

# **2014 Survey of America's College Students**

Conducted on Behalf of:  
**The Panetta Institute for Public Policy**

**By Hart Research Associates**

April 2014

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## I. Introduction

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This report summarizes the major findings of a survey among American college students conducted by Hart Research Associates for the Panetta Institute for Public Policy. Starting in 2001, the Panetta Institute has commissioned surveys among US college students that yield invaluable insights into their opinions. Because of the research's continuity and depth, it truly is one of the best barometers for measuring college students' attitudes. Hart Research is honored to have conducted this important research on behalf of the Panetta Institute, and we present the results in this summary of key findings.

The 2014 Panetta Institute survey covers a number of issues in-depth, including college students' general outlook for the country; ratings of political figures and the country's leadership, including students' preference for the 2014 and 2016 elections; views on the balance between intelligence gathering and personal privacy; the level of student concern about international terrorism; assessments of the Affordable Care Act, the state of the economy and students' job prospects; how closely college students follow the issues of the day and the extent of their interest in public service. The following are the major findings from this year's survey:

- College students worry more that the United States will violate average Americans' personal privacy than that the United States will fail to prevent a terrorist attack. And the divide is quite large, as 60% worry more about the violation of personal privacy compared with 38% who worry more that the United States will fail to prevent another terrorist attack.
- Today's college students were quite young when the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, occurred, and while students say this is the most influential event of their lifetime (37%), it does not stand by itself, as 29% mention the financial crisis of 2008, and 21% cite Barack Obama's election as president.
- This may help to explain why college students are more worried about a major cyber terrorist attack than about a conventional terrorist attack. While 39% of college students worry that the United States will experience another major terrorist attack, this proportion jumps to 47% when college students consider the possibility of a major *cyber* terrorist attack.
- In general terms, college students are more inward looking and focused on domestic issues rather than showing greater interest in international affairs. This is true even though 73% of college students believe that the United States is less respected by other countries than it was in the past. In fact, 69% believe that the problems that their generation will face will be national compared with

just 30% who say international. This is the largest proportion in the history of the Panetta Institute poll who say national problems will be foremost. And when presented with two statements characterizing a more activist foreign policy and a more isolationist foreign policy, students favor a more isolationist approach by 45% to 32%.

- These broad views of a more inward-looking nation are seen in a specific foreign policy measure of the situation in the Ukraine. Fully 68% of college students prefer that the United States not get too involved in the situation while just 27% want the nation to take a firm stand.
- Domestically, college students see the nation's economic situation continuing to improve after the financial crisis, but still having a long way to go to get back to better days. Now, 28% of students describe the economy as excellent or good, up from 21% in 2012, and 15% in 2011. But when one considers that in 2006 54% rated the economy similarly, one can see how much erosion has occurred on this key measure.
- Fully 60% of college students see income inequality between the rich and poor as a serious problem, and nearly the same proportion (62%) favor increasing the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 an hour to \$10.10.
- Despite difficult economic times, college students remain a generally optimistic group when it comes to their own ability to find a job after graduation that is acceptable to them. Consider that 70% report that they are very or fairly confident in this, which approaches the all-time high of 75% recorded in 2005.
- Still, students have concerns, and 63% worry about finding a good-paying quality job, with another 58% worrying about having too much student loan debt. This is an increase from 44% in 2010 and underscores the increasing severity of the issue.
- Politically, students report near-record low satisfaction with the country's political leadership. Just 39% say they are satisfied with the country's political leadership while 60% are dissatisfied. Consider that at the start of the Obama administration in 2009, fully 73% were satisfied with the country's political leadership and 25% were dissatisfied.
- Along these same lines, just 42% say that politics is very or fairly relevant in their life, the lowest proportion that has been recorded in the poll.
- While Barack Obama remains popular among college students, his numbers are diminished. Consider that 56% of college students approve of the job that he is doing as president, which is down from 67% in the 2012 survey. And in personal terms, college students also feel less enthused about Barack Obama, with 50% feeling positive toward him and 29% feeling negative, which is down from 57% positive, 24% negative in 2012.
- Not only have the President's ratings declined, but so too has support for his signature piece of legislation, the Affordable Care Act. In 2012, 61% of college students said that it was a good thing that Congress passed the Affordable Care Act, but this proportion has dropped to 53%, with 42% now saying it is a bad thing. There is only a five-point difference among college students as to whether the law should be kept or repealed (49% to 44%) while in 2012 students wanted the law kept by 59% to 33%.

- Looking to the 2014 elections, despite these challenges facing the President and the Democratic Party, college students continue to favor Democratic candidates over Republican candidates in congressional elections by similar margins to previous elections (45% to 30%).
- While there has been some decline in the proportion of students who identify as Democrats, this has not been to Republicans' advantage; rather, more students are identifying as independents. And a far greater concern for Democrats than losing ground to Republicans among college students is a real question as to how many college students actually will turn out to vote given their disenchantment with the political system. Just 25% of college students are following the 2014 congressional elections closely.
- While the President's ratings have declined, Hillary Clinton's ratings have improved significantly since 2008, when 37% of college students viewed her positively and 37% viewed her negatively. Now she has a 47% positive, 23% negative rating.
- While 2016 is still a long way off, Secretary Clinton is not only much better known than any of her potential Republican challengers, of whom only Marco Rubio has a net positive personal rating. In head-to-head matchups against Rand Paul (53% to 32%) and Jeb Bush (58% to 26%), Hillary Clinton holds wide leads.

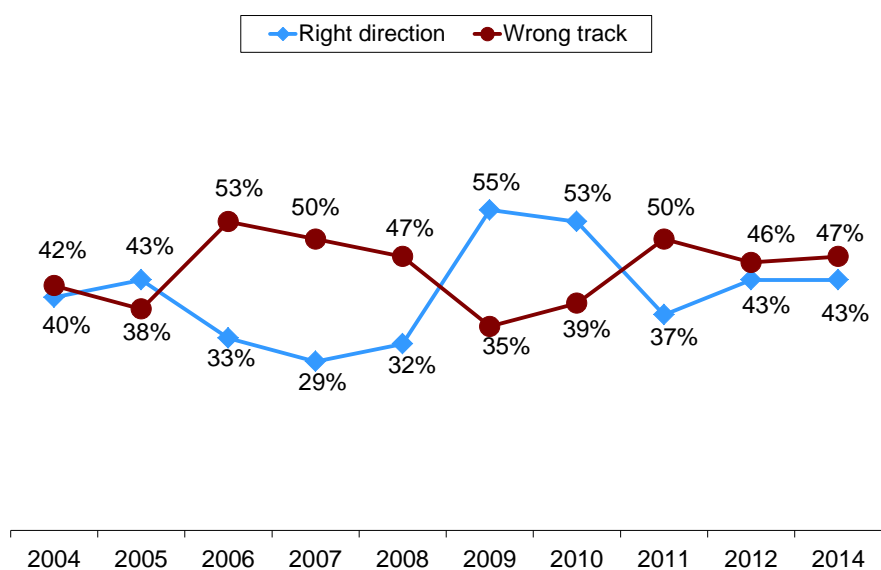
**Methodology:** In an effort to reach a fully representative sample of college students, the survey's methodology consists of interviews conducted by telephone and online. Hart Research interviewed college students using traditional telephone interviewing based on list samples of college students at four-year higher-learning institutions nationwide. This list included a considerable number of cell phone numbers; we reached more than half the telephone respondents on their cell phone. In addition, Hart Research contracted with an online survey vendor to administer an identical survey to a sample of people currently enrolled in some type of post-secondary institution drawn from the vendor's multi-million-member respondent panel. In the online survey, screening questions limited participation to students enrolled in a four-year higher-learning institution. A total of 817 interviews were completed. All interviews, whether phone or online, were conducted from April 11 to 19, 2014, with no telephone interviews conducted on either April 18 (Good Friday) or April 20 (Easter). Some demographics were weighted in each sample to achieve representative samples of four-year college students nationwide. The margin of error is  $\pm 3.5$  percentage points for the overall sample and is higher for specific subgroups.

## II. State of the Nation

Overall, college students' attitudes toward the country's direction and their own future have changed little since 2012. They remain more positive about the country's direction and economy than the overall public, and their optimism about their personal future continues to outstrip how they feel about the country's future.

Compared with the overall public, college students continue to display more confidence about the direction of the country, with 43% saying things are heading in the right direction and 47% saying things are on the wrong track. For the overall public, those figures are 26% and 65% respectively.<sup>1</sup> Among college students, these proportions largely are unchanged from 2012, a period of stasis following the previous decade's volatility.

### Direction Of The Nation



College students feel far more confident and secure about their own future than they do about the country's future. Half (51%) say they are confident and secure about their own future, compared with just 28% who say the same about the country's future. This personal optimism wanes somewhat as students approach graduation, with majorities of freshman, sophomores, and juniors all expressing optimism about their own future, while seniors are more likely to be uncertain and concerned (54%) than confident and secure (43%).

<sup>1</sup> NBC/Wall St. Journal poll conducted March 5-9, 2014.

Overall, 28% rate the state of the nation’s economy as either excellent or good, the highest proportion seen in this survey since the onset of the financial crisis. Mirroring the country as a whole, students’ impressions of the economy are influenced heavily by their political beliefs; one-third of self-identified Democrats (33%) say things are either excellent or good, compared with just 23% of both Republicans and independents. College students who describe the state of the nation’s economy as either excellent or good are very optimistic about their own future, saying that they are confident and secure rather than uncertain and concerned by 76% to 23%.

### **The Role of Government, Issues, and News**

When it comes to the government’s role, college students continue to display decidedly progressive attitudes and inclinations. They are more likely than the rest of the country to be paying attention to news about the rollout of the Affordable Care Act, and cite the September 11th terrorist attacks as the most defining event of their lives.

Speaking generally, 56% of college students believe that government should do more to solve problems and help meet people’s needs, compared with 39% who say that government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals. This breaks down along party lines, with 76% of Democrats saying the government must do more, compared with 54% of independents and 25% of Republicans who say the same. Students whose primary course of study is in the social sciences or humanities heavily favor more government action, while those in the hard sciences, math, or business fields are divided almost equally.

<b>The Role of Government</b>		
	<b><u>Should Do More</u></b>	<b><u>Doing Too Many Things</u></b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
All college students	56	39
Social Sciences	67	28
Humanities	64	31
Science/Math/Computer Science	53	45
Business	48	47
Democrats	76	18
Independents	54	43
Republicans	25	71

More directly, 44% of college students say the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living, compared with 32% who say that government should just let each person get ahead on their own. While pluralities of freshmen, sophomores, and juniors feel the government should do more, a majority (58%) of seniors disagree and favor greater personal responsibility over government intervention.

College students display particular concern for the availability and affordability of health care. Nearly seven in 10 (69%) rate the cost of health care as either a very or fairly serious problem today (a rating of eight to 10 on a zero-to-10 scale), compared with 47% who say the same about the country's immigration policy and 57% for gridlock between the political parties. Against this backdrop, students are following the rollout of The Affordable Care Act more closely than they are reports about the condition of the U.S. economy or Russia taking control of Ukraine's Crimea region.

While college students are generally less likely to follow news than the public overall, they are more interested in the rollout of the Affordable Care Act and U.S. government surveillance efforts than adults nationwide. Meanwhile, only a quarter say they are paying either very or fairly close attention to news about this year's congressional elections, compared with 37% nationwide.

<b>Proportion Saying They are Following News About Current Issues Very or Fairly Closely</b>		
	<b><u>College Students</u></b>	<b><u>All Adults</u></b> <sup>2</sup>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
How the roll out of the 2010 Affordable Care Act, also called Obamacare, is going	61	49
Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	59	64
Russia taking control of Ukraine's Crimea region	50	63
Reports about the U.S. government's phone and internet surveillance programs	49	42
News about this year's congressional elections	25	37

<sup>2</sup> Pew Research Center, March 20-23, 2014



A plurality (37%) of college students cite the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, as the most influential event of their lifetime, but it is not the defining moment for all college students. While sophomores, juniors, and seniors all rate it as their top choice, freshman are more likely to select the financial crisis of 2008 (34%) than the attacks of 9/11 (31%), as are Hispanic students (36%). While both men and women rate 9/11 as their top choice, men (34%) are more likely to cite the financial crisis than women (26%), while women (27%) are twice as likely as men (13%) to select President Obama's election. For African American students, Obama's election is far and away the most influential event (44%), followed by the financial crisis (24%) and 9/11 (22%). Mirroring results elsewhere in the survey, this question is evidence that domestic events resonate more with college students than does international activity. Both the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (10%) and the killing of Osama bin Laden (1%) are less likely to be seen as the defining event of students' lifetime.

### Which of the following events do you consider the most influential of your lifetime?

	<u>Men</u> %	<u>Women</u> %	<u>Hispanics</u> %	<u>African Americans</u> %	<u>Upper-classmen</u> %	<u>Under-classmen</u> %
The terrorist attacks of 9/11	41	35	28	22	41	33
The financial crisis of 2008	34	26	36	24	27	32
The election of Barack Obama as President	13	27	23	44	20	22
The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan	9	10	10	7	9	10
The killing of Osama bin Laden	2	1	2	1	1	2

### Political Attitudes

While college students remain more likely than adults to identify as Democrats, there have been some important changes in their political attitudes over the last few years. Overall support for political institutions and leaders has fallen, and students are less likely than anytime this century to say that politics are relevant in their lives.

Democrats enjoy a 46%-to-28% party identification advantage over Republicans among college students, with another 26% identifying as political

independents. While the proportion identifying as Republican has stayed the same since 2012, there has been a two-point drop in Democratic support. This drop is most noticeable among white respondents, whose Democratic identification has declined from 41% in 2012, to 37% in 2014. Mirroring the country as a whole, male college students (40%) are less likely than women (51%) to identify as Democrats.

There are also differences in party identification by college class. While college students as a whole have gradually slid away from the Democratic Party over the past few years, that trend is most stark among freshmen. In 2012, freshmen were no less likely than their peers to identify as Democrats, but now they have the lowest Democratic affiliation of any class.

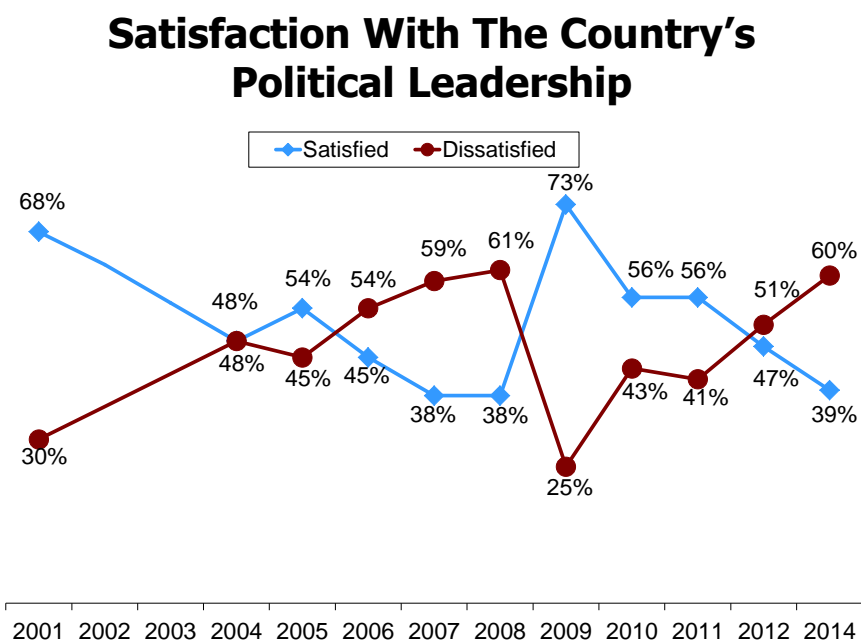
While President Obama remains popular among college students, his professional and personal ratings both have declined since 2012. Half of students rate their feelings towards him as either very (20%) or somewhat (30%) positive—the highest positive rating of any individual tested in the survey—compared with just 29% who feel very or somewhat negative. These numbers are strong, but notably down from 2012, when they stood at 57% positive and 24% negative.

<b>Feelings Thermometer</b>			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Difference</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	
Hillary Clinton	47	23	24
Barack Obama	50	29	21
Elizabeth Warren	11	4	7
Marco Rubio	12	9	3
Rand Paul	15	17	-2
Ted Cruz	9	15	-6
Harry Reid	6	14	-8
Jeb Bush	11	19	-8
Mitch McConnell	6	15	-9
Nancy Pelosi	15	25	-10
John Boehner	7	24	-17

This decline is even more apparent in the President's job approval, where 56% approve of the job he is doing, down from 67% in 2012 and 75% three months after taking office in 2009. Still, just 39% express disapproval, and President Obama's +17 net approval rating among college students stands in stark

contrast to his -6 rating among all adults (44% approve, 50% disapprove).<sup>3</sup> Interestingly given how closely they are following news about the law's implementation, students' attitudes toward the health care law are a more powerful predictor of their approval rating than even party identification or ideology. Among students who say it is a good thing that the Affordable Care Act was passed and signed into law, President Obama enjoys a net approval rating of +76, compared with +73 among Democrats, and +58 among liberals.

While the President still receives favorable, though diminished, ratings, a near record low proportion indicates satisfaction with the country's political leadership overall. Just 39% say they are either very (4%) or fairly (35%), satisfied compared with 60% who are dissatisfied with the quality of the country's political leadership. These figures are no different statistically from 2008, when 38% said they were satisfied, and down eight points from where they stood in 2012 (47%). Overall, this represents a marked decline from the high of 73%, recorded just three months after President Obama's inauguration. The feeling of hope and change has subsided significantly among Democrats (57% satisfied, down from 88% in 2009), but the major movement is among Republicans (17%, down from 48%), and independents (33%, down from 70%).



<sup>3</sup> NBC/Wall Street Journal poll conducted April 23-27, 2014.

This increased dissatisfaction with today's political leadership leads 58% of college students to report that politics is either just somewhat or not relevant at all to their life, the highest proportion ever recorded in the Panetta Institute poll, and up from 50% in 2012. On the other hand, students who report they are likely to vote for the Republican for Congress this year (53%) are more likely to say that politics is either very or fairly relevant in their lives than those who are undecided (30%) or say they will likely vote for the Democratic candidate (41%).

Just 38% of college students say they are paying a lot of (6%) or some (32%) attention to the 2014 congressional elections, down from 44% at a similar time in 2010. Again, Republicans (43%) are paying more attention than Democrats or independents (35%), which bears watching as Republicans look to depressed Democratic turnout among younger voters to bolster their candidates in November.

Among college students overall, however, Democrats still enjoy a 45% to 30% advantage over Republicans on the generic ballot. While the Democratic candidate receives slightly less support than in 2012 (45% down from 49%), that drop is not mirrored by a corresponding rise in support for the Republican candidate. It is clear that dissatisfaction or uncertainty with Democratic candidates has left some students unsure of whom to support in 2014, or whether to turn out at all, but not yet driven them toward Republicans.

Comparing the data to the 2012 survey reveals Democrats losing their advantage with white college students. And African-Americans are less likely to support the Democratic candidate at this time, though this is really because more African-Americans are currently undecided rather than that they are voting for the Republican. Independents are also less engaged at this time in terms of picking a candidate, but the gap here has narrowed from a Democratic advantage of 13 points in 2012 (31% to 18%) to 7 points today (24% to 17%). Again, as with African-Americans, there is a drop-off in support of the Democratic candidate but not a significant increase in level of support for the Republican candidate.

<b>Congressional Trial Heat By Subgroup</b>				
	<b>2014</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2012</b>
	<b>Democrat</b>	<b>Republican</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	<b>Republican</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
All students	46	29	49	29
Men	41	32	44	31
Women	49	27	53	27
Northeast	48	22	57	20
South	41	31	49	32
Midwest	49	29	42	36
West	47	34	49	26
Whites	36	38	41	37
Hispanics	58	25	56	23
African Americans	66	8	81	5
Asians	59	17	51	13
Social sciences	57	24	49	30
Humanities	49	26	56	23
Science/math/CS	41	34	49	29
Business	44	30	39	34
Democrats	83	1	85	2
Independents	24	17	31	18
Republicans	3	86	3	84
School size: Less than 5,000	43	30	51	30
School size: 5,001 to 20,000	50	27	49	33
School size: More than 20,000	45	34	49	28

Interestingly, while freshman are less likely than others to identify as Democrats, they nonetheless favor the Democratic candidate by 50% to 29%, a slightly better showing for a generic Democrat than among students overall. While registered voters indicate support for the Democratic candidate by a decisive 46% to 33%, the Democratic advantage is even stronger among unregistered voters, where just 20% indicate support for the Republican candidate. Even in the wake of President Obama's 2012 voter registration push it appears that further registration efforts on college campuses could increase Democratic support in 2014.

The relative lack of interest in the 2014 congressional elections stands in stark contrast to the attention college students are paying to the 2016 race for president. Students actually are more likely to be paying very or fairly close attention to news about the 2016 election (36%) than they are the 2014 elections (25%). In another cautionary statistic for Democrats, key constituencies such as African-Americans (41% to 19%), women (37% to 22%), and students in the

Northeast (42% to 21%) all appear to be looking past 2014 to the next presidential election.

Despite this, many of the potential Republican candidates remain largely unknown to college students. Nearly two in five admit to not knowing Rand Paul (38%) or Jeb Bush (39%), but those figures pale compared with the lack of recognition for Ted Cruz (54%) and Marco Rubio (54%).

Meanwhile, the potential Democratic frontrunner, Hillary Clinton, enjoys near universal recognition, with a mere 2% saying they do not know her name. Her time at the State Department also appears to have helped her image, with her ratings of 47% positive, 23% negative showing a marked improvement from April 2008 (37% positive, 37% negative).

With the qualifier that it is very early in the process, Secretary Clinton enjoys majority support in 2016 trial heats against both Rand Paul (53% to 32%) and Jeb Bush (58% to 26%). Combined with the fact that he is both more well-known and better liked, it appears at this juncture that Rand Paul offers Republicans a better opportunity to eat into the Democratic advantage that President Obama enjoyed on college campuses in both 2008 and 2012.

Against this backdrop, it is interesting to look at the topic of libertarianism throughout the survey. Overall, 26% of college students identify as libertarian, but their profile is very different than how libertarians are generally viewed nationwide. Of those identifying as libertarian, 53% also identify as Democrats, compared with 22% as independents, and 25% as Republicans, and 51% identify as liberal. In short, the roughly one-in-four college students who identify as libertarian do not appear to differ in any significant ideological way from the majority of their peers.

The survey also asks a series of questions about different government activities and government's role, and by looking at those results it is possible to identify a group of students who more closely identify with libertarian ideology. Overall, 23% are defined as libertarians. This group overlaps with self-identified Republicans, both in terms of their partisan identification, and basic attitudinal measures.

Libertarians are also more likely to be conservative, male, and white than liberal, female, or a racial minority. On attitudinal measures, in keeping with their Republican-leaning, they are more likely to support the Republican candidate for

Congress by a 48% to 13% margin. In foreign policy, they are more likely than college students overall to favor less engagement in Ukraine, with 83% not wanting the United States to get too involved (versus 68% overall). Libertarians are also decidedly against the Affordable Care Act, with 78% feeling that the law's passage was a bad thing and 75% wanting to see it repealed. In assessing government overall, by 74% to 26% they believe that government is doing too many things better left to business and individuals rather than government should do more to solve problems and help meet the needs of people (overall the results are reversed – 56% government do more, 39% government doing too many things). And in keeping with their views of government, they are less likely to be interested in working for government (33% compared to 39% overall) and much more interested in working in the private sector (83% compared to 57% overall).

<b>A Profile of Libertarians</b>		
	<u>All college students</u>	<u>Libertarians</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
All students	100	23
Male	45	57
Female	55	43
White	61	83
Hispanic	13	4
African-American	12	3
Asian	10	7
Democrats	46	19
Independents	26	32
Republicans	28	49
Liberal	32	13
Moderate	45	55
Conservative	20	32

### **The Economy and the Minimum Wage**

Mirroring their political identification, college students display decidedly progressive attitudes when it comes to fiscal and economic policy. They believe the government has a role in helping ensure the economic security of its citizens, and strongly support raising the minimum wage.

By a margin of 12 points (44% to 32%) college students believe the federal government should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living rather than let each person get ahead on their own. To accomplish this, students (62%) support raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour in roughly

similar proportions to adults nationwide (65%).<sup>4</sup> Raising the minimum wage enjoys support among nearly all attitudinal and demographic subgroups, including 60% of students who are unsure who they will be supporting in the upcoming congressional elections.

Students also believe that raising wages is the key to reducing income inequality. Sixty-six percent agree that the key to dealing with income inequality is to increase workers' wages, compared with 40% who say expanding the economy through tax incentives. Even self-identified conservatives are divided on the issue, with equal proportions selecting tax incentives, and raising wages (46%, 46%).

## Personal Future

Despite their ongoing pessimism about the state of the economy, college students remain optimistic about their own job prospects. They do worry about that job paying well, however, an attitude closely tied to both their current course of study and their economic background.

While their perception of the economy remains negative, seven in 10 are either very (34%) or fairly (36%) confident that they will be able to find an acceptable job after graduation, essentially identical to the 69% who felt similarly in 2012. While they are slightly less optimistic than their younger peers, two-thirds (65%) of seniors are confident they will find an acceptable job.

<b>Worry About Finding a Good-Paying Quality Job</b>		
	<u>Very Often</u>	<u>Somewhat Often</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
All college students	32	31
Social Sciences	36	39
Humanities	35	30
Science/Math/Computer Science	29	28
Business	22	32
Upper/Upper Middle-Class	22	25
Middle-Class	32	32
Lower/Lower Middle-Class	39	32
Economy is excellent or good	21	27
Economy is not so good or poor	36	32
Women	40	30
Men	22	31

<sup>4</sup> CBS/*New York Times* Poll, February 19-23, 2014.



Students appear to draw a distinction, however, between a job that is “acceptable” and a “good-paying quality job.” Nearly two-thirds (63%) worry either very or somewhat often about finding a good-paying quality job, and 58% worry about having too much student loan debt, up from 44% in 2010. Perhaps in anticipation of future income, this worry about student loan debt breaks down cleanly among course of study and economic background, with three-quarters of students in the social sciences (75%) worrying very or somewhat often compared with 43% of students studying business. With regard to economic background, two-thirds of students from lower or lower-middle class backgrounds say they worry about student loan debt, compared with 42% of students from upper or upper middle-class backgrounds.

<b>Worry about.....</b>		
<b><i>Proportion worry very or somewhat often</i></b>		
	<b>Good paying job %</b>	<b>Student loan debt %</b>
All college students	63	58
Social Sciences	75	74
Humanities	65	62
Science/Math/Computer Science	58	52
Business	54	43
Upper/Upper Middle-Class	48	42
Middle-Class	64	59
Lower/Lower Middle-Class	71	67
Economy is excellent or good	48	45
Economy is not so good or poor	67	62
Men	54	49
Women	70	65

## **Energy & Immigration**

College students favor the promotion of clean energy development and support immigration reform that allows undocumented immigrants to apply for citizenship.

By a margin of more than two to one college students agree that the government should discourage the use of coal and oil and promote clean energy development (68%) rather than encourage more production of US coal and oil (30%). Throughout the survey, students who study science, math, or computer science are generally more conservative than their peers, but on this issue their attitudes reflect college students from all disciplines.

College students show even more progressive attitudes on immigration reform, with 71% agreeing that undocumented immigrants residing in the United

States should be allowed to remain in the country as they apply for citizenship. Just 28% favor requiring those immigrants to return to their country of origin in order to apply for citizenship. While Hispanics (85%) overwhelmingly agree with the former approach, so do two-thirds of whites (68%) and African-Americans (67%). Self-identified Republicans split evenly on the issue, while independents favor allowing immigrants to remain by a margin of 71% to 24%.

### **III. Health Care**

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When presented with seven different issues that are currently prominent in the news, college students pick the rollout of the Affordable Care Act as the one they are following most closely, and when asked to choose among five specific national problems, they cite the cost of health care as the one they see as most serious. Clearly, health care is a major issue for college students and while they are still more likely to believe the Affordable Care Act's passage is a good thing, the gap has narrowed and fewer college students want to keep the health care law.

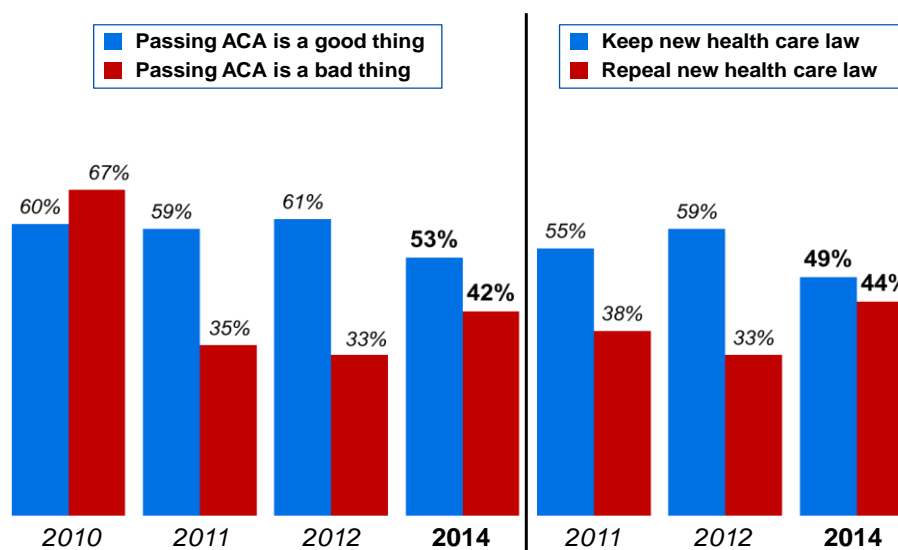
As mentioned previously, fully three in five college students (61%) are following the rollout of the health care law closely. And the cost of health care is an issue college students see as a real problem facing the country—as 69% say this is a serious problem (7 or higher on a 10-point scale). Seniors (73%) and Democrats (75%) are more likely to say the cost of health care is a problem.

While college students are following the issue closely, their support for the Affordable Care Act has declined. In April of 2012, college students said by a margin of 61% to 33% that it was a good thing rather than a bad thing that Congress passed the Affordable Care Act – a finding essentially unchanged from 2010, when 60% said it was a good thing, and 2011, when 59% said good thing. Now, the margin has narrowed to 53% good thing, 42% bad thing. Notably, while Democrats remain strongly on the side of the law's passage being a good thing (from 86% in 2012 to 80% now), independents have gone from a majority who said the law's passage was a good thing (57% good thing, 35% bad thing) to a mixed assessment (47%, 46%). And Republicans have grown more negative on the law (from 23% good thing, 71% bad thing in 2012 to 14%, 82%).

Even more concerning for supporters of the Affordable Care Act is that college students, an eventual primary target of the law due to their age and health,

are much more divided about whether the law should be kept or repealed. In 2012, college students wanted the law to be kept rather than repealed by 59% to 33%. Now, preference is still to keep the law, but the margin has narrowed to 49% who want the Affordable Care Act kept and 44% who want it repealed. The biggest increases in preference for repeal are among college students from upper and upper middle class families (shifting from 33% repeal to 50%), Republicans (going from 70% to 86%), and those in the South (up from 36% to 50%). Independents went from a majority who wanted the law to be kept (55% keep, 35% repeal) to a much more mixed verdict (45% keep, 44% repeal).

## Attitudes on the Affordable Care Act



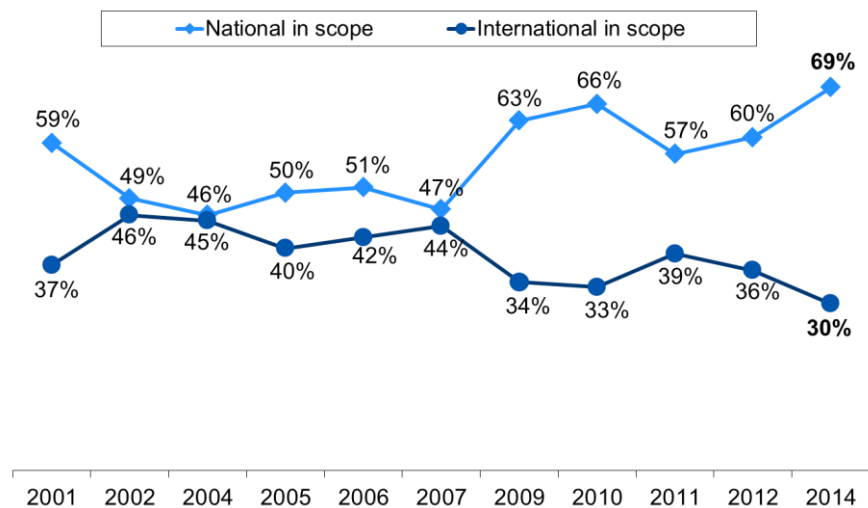
## IV. International Issues

College students continue a trend of looking inward and focusing on national rather than international problems. At the same time, by overwhelming margins, students believe that the United States is less respected in the world today. But whether it is a general assessment of America's role in the world or specifics on the crisis in the Ukraine, college students are clear in their preference for the United States to be less rather than more involved in world affairs.

Looking ahead to problems that their generation will face, students are even more likely than in 2012 to say that these problems will be national rather than international (69% to 30%). In fact, this marks the widest gap in the history of the Panetta Institute poll on this measure. At a time when political cleavages are seen

on most issues, it is remarkable that this is an instance when Democrats (68% national, 31% international), independents (70%, 29%), and Republicans (70%, 29%) overwhelmingly agree that the problems for their generation will mostly be national rather than international. One side note is that 8% of students report studying abroad for college credit. Among these students, the gap between a national and international focus narrows to 54% national, 46% international.

## Most of the problems my generation will face are:



This is just one example of the growing inward-looking focus of the nation. And even though by a 73% to 8% margin students say that the United States is less respected rather than more respected, there is little desire to have the country become more involved.

In broad terms, by 45% to 32% students are more likely to say the United States should mind its own business rather than that the United States has a responsibility to help people in other countries.

And when it comes to specifics, the results are even more one-sided. By 68% to 27%, college students would rather the United States not get too involved with the situation in the Ukraine rather than taking a firm stand. Again, this is an instance where politics does seem to end at the water's edge, with strong majorities of Democrats (69%), independents (68%), and Republicans (66%) all expressing a desire for the United States not to get too involved in the Ukraine situation.

## **V. Personal Privacy, Intelligence, and Terrorism**

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College students are more likely than the general public to be following news about the government's surveillance programs. Students are also more likely to believe that these programs should be eliminated rather than allowed to continue. Students are mixed on whether Edward Snowden should be pardoned or prosecuted for his sharing of intelligence information. And concerns about violating privacy are greater than concerns about preventing another terrorist attack. When it comes to a terrorist attack, college students are more worried about a cyber attack than a conventional kind of attack.

In most cases, the general public is more likely than college students to be following a particular news story, but this is not the case for coverage of the government's surveillance program, as 49% of college students say they are following this story closely compared with 42% of adults overall. Men (59%) and Hispanics (56%) are more likely than other college students to be following this story closely.

And by 50% to 27% college students believe government has gone too far in monitoring conversations and these surveillance programs should be eliminated rather than that government should continue such programs.

Edward Snowden receives an almost evenly divided judgment from college students, as 48% believe that he performed an important public service and should be pardoned, while 46% believe he endangered national security and should be prosecuted. Republicans, women, those in the Northeast, and college students who worry more about terrorism than violating privacy are more likely to want Snowden to be prosecuted.

<b>Edward Snowden should be....</b>		
	<u>Prosecuted</u>	<u>Pardoned</u>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
All college students	46	48
Democrats	48	45
Independents	36	59
Republicans	52	42
Men	40	56
Women	51	41
Worry more: Terrorism	61	33
Worry more: Violate privacy	38	57
Northeast	54	45
South	46	47
Midwest	43	50
West	43	49

Students are more concerned about violating privacy than preventing another terrorist attack by 60% to 38%. Even Republicans, who are generally more concerned about terrorism, say they are more concerned about the United States violating the privacy of average Americans by 56% to 43%.

And despite the fact that such an event has not yet occurred, college students are more worried that the United States will experience a major cyber terrorist attack than another major terrorist attack by 47% to 39%.

## Worry about Terrorist Attacks

■ I am very worried about this   ■ I am fairly worried about this

United States will experience a major cyber terrorist attack that would paralyze the nation or cause serious disruption to credit, financial, or Internet operations



United States will experience another major terrorist attack



## **VI. Public Service**

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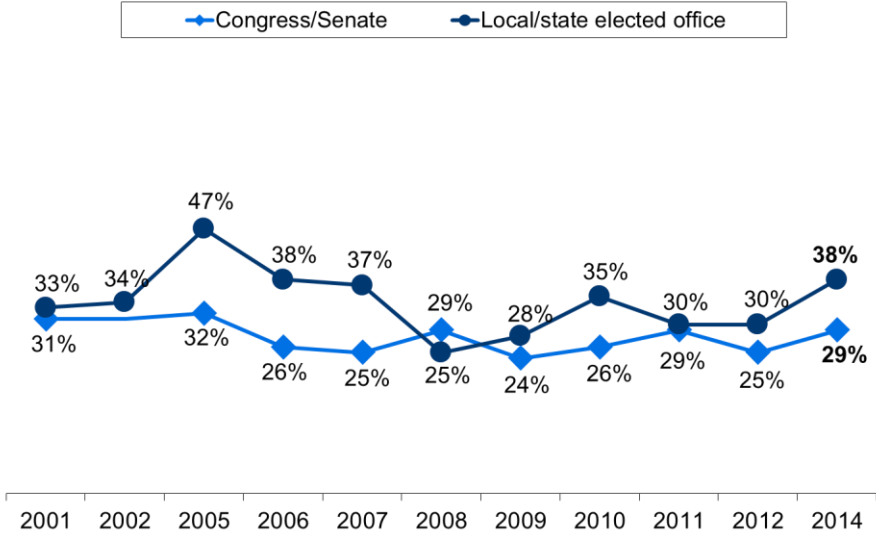
When it comes to career choices, college students are most interested in working in the private sector, while two out of five express interest in working for a not-for-profit organization or for government. Interest in teaching continues to decline somewhat. And despite near record low ratings for Congress, college students report a slight increase in interest in running for federal elected office, and are also more interested in running for a local or state elected office. Interest in pursuing a service-oriented experience has dropped since 2012 and is at an all-time low in this survey.

Fully 57% of college students say that they are very or fairly interested in working in the private sector, while roughly two in five students express high interest in working for a not-for-profit (40%) or working for government (39%). Those who are majoring in social sciences (50%), Democrats (46%), African-Americans (49%), those who studied abroad for credit (48%), and those living in the Northeast (45%) are more likely to be interested in working for government.

Interest in teaching in a public school has declined from 30% in 2011, to 27% in 2012, to 24% now. Those majoring in the social sciences (35%) and humanities (38%) are more likely to be interested in teaching. And women (28%) are more likely than men (19%) to be interested in teaching.

While Congress's job rating may be at historically low levels, interest in running for Congress has actually increased. Today, 29% of college students express an interest in running for federal elected office, up from 25% in 2012, and near the all-time high of 32% in 2005. And interest in running for local or state elected office is even higher with 38% expressing interest in this, up from 30% in 2012. There continues to be a gender gap when it comes to interest in running for office, with men being much more interested than women regardless of whether the office is at the federal level (men: 40%, women: 21%) or local level (men: 48%, women: 29%).

# Interest in Running for Office



While interest in elected office has increased, the opposite is true of service-oriented experiences such as Teach for America, VISTA, or AmeriCorps. Today, just 28% would consider this, compared with 38% in 2012, which was an all-time high.