

# Free Speech & Yale's Presidential Search

A Buckley Institute/College Pulse Study



COLLEGE PULSE



BUCKLEY  
INSTITUTE

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# About Us

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## About BUCKLEY INSTITUTE

The mission of the Buckley Institute is to promote intellectual diversity and freedom of speech at Yale University. We aim to foster robust and open debate, provide a home for enlightened conservative thought, and expose students to often-unvoiced views. We believe that genuine intellectual diversity is essential for advancing critical inquiry and seek to challenge ideological complacency wherever it exists.

For more information, visit [buckleyinstitute.com](https://buckleyinstitute.com)

## About COLLEGE PULSE

College Pulse is a survey research and analytics company dedicated to understanding the attitudes, preferences, and behaviors of today's college students. College Pulse offers custom data-driven marketing and research solutions, utilizing its unique American College Student Panel™ that includes over 800,000 college students and recent alumni from more than 1,500 two- and four-year colleges and universities in all 50 states.

For more information, visit [collegepulse.com](https://collegepulse.com) or College Pulse's official Twitter account [@CollegeInsights](https://twitter.com/CollegeInsights).

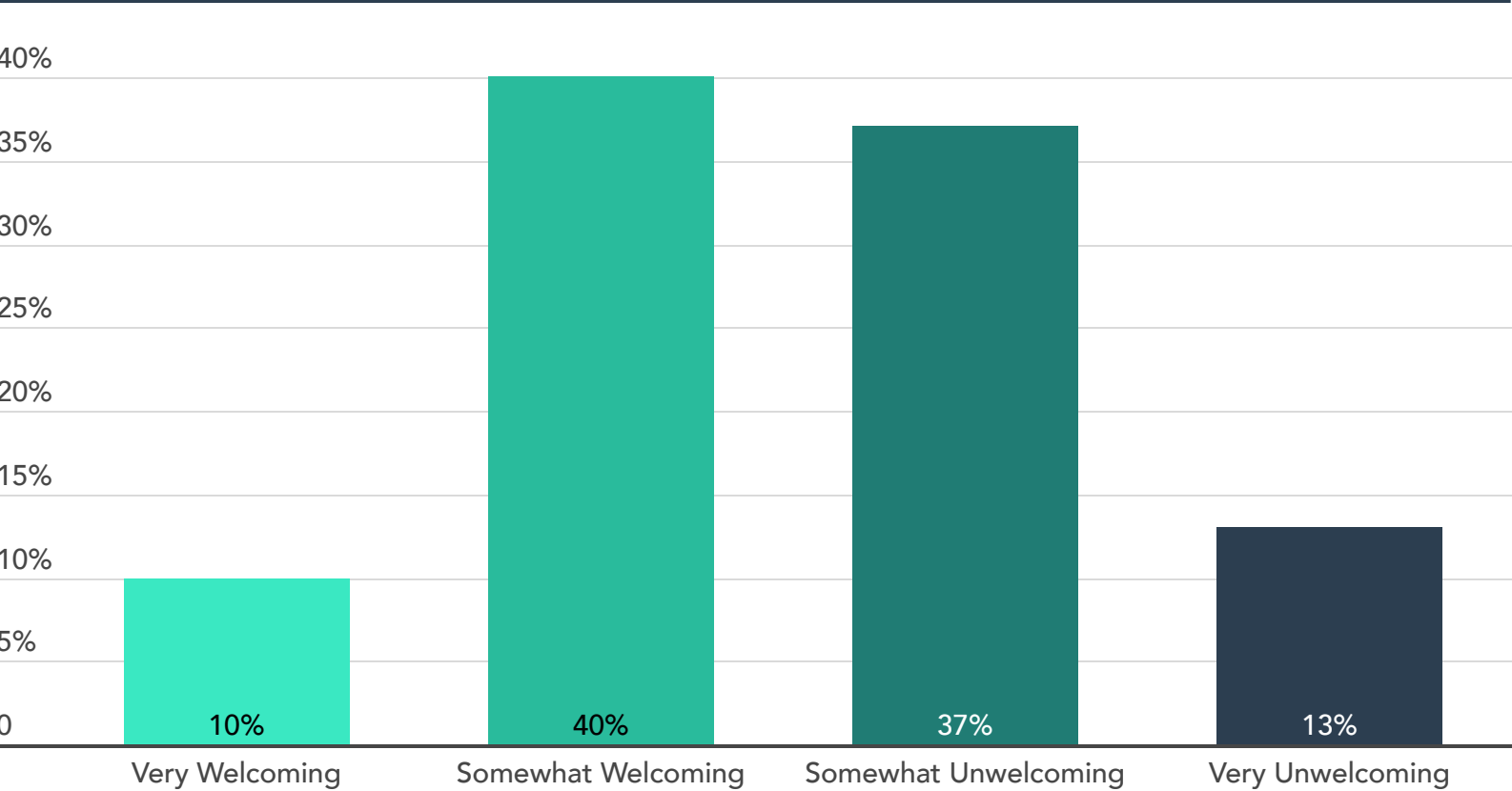
# Highlights



HIGHLIGHT 1

Half of students believe Yale is unwelcoming to students who hold political opinions that are unpopular on campus

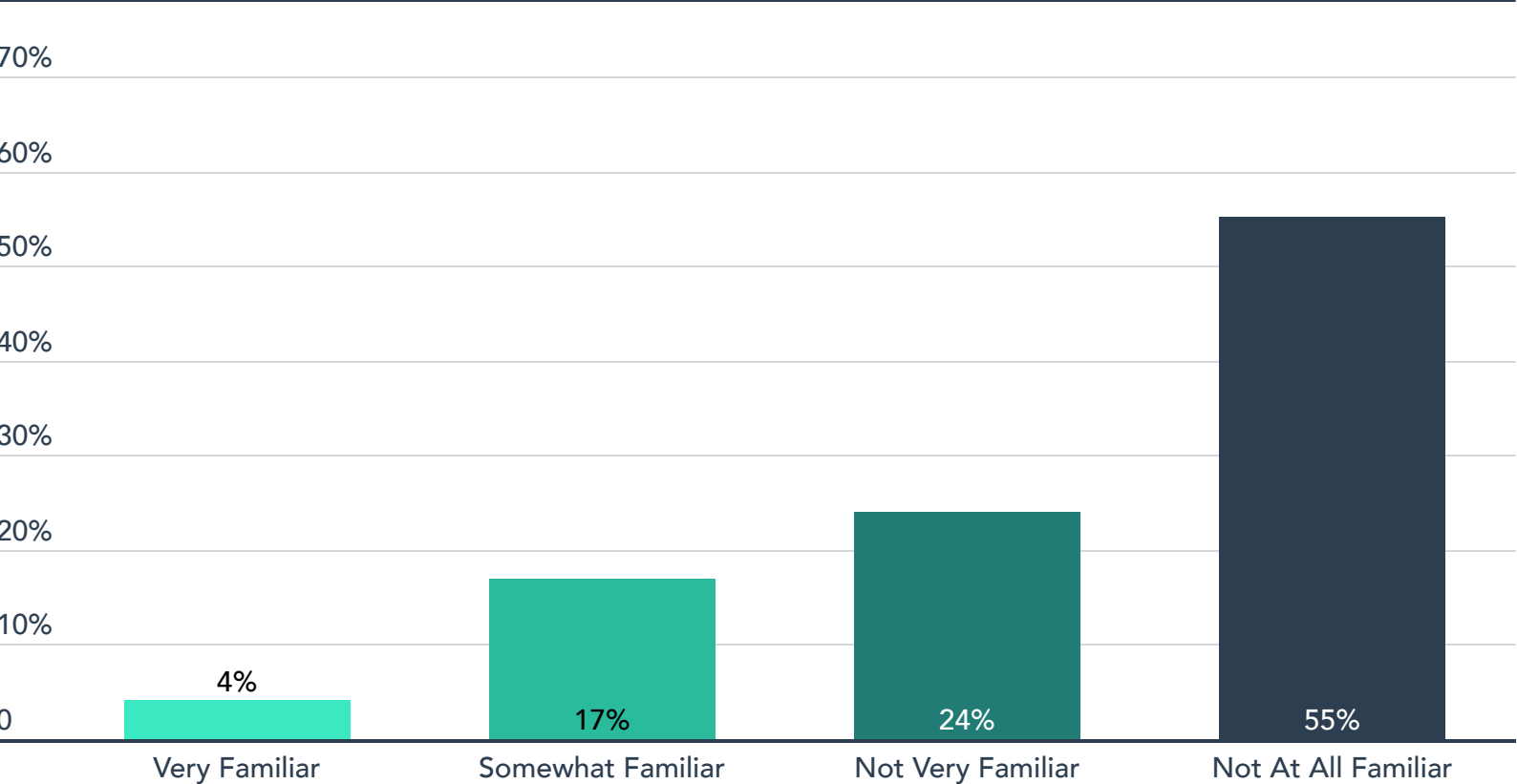
- Exactly half of students surveyed (50%) consider Yale a somewhat or very unwelcoming environment to students who hold unpopular political opinions on campus.



HIGHLIGHT 2

# Nearly 6 in 10 students are not at all familiar with the Woodward Report, Yale's free speech policy

- A majority (79%) of Yale undergraduate students surveyed say they are not very familiar or not at all familiar with their free speech rights on campus, while only 21% say that they are somewhat or very familiar with the report.

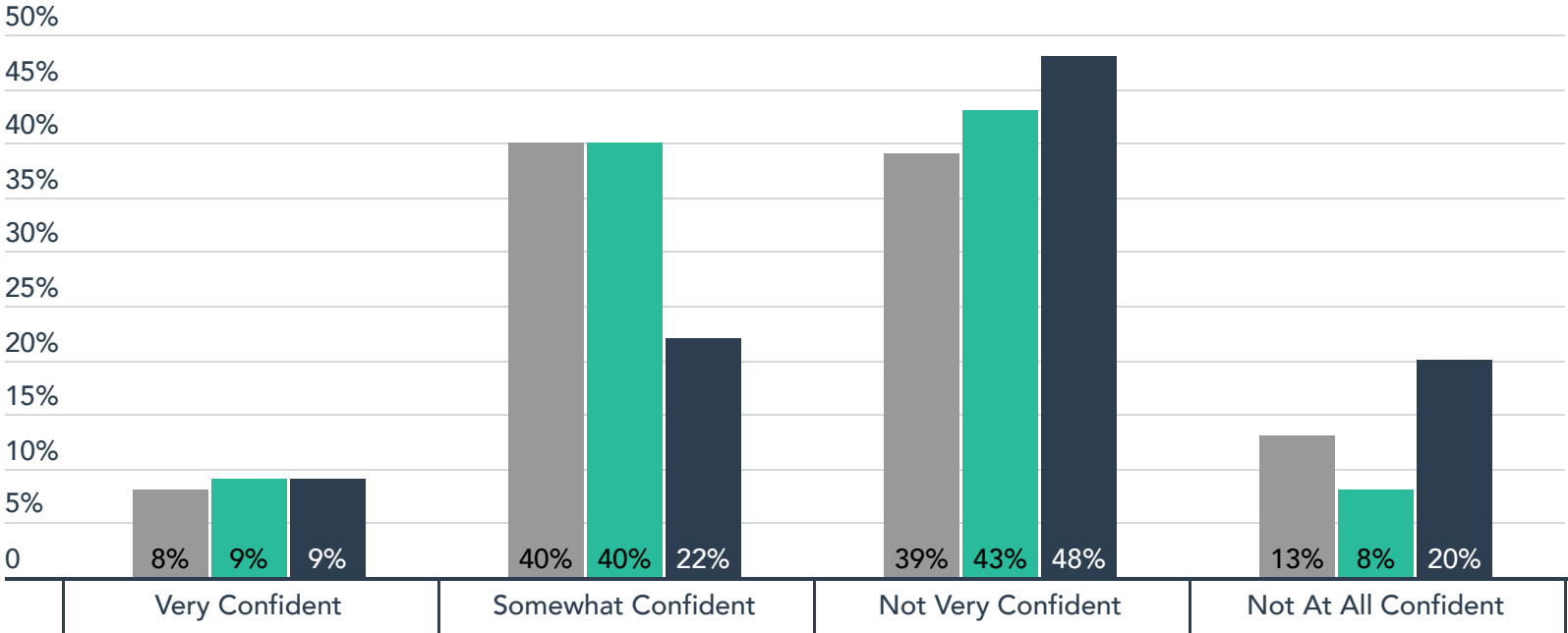


HIGHLIGHT 3

# Half of students aren't confident Yale would stand by them if they shared a perspective others deemed offensive

- More than 5 in 10 (52%) students are not very confident or not at all confident that Yale will stand by the Woodward Report's call for "the right to think the unthinkable, discuss the unmentionable, and challenge the unchallengeable" if they said something that offended other students.
- Students who identify as Republican or Independent and lean Republican are less likely than Democrats or Independents who lean Democrat to say that if they shared a perspective others deemed offensive, Yale would stand by them (31% vs. 49%).

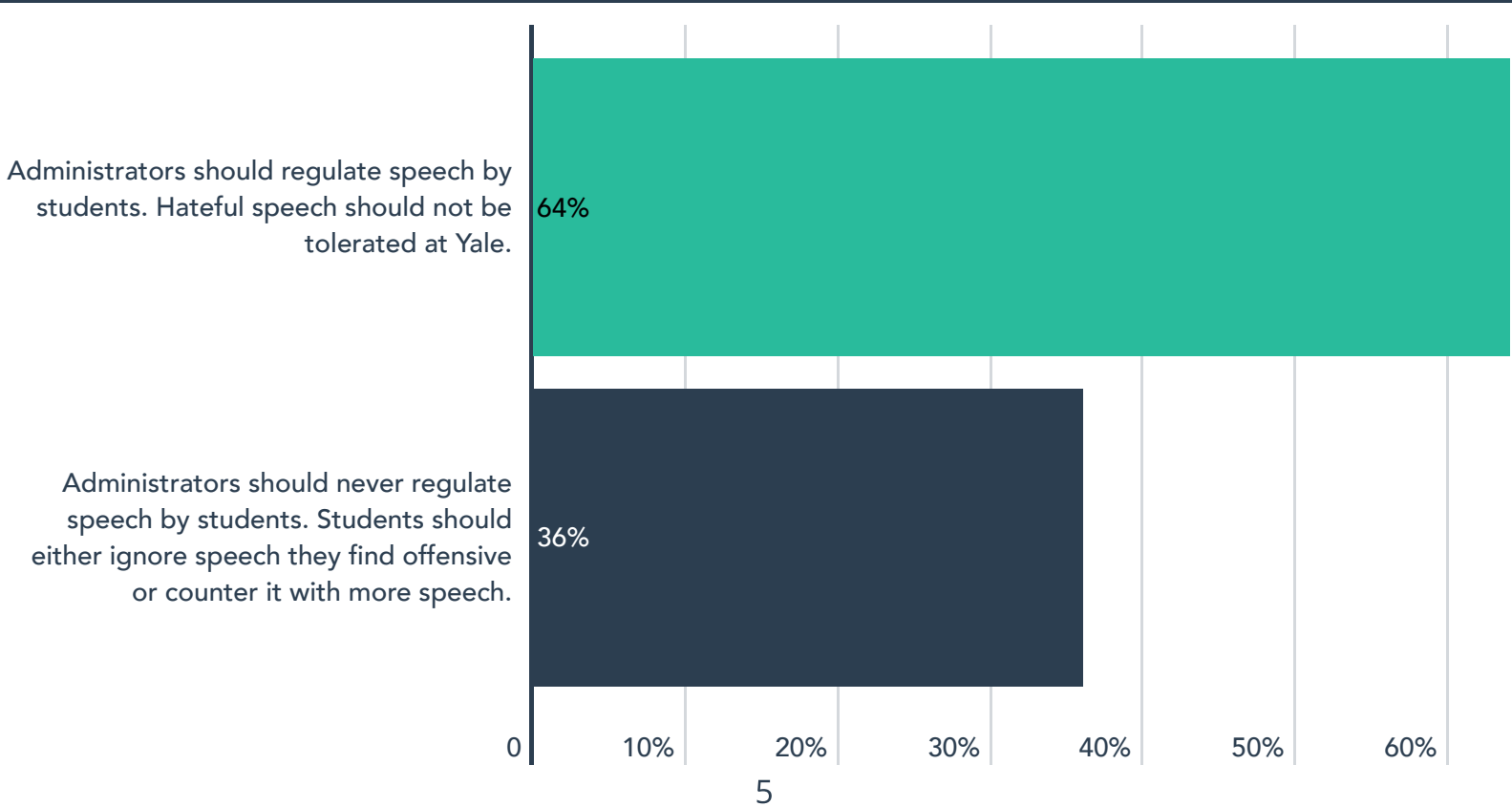
● All Students   ● Democrat or Independent and lean Democrat  
● Republican or Independent and lean Republican



HIGHLIGHT 4

Two-thirds of students agree that hateful speech should be regulated by administrators and not be tolerated at Yale

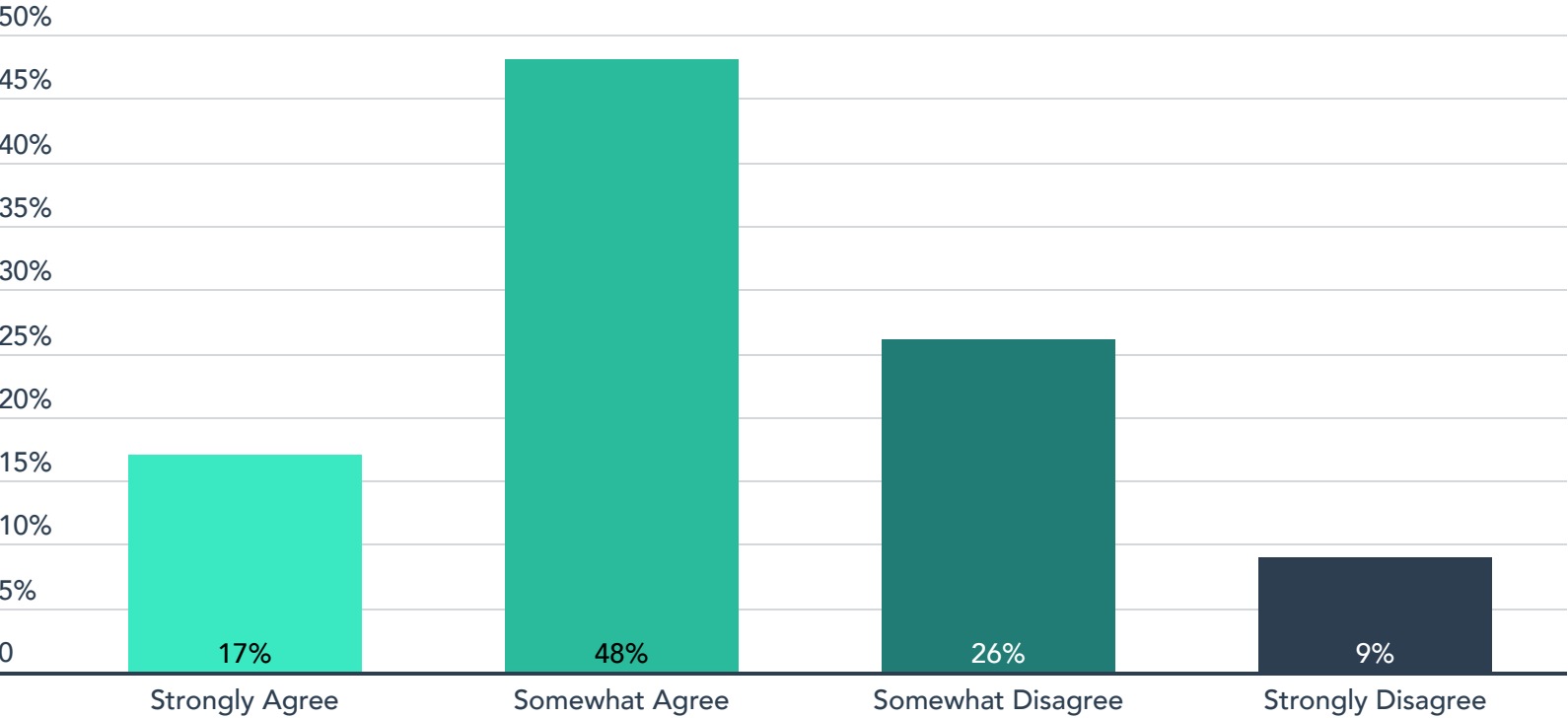
- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Yale students support the idea that "administrators should regulate speech by students" and "hateful speech should not be tolerated at Yale"; versus 36% who think administrators should "never regulate speech by students" and instead, "students should either ignore speech they find offensive or counter it with more speech."



HIGHLIGHT 5

Two-thirds of students agree that the Yale presidential search committee should prioritize candidates committed to strengthening free speech on campus

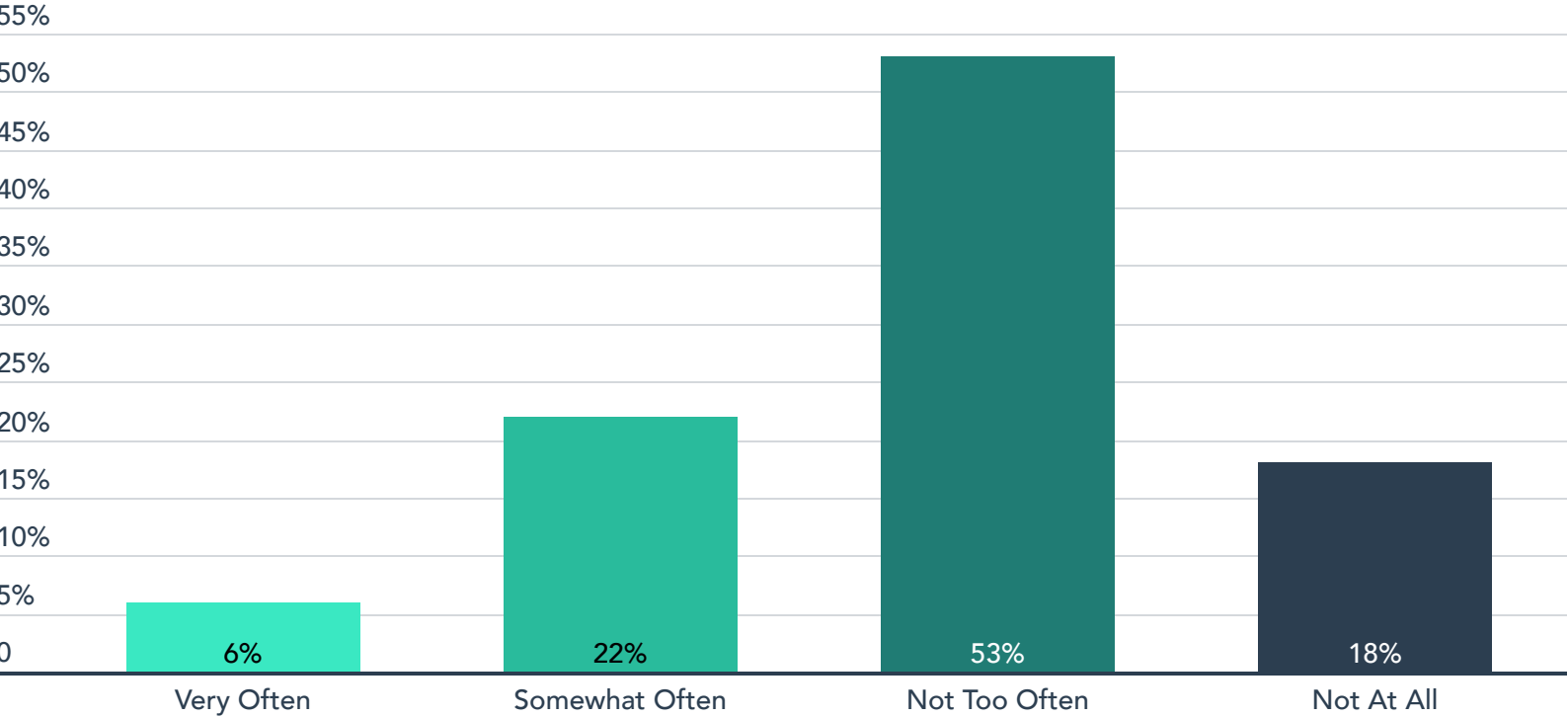
• About two-thirds (65%) of Yale students somewhat or strongly agree that in the search for a new university president, the Yale search committee should prioritize candidates committed to strengthening campus free speech.



HIGHLIGHT 6

Less than one-third of students say they've heard Yale faculty or staff discuss the value of free speech on campus very often or somewhat often

- 71% report hearing not too often (53%) or not at all (18%) from faculty, administrators, or first-year counselors about the value of free speech, compared to 28% of students who have heard about the value of free speech somewhat or very often.

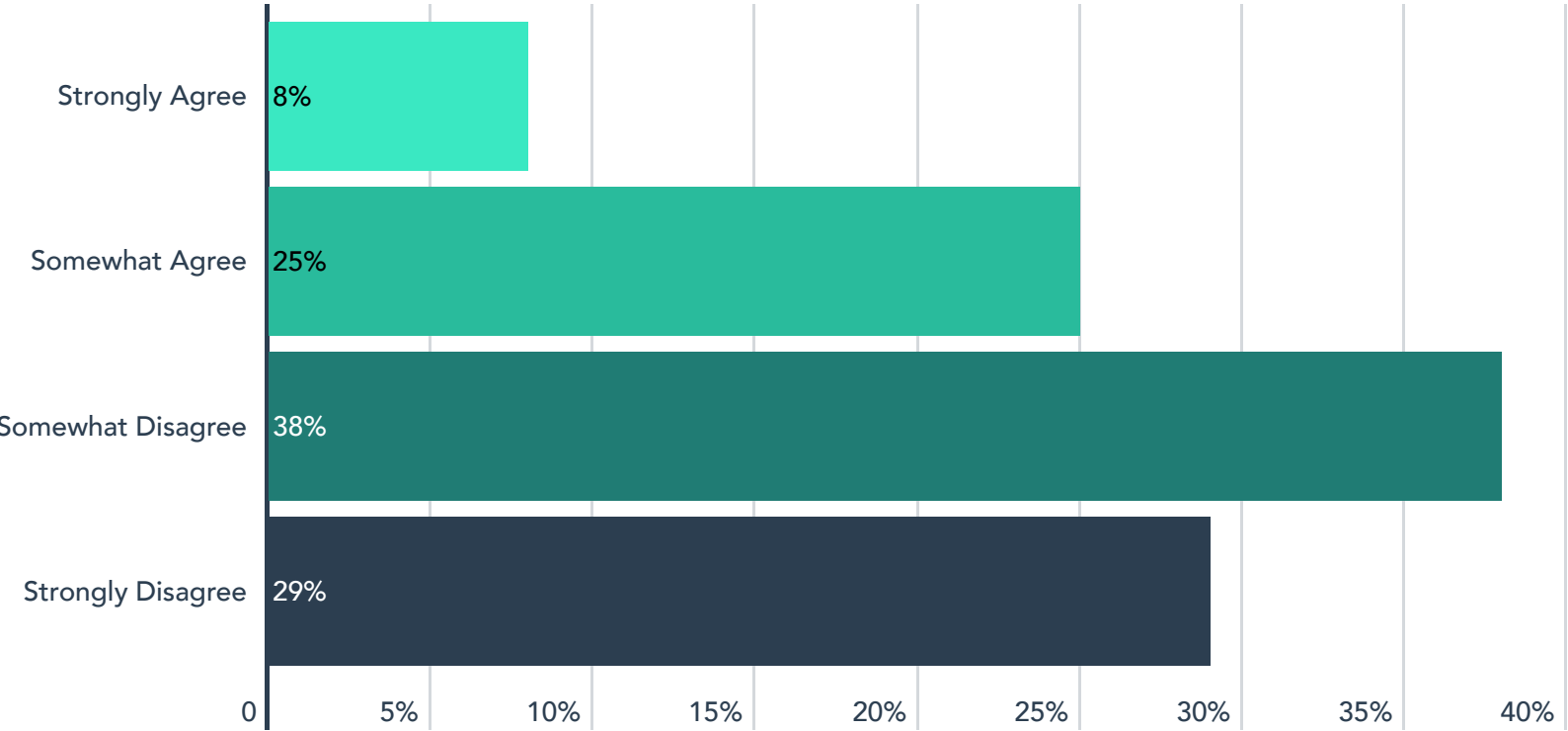




HIGHLIGHT 7

# One in three Yale students say it is acceptable to shout down speakers on campus in some instances

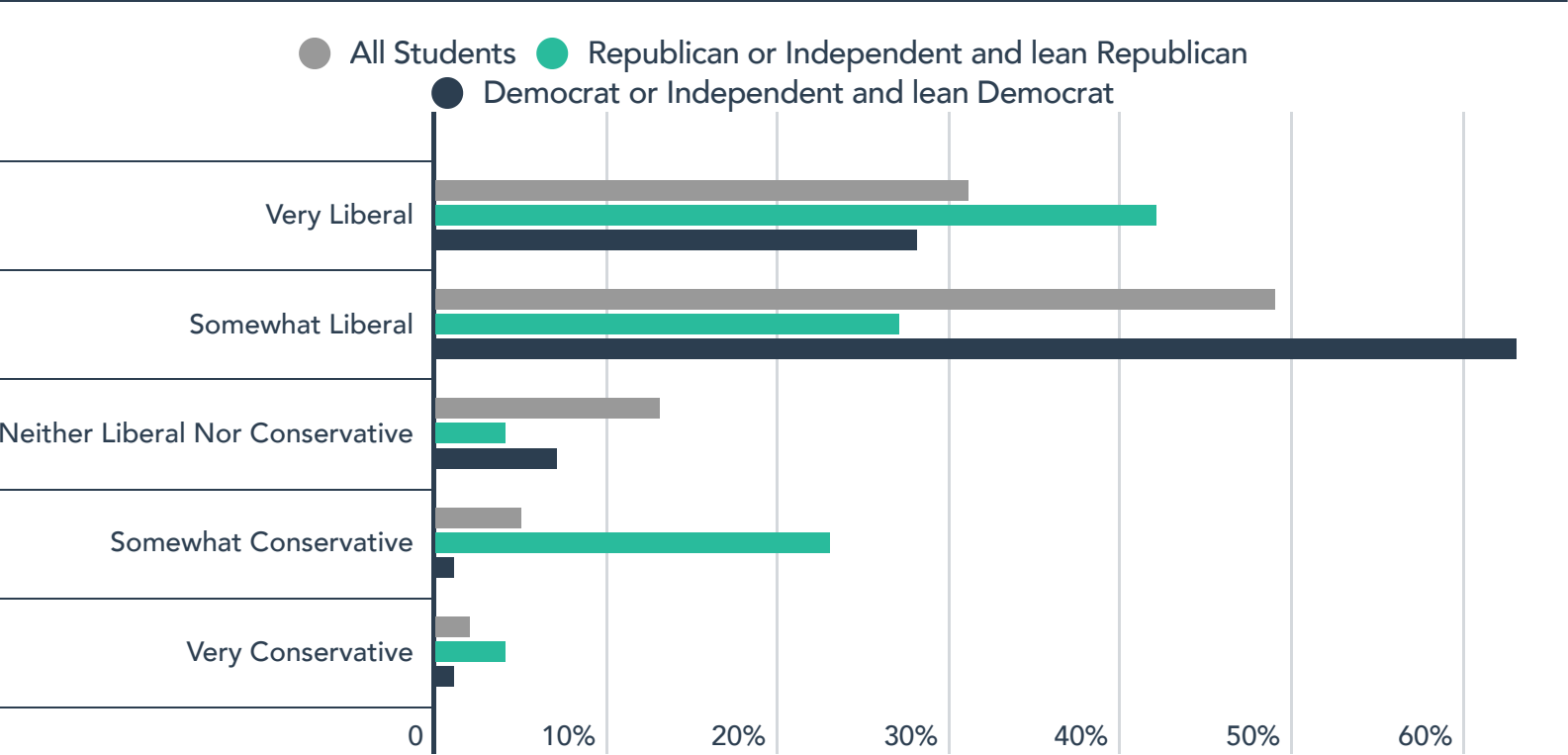
- One-third (33%) of students somewhat or strongly agree that it is acceptable to shout down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus. In comparison, 38% of students somewhat disagree and 29% strongly disagree.



HIGHLIGHT 8

# Three-quarters of students describe the overall political and philosophical environment at Yale as liberal

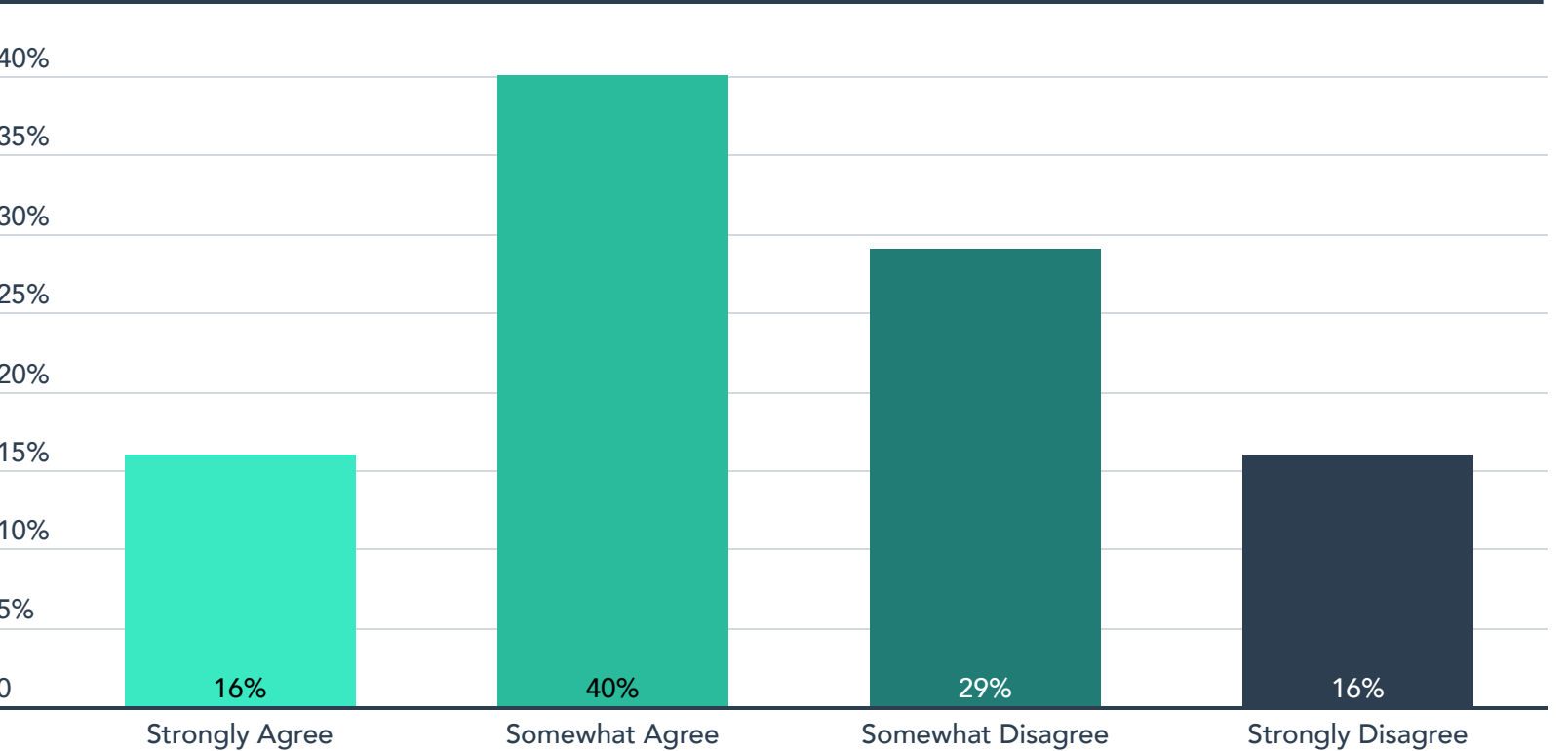
- More than three-quarters (80%) of students describe the overall political and philosophical environment at Yale as somewhat or very liberal, compared to 13% who say it's neither liberal nor conservative and 7% who say it's somewhat or very conservative.
- Students who identify as Republican or Independent and lean Republican are one-and-a-half times as likely as those who identify as Democrat or Independent and lean Democrat to describe Yale as very liberal (42% vs. 28%).



HIGHLIGHT 9

# More than half of students want Yale to promote political diversity among new faculty hires

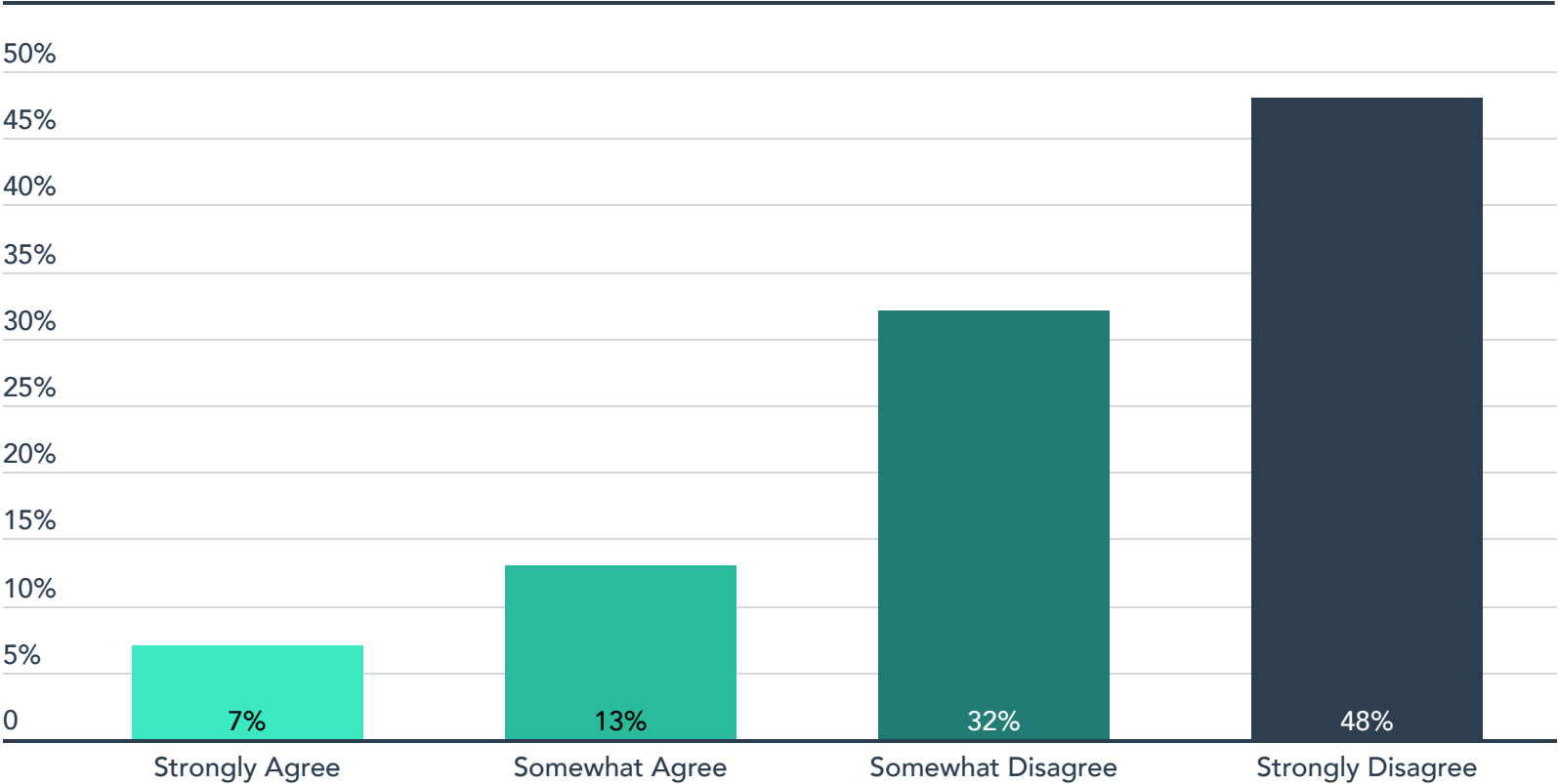
• When asked if Yale should take action to promote political diversity among faculty members, over half (56%) somewhat or strongly agree. A recent review of Yale faculty in key departments and the Law School found that 83% were registered Democrats and 3.5% were registered Republicans. National polling in recent years has Democrats and Republicans roughly even.



HIGHLIGHT 10

One in five students believe it is justifiable to use physical violence to stop hate speech

- If an individual was using hate speech, physical violence would be somewhat or strongly justified to prevent them from espousing their hateful views, according to one-fifth (20%) of Yale students.



# Methodology

# Sampling Methodology

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This survey was designed by the Buckley Institute and conducted by College Pulse. Interviews were conducted in English among a sample of 500 undergraduate students who are currently enrolled at Yale University.

The sample was drawn from College Pulse's Undergraduate Student Panel that includes over 700,000 verified students representing more than 1,500 different colleges and universities in all 50 states. Panel members are recruited by a number of methods to help ensure diversity in the panel population, including web advertising, permission-based email campaigns, and partnerships with university organizations. To reduce the effects of any non-response bias, a post-stratification adjustment was applied based on demographic distributions of the Yale undergraduate student body from the 2017 Current Population Survey (CPS), the 2016 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), and the 2021-22 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The post-stratification weight rebalanced the sample based on the following Yale undergrad benchmarks: age, race and ethnicity, and gender. The sample weighting was accomplished using an iterative proportional fitting (IPF) process that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables. Weights were trimmed to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on the final results.

The margin of error for this survey is +/- 5%. Margins of error are typically calculated on probability-based samples and are not technically correct for non-probability online samples. We supply them here to provide a general assessment of error ranges that may be associated with the data.

This survey was fielded between November 7th, 2023, and November 15th, 2023.

For more information about College Pulse's methodology, [click here](#).



# Survey Results

# Survey Results

[Access Interactive Survey Results](#)

## **Q.1 How familiar are you with the Woodward Report, Yale's free speech policy?**

4% Very familiar  
17% Somewhat familiar  
24% Not very familiar  
55% Not at all familiar

## **Q.2 How often have you heard Yale, through faculty, administrators, or first-year counselors (FroCos), explain or discuss the value of free speech on campus?**

6% Very often  
22% Somewhat often  
53% Not too often  
18% Not at all

## **Q.3 The Woodward Report–Yale's free speech policy–calls for "unfettered freedom, the right to think the unthinkable, discuss the unmentionable, and challenge the unchallengeable." \*\*Do you agree or disagree that this should be Yale's official free speech policy?\*\***

35% Strongly agree  
46% Somewhat agree  
16% Somewhat disagree  
4% Strongly disagree

## **Q.4 How confident are you that Yale will stand by the Woodward Report's call for "the right to think the unthinkable, discuss the unmentionable, and challenge the unchallengeable" if you said something that others deemed offensive?**

8% Very confident  
40% Somewhat confident  
39% Not very confident  
13% Not at all confident

## **Q.5 How often do you self-censor during classroom discussions?**

11% Very often  
34% Somewhat often  
39% Not too often  
17% Not at all

## **Q.6 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? \*\*It is acceptable to shout down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus.\*\***

8% Strongly agree  
25% Somewhat agree  
38% Somewhat disagree  
29% Strongly disagree

# Survey Results

[Access Interactive Survey Results](#)

**Q.7 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? \*\*If someone is using hate speech, physical violence can be justified to prevent this person from espousing their hateful views.\*\***

7% Strongly agree  
13% Somewhat agree  
32% Somewhat disagree  
48% Strongly disagree

**Q.8 Which of the following statements comes closer to your own personal opinion?**

16% Speech is violence and should be treated as such by Yale.  
84% It is important for a healthy campus life that the distinctions between speech and violence are maintained.

**Q.9 Which of the following statements comes closer to your own personal opinion?**

87% Yale should allow people with controversial views on issues like politics, race, religion, or gender to speak on campus.  
13% Yale should forbid people with controversial views on issues like politics, race, religion, or gender to speak on campus.

**Q.10 How often have you been treated unfairly on campus by professors, teaching fellows, or administrators as a result of your political opinions and beliefs?**

4% Frequently  
12% Sometimes  
21% Rarely  
63% Never

**Q.11 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? \*\*I feel comfortable expressing disagreement with my professors about a controversial political topic in a written assignment.\*\***

17% Strongly agree  
37% Somewhat agree  
31% Somewhat disagree  
15% Strongly disagree

**Q.12 How would you describe the overall political environment at Yale?**

31% Very liberal  
49% Somewhat liberal  
13% Neither liberal nor conservative  
5% Somewhat conservative  
2% Very conservative

# Survey Results

[Access Interactive Survey Results](#)

**Q.13 Do you think Yale offers a welcoming environment to students who hold political opinions that are unpopular on campus?**

10% Very welcoming  
40% Somewhat welcoming  
37% Somewhat unwelcoming  
13% Very unwelcoming

**Q.14 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
\*\*Even though Yale is a private university not bound by the First Amendment, it should respect First Amendment free speech rights for its students.\*\***

49% Strongly agree  
39% Somewhat agree  
8% Somewhat disagree  
4% Strongly disagree

**Q.15 Generally speaking, do you approve of Yale taking stances on political and moral issues, whether controversial or not?**

14% Strongly approve  
54% Somewhat approve  
20% Somewhat disapprove  
11% Strongly disapprove

**Q.16 Which of the following statements comes closer to your opinion?**

36% Administrators should never regulate speech by students. Students should either ignore speech they find offensive or counter it with more speech.  
64% Administrators should regulate speech by students. Hateful speech should not be tolerated at Yale.

**Q.17 In March 2022, following the disruption by Yale Law students of a panel on free speech, a federal judge suggested those students who disrupted the panel should be barred from prestigious federal clerkships after law school. \*\*Do you agree or disagree that students should face career consequences for disrupting speakers with whom they disagree?\*\***

9% Strongly agree  
22% Somewhat agree  
33% Somewhat disagree  
35% Strongly disagree

**Q.18 On October 7, 2023, hundreds of Hamas militants entered Israel from Gaza and killed around 1,400 Israeli civilians. Which of the following comes closer to your opinion?**

19% The Palestinians' frustration and anger about their treatment by Israel justify the attack.  
81% Regardless of the history between Israel and the Palestinians, there is no justification for attacking civilians.

# Survey Results

Access Interactive Survey Results

**Q.19 In October 2023, Yale University administrators defended the free speech rights of a professor who celebrated Hamas' terror attacks in Israel. Do you agree or disagree with the action Yale took?**

29% Strongly agree  
41% Somewhat agree  
20% Somewhat disagree  
10% Strongly disagree

**Q.20 A recent review of Yale faculty in key departments and the Law School found that 83% were registered Democrats and 3.5% were registered Republicans. National polling in recent years has Democrats and Republicans roughly even. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? \*\*Yale should take action to promote political diversity among its faculty.\*\***

16% Strongly agree  
40% Somewhat agree  
29% Somewhat disagree  
16% Strongly disagree

**Q.21 Yale is currently searching for a new president. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? \*\*The Yale presidential search committee should prioritize candidates committed to strengthening free speech on campus.\*\***

17% Strongly agree  
48% Somewhat agree  
26% Somewhat disagree  
9% Strongly disagree

**Q.22 What, if anything, would you like to see the next president of Yale do to improve free speech on campus?**

46% Host and moderate debates on contentious topics to model civil dialogue across the political spectrum  
44% Hire faculty with intellectually diverse viewpoints  
33% Offer courses and programming throughout the year to educate students on free speech  
31% Provide every incoming student with a copy of the Woodward Report, Yale's free speech policy, before they arrive on campus  
29% Institute programming on freedom of speech during freshman orientation  
23% Create an office dedicated to the promotion and protection of free speech on campus  
15% Unsure  
14% Eliminate platforms for tracking complaints about protected speech  
7% Nothing needs to be done

**Q.23 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? \*\*Yale should discipline students who deliberately disrupt classes or events to prevent the voicing of views with which they disagree.\*\***

17% Strongly agree  
33% Somewhat agree  
34% Somewhat disagree  
17% Strongly disagree



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