to be good for America, while 35% say that capitalism has promoted freedom and opportunity and socialism is too radical.
- ***On Sexual Assault Charges***--Students are sharply divided, with 46% saying anyone accused should be prevented from holding a position of power, while 47% say it is a serious problem, but there needs to be some evidence or corroboration.
- ***On Activism***--One-third of students, 33%, have attended a rally or protest in the last two years that advocated for a particular political cause.