

Report Findings

Based On A Survey Among American College Students

Conducted On Behalf Of:

The Leon & Sylvia Panetta Institute For Public Policy

By Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.

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Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.
1724 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009

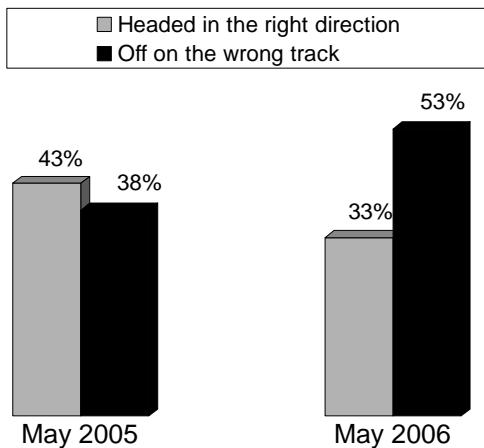
This report analyzes the findings of a survey among American college students conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., for the Leon & Sylvia Panetta Institute for Public Policy. Since 2001, the Panetta Institute has sponsored a yearly survey of college students that yields invaluable insights into the opinions of our nations' college students. Because of this continuity and the depth of the research, it truly is one of the best barometers of measuring college students' attitudes. Hart Research is particularly proud to have conducted this important research on behalf of the Panetta Institute and present the results in the following summary of key findings. The research consists of 800 interviews among a representative sample of college students at four-year higher-learning institutions throughout the country. Interviews were conducted by telephone from May 13 to 19, 2006. The margin of error is ±3.5 percentage points for the overall sample and higher for specific subgroups.

State of the Nation

The mood among college students has darkened considerably over the past 12 months. A large majority of students are uncertain about the country's future. While college students believe that the problems that they are likely to face will be national in scope, a majority also closely follow international news and see that America is losing its stature around the world.

- Today, one in three (33%) college students says that the country is headed in the right direction while a majority (53%) say that it is off on the wrong track. This marks a significant decline from last year's survey when a plurality said that the country was headed in the right direction while 38% disagreed. The responses break significantly by party identification, as both Democrats (23% right direction, 66% wrong track) and independents (26%, 53%) view the country's direction differently from Republicans (58%, 29%). As we will reference throughout the report, attitudes on Iraq and the economy drive perceptions of the country's overall well being. Among college students who believe that the United States should have gone to war in Iraq, 48% say that the country is headed in the right direction, versus 37% who disagree. Students who believe that the U.S. should not have gone to war also say that we are off on the wrong track by 73% to 17%. Additionally, more students who say that the economy is in excellent or good shape believe that the country is headed in the right direction (44% to 42%) than do students with a less sanguine economic assessment (20% to 66%).

Overall Direction Of The Nation



- When it comes to assessing the country's future, a large majority of college students (67%) feel uncertain and concerned about the country's future and just 26% feel confident and secure. Students' optimism has declined from last year's survey and also differs widely by party, as just 15% of Democrats and 23% of independents feel more confident and secure, compared to a plurality (49%) of Republicans.

Students' Report Card on America

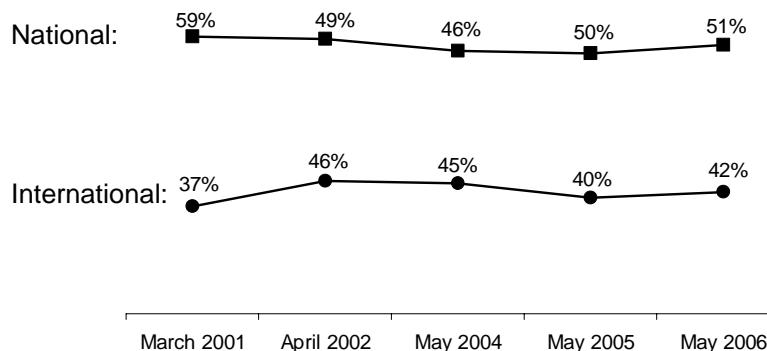
College students give the United States mixed assessments when it comes to living up to its ideals. Out of nine American ideals, a bare majority of college students say that America lives up to one: assisting qualified students to attend college through grants and loans (50%). Students give America the lowest marks on assisting those in poverty (77% just a fair or poor job) and providing health care for its citizens (72%).

LIVING UP TO AMERICAN IDEALS		<u>Excellent/ Good Job</u>	<u>Just A Fair/ Poor Job</u>
Assisting qualified students to attend college through grants and loans		50	49
A symbol of democracy to the rest of the world		43	55
A land of opportunity for immigrants		37	61
Protecting its citizens from terrorism and natural disasters		47	52
Protecting the personal privacy and civil liberties of its citizens		36	63
Taking care of the elderly		36	60
A government that represents the best interests of its citizens		33	65
Providing health care for its citizens		23	72
Assisting those in poverty		21	77

- Despite the war in Iraq and the ongoing war on terrorism, college students continue to believe that the problems that their generation will face will be more national in scope (51%) than international (42%). While we found a narrowing margin on this measurement in the few surveys after 9/11, this survey's findings are nearly identical to last year's. Women believe that future problems will be national in scope (54% to 38%) while men are evenly divided (48% national, 47% international).

Problems My Generation Will Face

Thinking about the problems your generation will face, are most of the problems international or national in scope?



- While college students see current challenges as domestic in nature, a majority (55%) says that they follow news about other parts of the world very or fairly closely. Seniors (62%) and those studying the social sciences (63%) are more likely to say this is the case.
- College students also believe that America's standing has declined internationally. Fully 82% say that the country is less respected today than in the past. This feeling of diminished stature goes across all demographic groups and this is one area in which Democrats (90%) and Republicans (73%) can agree.

Political Engagement and Public Service

College students' views on the country's leaders broadly, and specifically President Bush, have soured substantially since last year's survey.

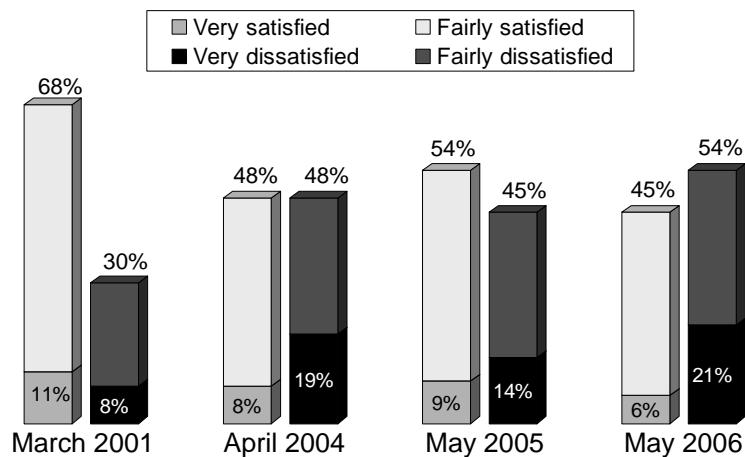
Students are not confident in their government's ability to handle another disaster similar to 9/11 or Hurricane Katrina. A majority of students believe that politics is relevant to their life. They doubt the trustworthiness of most Members of Congress, as well as whether Members work for the benefit of the people they represent. Students believe that controlling how lobbyists curry favor with Members would help diminish special interests' influence. In this year's congressional elections, by a large proportion, college students favor the Democratic candidate in their district over the Republican. Looking ahead to the 2008 presidential election, students want a change from President Bush and a leader who will take the country in a new direction.

Encouragingly, against this backdrop, more students are volunteering today than ever recorded in the history of the Panetta Institute survey—nearly three in four students (74%) have been involved in activities that help their communities. A majority (53%) also report having been approached about getting involved in politics or public service, a marginal decline since last year (56%), but still up from the 2004 result (45%). However, students' community service and apparent awareness of public service do not seem to be translating into a desire to run for office, either federal or local. The number of students interested in running for federal office has declined six

points to just 26% from 32% last year. Further, students' interest in running for local or state office also has dropped off from our highest reported level in 2005 (47%), to 38%. Perhaps controversy surrounding Members of Congress' ethical indiscretions has made running for office less appealing than it previously has been.

- For the first time in the history of the Panetta Institute poll, a majority of college students are dissatisfied with the quality of the country's political leadership. Today, 45% are satisfied while 54% are dissatisfied, which marks a nine-point increase from last year's survey results. Party identification, Iraq, and economic outlook drive students' responses. Among those who support the war in Iraq, 63% are satisfied with the country's leaders while 74% of those who say that we should not have gone to war are dissatisfied. Among students who say the economy is excellent or good, 57% are satisfied with the country's leaders, while those with a negative assessment of the economy are dissatisfied (69%).

Satisfaction With Quality Of U.S. Political Leadership



- The numerous ethical scandals in Congress appear to have taken a toll on students' perceptions, as only one in three (31%) college students says that all or most Members of Congress are honest and trustworthy and 42% say that all or most Members of Congress work for the benefit of the people they represent. Students do believe that banning lobbyists from giving gifts (32%) would have the greatest effect on reducing special interests' influence.
- Only 30% of students say that they have a great deal or quite a bit of

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confidence in the federal government to respond to a disaster similar to 9/11 or Hurricane Katrina.

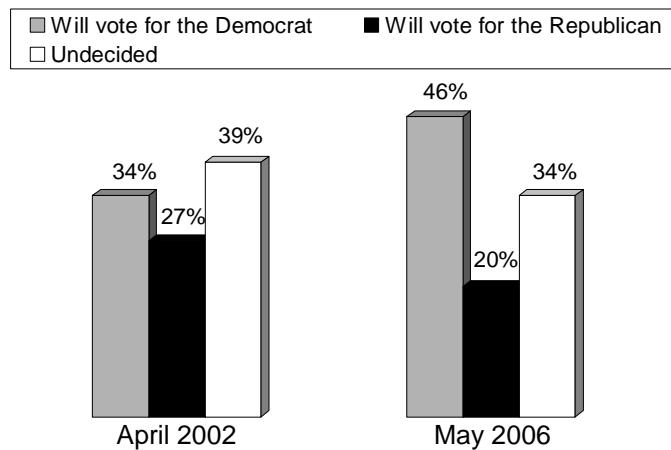
- President Bush's approval rating has dropped substantially among college students. Today, just 29% approve of the job he is doing while 66% disapprove. This marks a 15-point decline in his approval rating since last year and is 7-points lower than a recent NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll which showed the president with a 36% job rating. Responses differ by gender, region, course of study, family income, view of the Iraq War, religiosity, and view of the economy. Of particular concern for the President is his approval rating among independents, which stands at only 20%.

APPROVAL RATING OF PRESIDENT BUSH		
	Approve %	Disapprove %
All college students	29	66
Men	33	64
Women	27	67
Study: Social Sciences	27	69
Study: Humanities	22	72
Study: Science/Math/CS	28	68
Study: Business	41	52
Income: Below average	23	72
Income: Average	26	71
Income: Above average	36	59
Democrats	11	86
Independents	20	74
Republicans	71	23
Iraq: Should have	48	46
Iraq: Should not have	10	88
Church: Weekly	46	50
Church: Occasionally	32	61
Church: Rarely/never	20	76
Economy: Excellent/good	42	54
Economy: Not so good/poor	14	81

- Nearly three in five (59%) college students say that politics is very or fairly relevant in their life—the greatest proportion recorded in this survey, including our 2004 survey, which was conducted several months before a presidential election. Upperclassmen are more likely to feel that politics is relevant, as are students in the social sciences (70%) and not surprisingly, registered voters are more likely to feel this way (64%) than are unregistered voters (44%). Those who are very dissatisfied with the country's leaders are also more likely to cite politics' relevance (78%) than are their more satisfied counterparts.
- In this year's congressional elections, college students plan to vote for the Democratic candidate over the Republican candidate by 46% to 20%, which marks a significant shift from 2002 when the spread was only 34% to 27%. According to a recent NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll, the general public does also favor Democrats over Republicans, but the 6-point differential is substantially less than the

26-point advantage that Democrats enjoy with college students. Those who support the war are divided 33% for the Democrat, 34% for the Republican, while those who believe we should not have gone to war favor the Democrat by 62% to 5%. Those who are satisfied with our political leaders favor the Republican candidate 35% to 30% while those who are fairly (53% to 11%) or very dissatisfied (71% to 2%) largely favor the Democrat.

Vote in Upcoming Congressional Election



- While the 2008 presidential election is more than two years away and poll results at this point are not that meaningful, college students overwhelmingly say that they want the next president to take the country in a different direction (79%) instead of continuing President Bush's policies (15%). Even among Republicans, a majority (52%) want the next president to take the country in a new direction.
- Perhaps in part riding on this sentiment, Hillary Clinton holds a 43% to 37% advantage over John McCain in a hypothetical 2008 trial heat. Women favor Clinton by 50% to 30% and men support McCain by 45% to 34%. Among registered voters, the race is a statistical dead heat with both candidates receiving 40% of the vote; however, Clinton leads McCain among unregistered voters by 50% to 28%. While college students are more likely to favor Hillary Clinton, according to a recent NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll, the overall electorate favors McCain over Clinton 46% to 37%.
- Consistent with the 2005 findings, a majority (53%) of college students say that someone has spoken to them about getting involved in politics or public service. Fewer students who are not registered to vote (44%) than those who are registered (55%) have been spoken to about getting involved. Interestingly, 58% of the more religious college students surveyed (i.e., those who go to church at least once a

month) say that they have been spoken to about public service, versus 51% of those who rarely or never go to church. Sixty percent (60%) of private school students have been spoken to, compared to 50% of state school students.

- Partisan college students are more likely to volunteer in their local communities than are independents, as 76% of Democrats, 78% of Republicans, and 64% of independents are volunteering today. More students who attend church at least once a month volunteer in their communities (80%) than those who rarely or never go to church (70%). Interestingly, there also appears to be a correlation between students who have been approached about public service and volunteering: 81% who have been approached are also volunteers, while only 66% of those who have not been approached report volunteering.
- We see a gender gap in students' interest in running for federal office as 35% of men say they would be interested, 16 points higher than women (19%). Regionally, college students in the South are nine points higher than average to express interest in running for federal office. Students with below-average family income (35%) are more interested than their wealthier counterparts (24%). Liberal college students (33%) report more interest in running for federal office than do moderate (22%) and conservative (24%) students. Students who believe that politics is relevant (36%) are more interested in running for office than those who disagree (12%). Talking to students about getting involved in public service also makes a difference, as students who have been approached (33%) are more interested in running for office than those who have not (20%).
- More college students are interested in running for local or state office (38%) than federal office (26%), and men show more interest (43%) than women (33%). While liberal students (44%) are more interested in federal office, conservatives (42%) are just as likely to be interested in running for local office; just 29% of moderates are interested. Again, almost half (49%) of students who say that politics is relevant are interested in local office, versus just 21% of those who disagree. Forty-two percent (42%) of students who volunteer in their communities are interested in local office, and students who have been approached about public service (46%) are more interested than those who have not (28%).

Jobs and Economy

College students are somewhat more optimistic about the nation's economy than in years past and a plurality still believe that they will be better off financially than their parents. Still, many worry about finding a good job after school. However, despite the belief that it is hard for most college students to find an acceptable job following graduation, a majority remain confident that they themselves will find such a job.

- College students' assessment of the nation's economy has improved over the past three years as a majority (54%) say that it is excellent or good, up from 51% in 2005 and just 40% in 2004. Still, the data suggest that not all groups praise the economy: in addition to significant breaks by party identification, those whose family income is below average (46%) are less likely than those with above-average incomes (61%) to feel that the economy is excellent or good. Additionally, men (62%) are more favorable to the nation's economy than are women (49%). Business majors (67%) offer the rosiest assessment.
- For the first time in history of the Panetta Institute survey, a majority of college students no longer believe that they will be financially better off than their parents; the past two years' majority (51% in both 2004 and 2005) has declined to a plurality (44%) in this survey. Underclassmen are less optimistic than upperclassmen, and those with below-average family incomes are more optimistic than those with above-average incomes. Not surprisingly, the better that college students feel about the economy, the better off they believe they will be.

PROPORTION WHO SAY THEY WILL BE FINANCIALLY BETTER OFF THAN THEIR PARENTS

	<u>%</u>
All students	44
Freshmen	36
Sophomores	42
Juniors	45
Seniors	52
Social Sciences	43
Humanities	23
Science/Math/CS	56
Family income: Below average	60
Family income: Average	46
Family income: Above average	33

- While college students' view of the economy has improved, they are most concerned about finding a job after graduation (31%), gas prices (26%), and tuition/student loans (26%). Women are most concerned about tuition/student loans (32%) while those in the social sciences are concerned about finding a job (41%). Business majors are most focused on gas prices (41%).
- In fact, 61% of college students worry very or somewhat often about finding a good-paying job, including 71% of those in the social sciences. Moreover, 61% say it is very or fairly hard for a recent college graduate to find an acceptable job in today's market. While this proportion is lower than in past surveys, it is still significant. Still, despite the worries they may have about finding a job, fully 72% are very or fairly confident that they will find an acceptable one.
- While other concerns are not as great for college students overall, they cause significant concern among certain groups. Overall, 46% of all college students worry about having too much student loan debt, but those with a below-average family income (62%) are more likely to worry about this than are their counterparts with average (54%) or above-average incomes (31%). Income also determines students' concern about health care. Thirty-six percent (36%) of all college students worry that they will not be able to afford health care, while 48% of students with a below-average family income do. While 34% overall worry about outsourcing of jobs preventing them from finding a good-paying job, 43% of business students find this to be concerning.

Careers

Over the course of the Panetta Institute surveys, we also have looked into perceptions about different careers. Today, more college students find teaching, or working for a non-profit or a public service organization to be of more interest as a career, while working for government is somewhat less so.

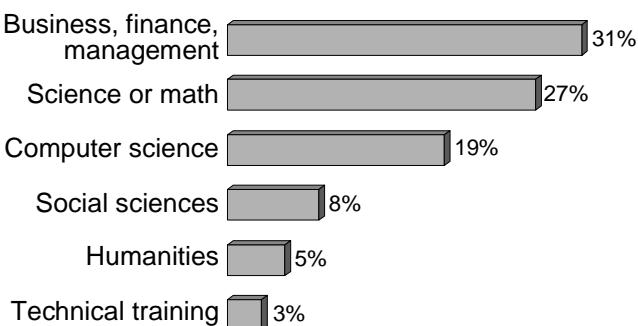
- Interest in teaching (45% very or fairly interested) or non-profit work (43%) have either remained the same or increased from past surveys, while interest in working for a public service organization (41%), government (34%), and serving in the military (8%) have declined.
 - Seniors are far and away the most interested in working for government (44%) while among all other classes—freshman (32%), sophomores (28%), and juniors (32%)—interest trails significantly. In addition, college students studying math, science, and computer science—areas that currently are in great demand—also are less interested in government (24%), than are students in the social sciences (49%) and business (42%).
 - Though the differences are less stark than among those interested in government work, seniors (48%) also are more likely than freshman (37%), sophomores (43%), and juniors (36%) to be interested in working for a public service organization. Women (48%) also are much more likely than men (33%) to be interested in this field of work. Other areas of fertile ground for public service include those in the social sciences (52%) and humanities (53%).

Global Economic Outlook

A broad majority (66%) of students feel that they are well prepared to compete with students from other countries for jobs in today's global economy. When asked to compare their preparedness in terms of the skills and overall education level to students' in six other countries—Russia, India, China, Germany, England, and Japan—a majority of students (52%) rate only Japan as better prepared. Students recommend business, finance, or management as majors that would best suit future students to compete with students from other countries in today's economy. Science and math come in a close second, at 27%.

Current Students' Recommendations To Future College Students

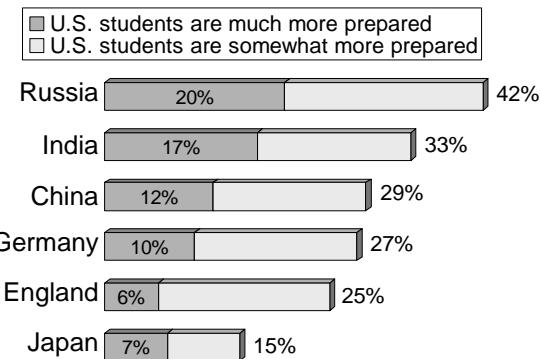
Which area of major would you advise for a young person entering college to best compete with students from other countries to get jobs in today's global economy?



- Two-thirds of all college students (66%) say that they are very or fairly prepared to compete with students from other countries in today's global economy. Asian students, however, are more split, as 51% say they are well prepared and 48% are just somewhat or not at all prepared. White (69%), Hispanic (63%), and African-American (58%) students are more optimistic about their preparedness. Seniors (59%) are slightly less optimistic than are juniors and underclassmen to say that they are well prepared. Private school students (77%) are more optimistic than are state school students (62%).

U.S. Students More Prepared Than International Counterparts

U.S. college students vs. students from other countries:
preparation for getting jobs in the global economy

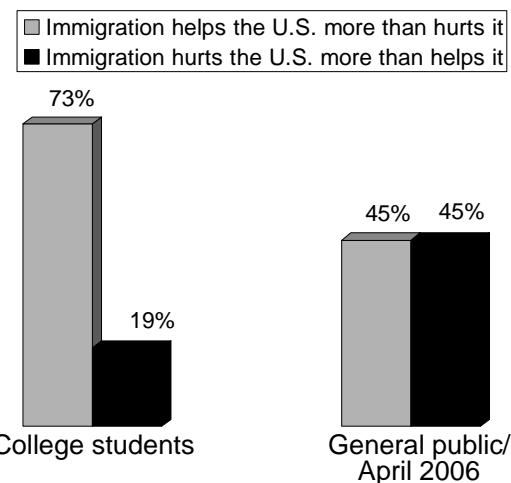


- While 52% of students say that they are less prepared than Japanese college students to compete for jobs in today's global economy, a majority of students say that they are as prepared or more prepared in terms of skills and their overall education than students from the five other countries tested. Forty-four percent (44%) of college students say that they are more prepared than Russian students and 28% are about as prepared. In comparison to Indian students, 34% say they are more prepared, 28% about as prepared, and 27% less prepared. Pluralities of students say they are as prepared as German students (36%) and English students (48%), while greater percentages are more prepared (28% and 25%, respectively) than less prepared (18% and 18%) than students from those two European competitors. China's emergence as a world economic superpower appears to be influencing U.S. students' perceptions of that country's college students, as 29% say they are more prepared than the Chinese, 26% about as prepared, and a 34% plurality are less prepared.

Immigration

College students are more accepting of immigration and more likely to view it as helpful to the country than the general public. According to a recent NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll, the general public is split 45% to 45% on whether immigration helps the United States more than it hurts it. College students, however, overwhelmingly say that it helps the country (73%), rather than hurts (19%). A majority (57%) of students also are concerned that restrictions on foreign students' ability to obtain student visas in the United States go too far and result in the loss of too many good students to other countries, while just 20% of the general public share this view, according to a recent survey from Pew Research. Conversely, fully 70% of the public feel that restrictions on student visas are worth it in order to prevent terrorists from getting into the country, while just 33% of college students agree.

College Students More Favorable Toward Immigration Than General Public



- Interestingly, college students in regions that are most affected by immigration from Mexico are most likely to hold the view that immigration helps the U.S. more than it hurts, as fully 79% say it helps more and just 12% say it hurts more. White students think immigration helps by 71% to 21%, which is somewhat less than

Hispanic (80% to 13%) and Asian students (85% to 11%). Not surprisingly, students' partisan affiliation plays a role in their view of the immigration debate; large majorities of Democrats say that immigration helps (80% to 14%) versus independents (70% to 19%) and Republicans (66% to 26%). College students who think that their generation's biggest problems are international are more likely to think that immigration helps (by 63 points) than are students who think the problems are domestic (50 points).

- Majorities of Democrats (68%) and independents (55%) feel that restrictions on student visas go too far, while 54% of Republicans think that restrictions are worth it. While half (50%) of students who think that the economy is in excellent or good shape say that student visa restrictions go too far, those who think that the economy is in trouble think that restrictions go too far by 65% to 25%.

Wiretapping

College students are far less accepting of the Bush administration's authorization of wiretapping than the general public, as just 35% of students approve, compared to a 51% majority of the public who approve, as was found in a recent NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll. Three in five college students disapprove of wiretapping American citizens without a warrant (62%), and this contrasts with the general public's slim majority of 51% approval. Similarly, while the same survey reports that 41% of the public think the Bush administration should be able to wiretap American citizens without a warrant, just 24% of college students agree and a 53% majority think that the administration should have a court order first. However, college students and the general public are equally weary of the Bush administration misusing wiretaps and invading peoples' privacy; 59% of students and 56% of the public are extremely or quite concerned.

- Among students who say they will vote Democratic in the 2006 congressional elections, three-fourths disapprove of wiretapping American citizens (77%), whereas college students who say they will vote Republican in this fall's elections approve of the practice by greater than two to one (66% to 31%). College students who say they are undecided—who realistically are less likely to vote at all in the next election—look a lot more like Democratic voters with a net disapproval of the Bush administration's wiretapping of 25 points (35% approve to

60% disapprove).

- While a majority of college conservatives (52%) feel that the Bush administration should have a court order before wiretapping, 70% of moderates and fully 86% of liberals hold this view. College students who are undecided on how they would vote in the next congressional election look much closer to Democratic students than Republicans, as seen in the following graph.

2006 Vote and Wiretapping		
	<u>Should Be Able To Wiretap</u>	<u>Should Get A Court Order First</u>
	%	%
Voting for Democrat	14	85
Voting for Republican	50	48
Undecided	24	70

- A plurality (40%) of college students are quite concerned that the Bush administration's wiretapping will be misused to violate peoples' privacy and 19% are very concerned. White students are less concerned than are minorities, as 54% of white students are very or quite concerned and 45% are not very or not at all concerned, compared to Hispanic students (68% very/quite), African-American students (66%), and Asian students (68%).

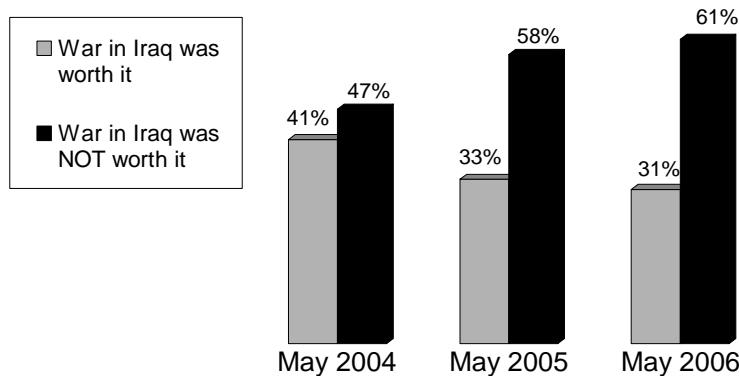
Iraq

College students are increasingly concerned about the Iraq war. A majority follow news about the war very or fairly closely (58%), and just 9% do not follow it closely at all. Over the past two years, the proportion of students who say that the U.S. should not have taken military action in Iraq has increased from 37% in 2004 to 39% in 2005 and up to 44% today. Just 31% of students now say that removing Saddam Hussein from power was worth the war's financial cost and military casualties, down from 41% in 2004 and nine points lower than the general public (40% worth it) in a recent NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll. If anything, students are slightly more hawkish on Iraq than the public in terms of their desire for troop levels in Iraq. While they do not differ on whether to send more troops (7% students, compared to 8% of the general public in a recent Gallup

Research survey) or keep the level as it is now (25% students and adults), students prefer a moderate approach of withdrawing some troops (44% students, 36% general public) rather than withdrawing them all (19% students, 28% adults).

Declining Support For War In Iraq

Was removing Saddam Hussein from power worth the number of U.S. military casualties and the financial cost of the war?



- A majority of college students follow news about the war very or fairly closely (57%), while another 33% follow somewhat closely, and just 9% say not that closely. Students in the South (62% very/fairly) follow the news about Iraq more closely than do students in the rest of the country (55%). Sixty-three percent (63%) of students who study social sciences and 64% who study humanities closely follow Iraq news, more than their fellow students studying science, math, and computer science (51%) and business (54%). Interestingly, students who think politics is relevant today are significantly more likely to follow the news about the war (70%), compared to 40% who say politics is not relevant.
- Majorities of students in the Midwest (51%) and South (58%) support military action, while students are split in the Mountain/West area (47% to 47%) and are more anti-war in the Northeast (53% say should not have taken military action). Party identification shows a predictable storyline: Democrats are more anti-war with a 22-point difference favoring not taking action, independents are more split with 42% in favor of military action and 49% not in favor, and Republicans are heavily in favor of the war with fully 81% saying they support military action.
- However, students do not think that the Iraq war has been worth the

cost and casualties; only 31% say that it has been worth it while 61% disagree. Students with below-average family incomes feel more strongly that the war has not been worth it—by 41 points—than do students with average family incomes (31 points) and students with above-average family incomes (26 points). Among liberals, 83% say that the war was not worth it, versus 62% of conservatives who say that it was.

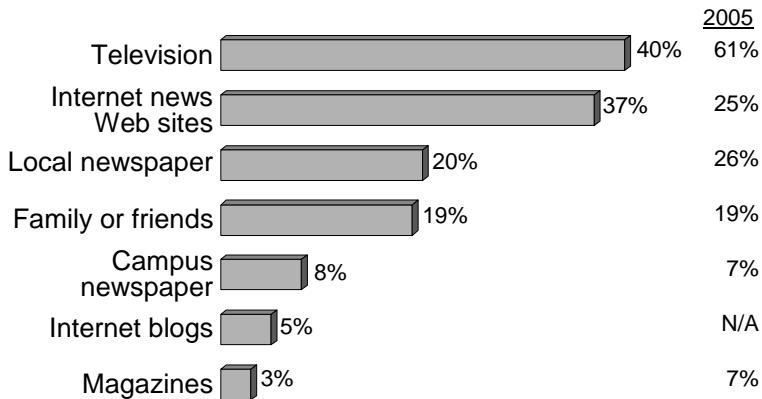
- Most college students want American troops to be withdrawn from Iraq, including a 44% plurality who want some troops withdrawn and 19% who want all withdrawn. Looking at the next congressional election, 75% of those who say they will vote for the Democratic candidate want troops withdrawn and 22% want to send more troops or keep the level as it is today. Yet 51% of students who will vote for a Republican candidate want to keep the troop level as it is or send more, and 46% want withdrawal. Among undecided voters, 59% want to bring at least some troops home and just one in three (33%) wants to send more or keep levels the same. Students' preference for President in 2008 has little correlation with troop level; 74% of students who say they would vote for Senator Clinton want to withdraw troops, while even 50% of Senator McCain supporters agree.

News Consumption

For the first time since Hart Research began asking college students about their primary source of news on politics and civic affairs, Internet news sites are legitimately challenging the television as students' first choice for information. In 2001, 29% of students cited the Internet, 26% in 2002, and 25% in 2004; now it is 37% of students' top one or two sources of information on current events. Television, on the other hand, has fallen somewhat precipitously to 40% from a high of 61% in 2004 (it still ranked first in 2002 with 46% and in 2001 with 51%). Community or city newspapers (20%) still provide a similar proportion of students' top two news options as in years past: 26% in 2004, 25% in 2002, and 21% in 2001. Family or friends (19%) rate slightly less, and just 8% of students get their politics and civic affairs news from campus newspapers, 5% from Internet blogs, and 3% from magazines.

College Students' Sources Of News

*Where do you get most of your information
about politics and civic affairs?*



- For men, Internet news Web sites are the top source of news at 41%, barely edging out television at 40%. Women still rely on television (39%) by six points over the Internet (33%). For Asian college students, the Internet (43%) is the clear leader among sources of news, 13 points higher than television (30%). First-year students also prefer the Internet (42%) over television (36%).