

2009 Survey Of America's College Students

Conducted On Behalf Of:
The Panetta Institute For Public Policy

By Hart Research Associates

May 2009

Hart Research Associates
1724 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20009
ph: 202-234-5570

Table Of Contents

I.	Methodology	2
II.	The State Of The Nation	2
III.	Attitudes Toward Government	7
IV.	Barack Obama.....	8
V.	Public And Community Service.....	9
	▪ Specific Careers	9
	▪ Aspects Of Public Service Careers	11
	▪ Attitudes to Public Service Organizations and Legislation....	11
VI.	The 2008 Election	12
	▪ Political Involvement	16
VII.	The Economy And Employment Outlook	17
	▪ Overall Economic Outlook	17
	▪ Government Involvement	18
	▪ Employment Outlook.....	19
	▪ Post-College Plans And Concerns.....	20
	▪ Prized Job Qualities	21

Hart Research Associates

Methodology

This report analyzes the findings of a survey among American college students conducted by Hart Research Associates for the Panetta Institute for Public Policy. Since 2001, the Panetta Institute has sponsored a yearly survey among U.S. college students that yields 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.

In an effort to reach a more representative sample of college students, the survey's methodology consists of interviews conducted by telephone and online. Hart Research interviewed 505 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; approximately one-half of the telephone respondents were reached 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 518 interviews were completed online, for a total combined sample of 1,023 college students. All interviews, whether by phone or online, were conducted from April 6 to 9, and April 13 to 16, 2009. No interviews were conducted over the Good Friday/Easter weekend. Some demographics were weighted in each sample to achieve representative samples of four-year college students nationwide. The margin of error is ± 3.1 percentage points for the overall sample and higher for specific subgroups.

The State Of The Nation

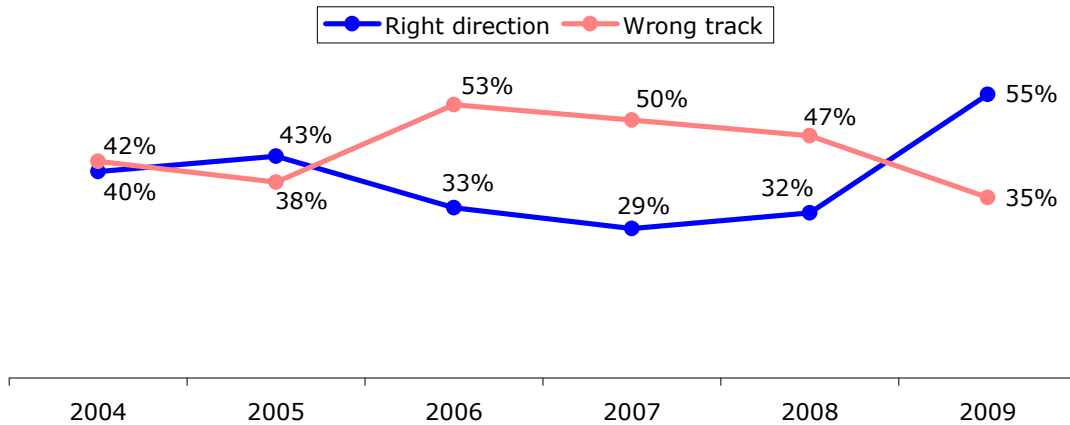
Despite the challenging issues facing the country, college students have dramatically shifted their views on the direction of the country and offer a much more positive outlook. A large part of this sea change in attitudes from last year's survey can be attributed to the 2008 election and subsequent change in administrations, which has in turn led college students to a dramatically more positive opinion of the country's political leadership. Still, college students have real concerns about the future of the country, particularly on the economic front. Related, college students believe that the country's problems are much more likely to be focused on national rather than international issues.

A majority of college students say that the country is headed in the right direction (55%), while 35% say things are off on the wrong track. This marks a significant shift in

Hart Research Associates

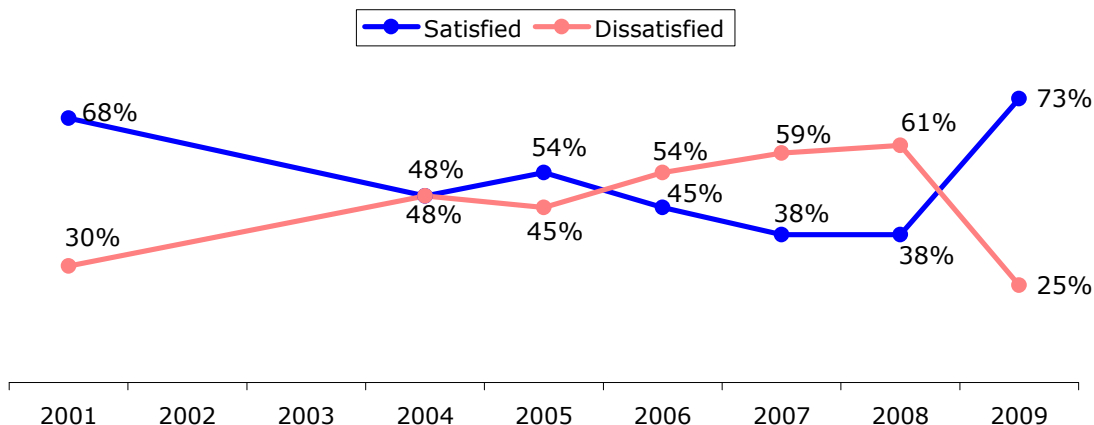
attitudes from last year's Panetta Institute survey, when a large plurality (47%) said things were off on the wrong track. In fact, this year's survey is the first time that a majority of college students believe that the country is headed in the right direction.

Direction Of The Nation



Clearly, the 2008 presidential election was a landmark moment for the country, and this is particularly the case for college students. The outcome of the election undoubtedly had an impact on how college students view the direction of the country, and we also find a marked transformation in how satisfied college students are with the country's political leadership. In last year's survey, just 38% said that they were satisfied with the country's political leadership. Today, this proportion has more than doubled, with fully 73% saying that they are satisfied with the country's political leadership—the highest measure recorded in the poll's history. The previous high was 68% in early 2001. Democrats (88% satisfied) and independents (70%) are more likely to be satisfied with the country's political leadership, while Republicans are divided (48% satisfied, 51% dissatisfied).

Satisfaction With The Country's Political Leadership

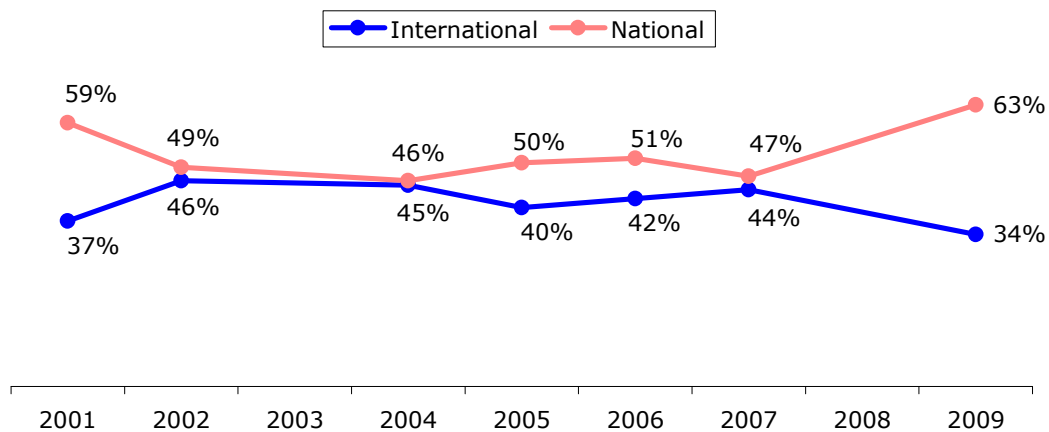


Hart Research Associates

While attitudes about the direction of the country have improved, college students offer a more tempered assessment about the future: they are much more likely to be uncertain and concerned about the future of the country (58%) than confident and secure (39%). Still, compared with last year, there is a 13-point increase in the proportion who are confident and secure, and this is the highest proportion measured since this question was first asked, going back to 2004.

Along with a major positive change in attitudes about the country's direction, college students have dramatically shifted their view of where the problems their generation will face are likely to come from. In 2007, 47% said that most of the problems would be national while 44% said they would be international in scope. Today, fully 63% say the problems will be national and 34% say international. As the following chart shows, this is the biggest divide ever measured on this question, and the strong focus on national issues looks similar to the result from the initial Panetta Institute survey in 2001. Significantly, that survey was conducted before the events of September 11th, which like the 2008 election, was a seminal moment in the lives of college students.

Scope Of Problems Facing Your Generation



When students are asked to speak in their own words about what they look for from their political leaders, they send two messages, and both are focused on the domestic front—(A) a focus on education and (B) a focus on the economy and job creation. College students are looking for the country's leaders to improve education and make it more affordable, and more specifically, to help with student aid and student loans. On the economic front, college students are looking for the country's leaders to fix the financial problems facing the country and create more jobs. Related, a significant proportion of students call on the country's leadership to be more efficient with the country's finances and end the practice of bailing out private companies.

Economic concerns clearly are top of mind for college students, as with the general

Hart Research Associates

public. When asked to rate a series of issues based on how high a priority each one should be for Congress and the president to address, the results match what college students say in their own words: four of the top six issues have a financial component to them. These priorities include providing more Americans with access to health care (78% say very top or high priority), helping reduce the burden of college student loans (67%), providing assistance to low-income families with children (65%), and increasing government regulation of the financial markets (57%). Other top-rated priorities include hiring more teachers and reducing class sizes (70%) and promoting human rights abroad (57%). Significant partisan divisions exist on many of the issue priorities, with the most pronounced disparities between Democrats and Republicans on providing more Americans with access to health care, addressing global warming, and putting less emphasis on prison for drug offenders. In all three instances, Democrats are much more likely to cite these issues as a greater priority than are Republicans. Conversely, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say that dealing with immigration and strengthening the military are high priorities.

Priorities To Address				
<i>Proportion Who Say "Very Top Priority" Or "A High Priority"</i>				
	<u>All College</u>	<u>Demo-</u>	<u>Independ-</u>	<u>Repub-</u>
	<u>Students</u>	<u>crats</u>	<u>ents</u>	<u>licans</u>
	%	%	%	%
Providing more Americans with access to health care	78	88	82	56
Hiring more teachers and reducing class sizes	70	72	72	64
Helping reduce the burden of college student loans	67	74	60	60
Providing assistance to low-income families with children	65	70	71	48
Increasing government regulation of the financial markets	57	68	54	40
Promoting human rights abroad	57	64	56	47
Addressing global warming	55	70	54	28
Dealing with the problem of the global AIDS epidemic	49	57	48	36
Dealing with immigration	47	42	41	62
Expanding trade with other nations	47	49	36	52
Strengthening the military and improving preparedness	45	37	38	63
Giving parents more choice in where they send their kids to school	39	33	45	44
Putting less emphasis on prison for drug offenders, and more on drug-treatment programs	35	40	41	23
Strengthening legal protections for gays and lesbians	35	48	38	9

Hart Research Associates

Many of these issue priorities also were asked in the 2001 and/or 2002 Panetta Institute surveys. Some of the priorities have shifted significantly over time. Of note, the issue of addressing global warming has increased in priority over time (41% high/top priority in 2002 to 55% in 2009). Upperclassmen (seniors 62%, juniors 58%) are more likely to rate global warming as a high/top priority than underclassmen (freshman 48%; sophomores 50%). Women (61%) and Democrats (70%) also are more likely to cite this than men (47%) and Republicans (28%), while independents are in the middle (54%). Expanding trade with other nations also is a greater priority today than in prior Panetta Institute polling (37% top/high priority in 2002 to 47% in 2009). Items that have dropped significantly include dealing with the problem of the global AIDS epidemic (70% in 2001 to 49% in 2009) and putting less emphasis on prison for drug offenders and more on drug-treatment programs (52% in 2001 to 35% in 2009). Strengthening legal protections for gays and lesbians also has declined from 43% in 2001 to 35% today.

In addition to the economy and education, health care also is a top concern for college students, as it is for the nation at large. When it comes to who should take the lead on health care, college students are divided: 40% prefer that the federal government take responsibility to ensure that Americans have health insurance coverage, while 36% prefer that employers and businesses take the lead, and another 18% say that individuals themselves should have the most responsibility. Across demographic groups, attitudes on who should take responsibility are far from uniform. The following table shows that women, students in the Northeast, and Democrats are among the demographic groups that are more supportive of the federal government taking the lead role, while Republicans and those who are majoring in business are more likely to say that employers should take the lead.

Responsibility For Health Care			
	<u>Federal Government</u>	<u>Employers</u>	<u>Individuals</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
All students	40	36	18
Men	33	37	23
Women	45	34	15
Northeast	53	28	17
South	32	40	20
Midwest	39	35	18
West	40	36	19
Whites	34	38	22
Hispanics	47	29	13
African Americans	54	33	8
Asians	55	28	13
Social sciences	50	24	17
Humanities	47	31	14
Science/math/CS	38	36	19
Business	34	42	20
Income: Below avg.	48	31	14
Income: Avg.	39	42	14
Income: Above avg.	37	34	24
Democrats	54	29	12
Independents	33	39	16
Republicans	19	45	32
Confident in finding job	37	38	19
Not confident in finding job	45	32	17

Attitudes Toward Government

College students would like to see government do more to solve problems, but do not closely identify with government.

By two to one (65% to 31%) college students would like to see a more activist government that is doing more. College students also are more likely than the general public to prefer a government that is more involved. In a February 2009 NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll, 51% of all adults said they prefer that government do more, while 40% say it is doing too many things. The results among college students essentially are unchanged from the 2007 Panetta Institute survey when the proportion was 64% to 27%. This feeling is felt across the board, with the exception of Republicans, among whom a majority (56%) say that government is doing too many things.

While support is strong for a more activist government, college students still see government as THE government (62%) rather than OUR government (37%), and this also is similar to the 2001 result (60% to 39%). Those who are more likely to consider government to be THE government include college students who attend a religious

Hart Research Associates

institution (74%), those who attend a private school (68%), those who are dissatisfied with the country's political leadership (69%), and men (67%). Liberals (44%) are more likely than other subgroups to consider government as OUR government.

Barack Obama

Barack Obama receives broad support on college campuses. College students are overwhelmingly supportive and believe that he will bring real change to Washington. However, as the president alluded to in a recent press conference, the country faces many challenges and obstacles that lie ahead, which may lower his support among college students, as well as the general public.

Barack Obama's job rating stands at 75% among college students, and this compares favorably to the relatively high 61% approval rating he receives from the general public in a recent NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll. Consider that in last year's Panetta Institute survey, George W. Bush's job rating stood at 25%. Not only does this comparison help explain the change in attitudes among college students about the country's political leadership, but also the new sense of optimism and hope despite the challenging times. Among college students, 92% of Democrats and 76% of independents approve of the job that Obama is doing, with Republicans divided (44% approve, 48% disapprove). While Republicans are divided, consider that in last year's survey, just 6% of Democrats approved of the job that George W. Bush was doing as president. Among African Americans, 92% approve of the job that Obama is doing.

College students' optimism that Barack Obama will bring real change to the country is evident in the proportion who believe that the country is headed in the right direction and satisfaction with the country's political leadership today. Two in three (66%) college students say it is very or fairly likely that Obama will bring real change in direction to the country, which is comparable to the proportion (61%) of all adults saying so in a March 2009 NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll. Men (59%) are less likely to say that this is the case than are women (72%). Similar partisan divides exist, as 82% of Democrats say that Obama is likely to bring real change, as well as 63% of independents, while only 41% of Republicans feel similarly.

However, while college students are overwhelmingly supportive of Barack Obama at this point, he faces many challenges, not the least of which is how to handle Afghanistan. While 80% approve of Barack Obama's decision to pull American troops out of Iraq, college students are not as supportive when it comes to his plan to increase the number of troops in Afghanistan. In fact, 50% disapprove of this endeavor, while 44% approve. There is a definite gender gap here, as men are more likely to approve (55% to 41%) while women

Hart Research Associates

disapprove (35% to 57%). We also see a reversal in attitudes by party: Democrats are more likely to disapprove of this policy (41% approve, 54% disapprove) while Republicans approve by 53% to 41%, and independents are more negative than Democrats on this measure (36% approve, 55% disapprove).

Public And Community Service

While Barack Obama clearly has inspired college students and provides them with hope in terms of the direction of the country, his leadership has not yet made a meaningful impact on college students and their desire to become more involved in public service.

Specific Careers

Interest in specific public service careers looks much like it has in the past, with a few key differences—namely a steady, stable rise of interest in government work and a continued decline of interest in teaching.

Overall, working for a *socially responsible* corporation after graduation continues to be the most appealing career, with half (49%) of students at least fairly interested in pursuing this type of job after graduation.

Students also are interested in government work, with 38% at least fairly interested in pursuing a government job after college. Although unchanged from 2008, interest in pursuing a government career has slowly climbed from just 26% who were very or fairly interested in 2001 to its current level. Men (43%) are more likely than women (34%) to be interested in working in government, and minorities (Hispanics, 48%; African Americans, 45%; and Asians, 46%) are more interested in government work than are whites (34%). In terms of areas of concentration, those in the social sciences (53%) are significantly more likely to be interested in working in government than are those in other concentrations.

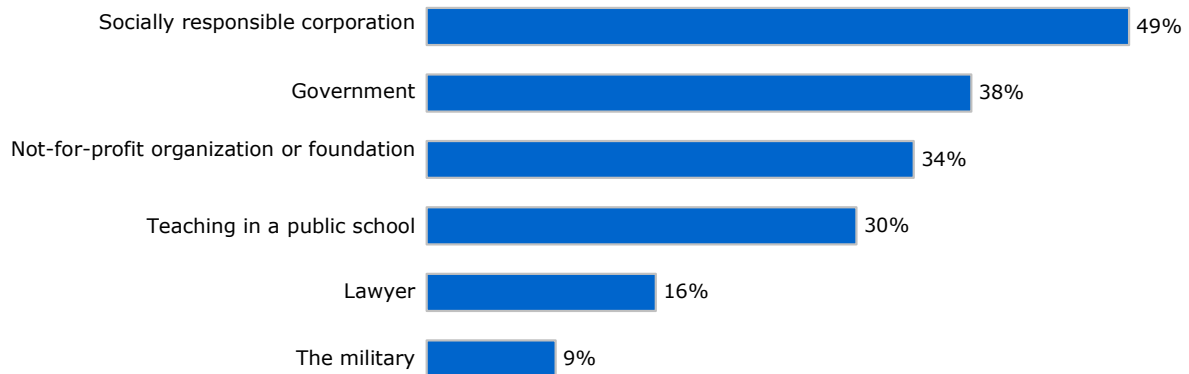
One in three (34%) students is interested in working for a not-for-profit community organization or foundation—a slight drop since 2008 (6 points), but roughly on par with past years (2007, 35%; 2005, 38%).

Interest in becoming a lawyer after graduation dropped six points this year, with 16% of students very or fairly interested.

Finally, one in 10 (9%) students says they are at least fairly interested in serving in the military after college, a level of interest that has remained constant since 2005.

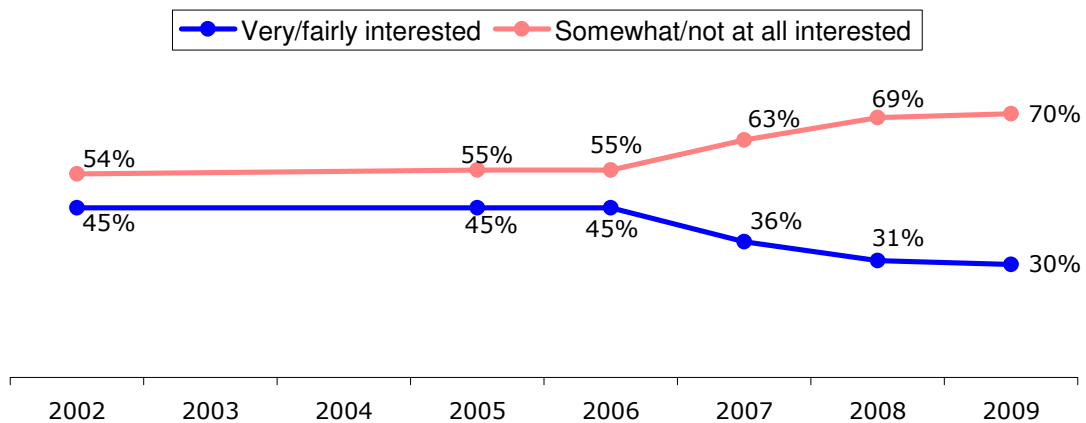
Interest In Specific Careers

% saying they are very/fairly interested in pursuing after college



Interest in teaching after graduation remains relatively low, after dropping sharply over the past two years. From 2002 to 2006, interest in teaching remained relatively constant (see chart below), but dropped nine points in 2007 and another six points since.¹

Interest In Teaching In A Public School



Looking beyond the aggregate 15-point drop since 2005, there is significant variation by certain key subgroups. Among social science majors, interest dropped only six points since 2005, while the drop is more significant among math and science majors (18 points) and humanities majors (17 points). Also a concerning trend, interest among juniors and seniors—who historically have been most interested in teaching—dropped considerably more than interest among lowerclassmen: a 19-point drop among juniors, a 23-point drop among seniors, and a nine-point drop among lowerclassmen.

¹ Prior to 2008, students were asked about their general interest in “teaching.” However, starting in 2008 students were asked more specifically about their interest in “teaching in a public school.”

Hart Research Associates

Aspects Of Public Service Careers

When it comes to working for government or a public service organization, the most appealing aspects are those that offer security. Fully 40% of students say job security (40%) and health and retirement benefits (37%) are the most appealing aspects about public service work. Interestingly, one in four (23%) students says opportunities for educational training and career growth are the most appealing aspects.

Students also believe the opportunity to give back to their community is quite appealing. One in five (20%) students says that providing critical services to citizens and communities is the most appealing reason, and 16% say being able to serve their country is appealing.

On other hand, college students are most concerned that decisions will be based on politics instead of merit (44%), that there will be too much bureaucracy (29%), and that the pay will be low (23%)

Turning to other significant concerns about working in government or a public service organization, 19% worry that the work will not be interesting, 18% are concerned that poor performers will not be dismissed, while another 10% are concerned that there will be few opportunities for career advancement.

Attitudes to Public Service Organizations and Legislation

One in three (31%) students say they have considered pursuing a service-oriented experience after graduation, such as Teach for America, VISTA, or AmeriCorps. Interest varies considerably by major, with half (49%) of humanities and 43% of social science majors saying they have considered joining these programs, compared with just 25% of science and math majors and 21% of business majors. Also of note, more juniors (31%) and seniors (38%) have considered service-oriented programs than lowerclassmen (27%). Finally, more students from private schools (39%) have considered these programs than students from public schools (29%).

Students were told of a proposed program that would require college students to perform 100 hours of public service each year in exchange for a \$4,000 per year tax credit. Students overwhelmingly support the plan, as four in five (79%) believe it is a good idea (45% strongly) and only one in five (18%) believes it is a bad idea. Across party lines, Democrats are most supportive of the plan (85%), followed by independents (74%), and Republicans (72%). Strong support across different family income levels is evident, with students from lower-income families the most supportive of the proposed program (85%), followed closely by students from average- (79%) and upper-income families (76%).

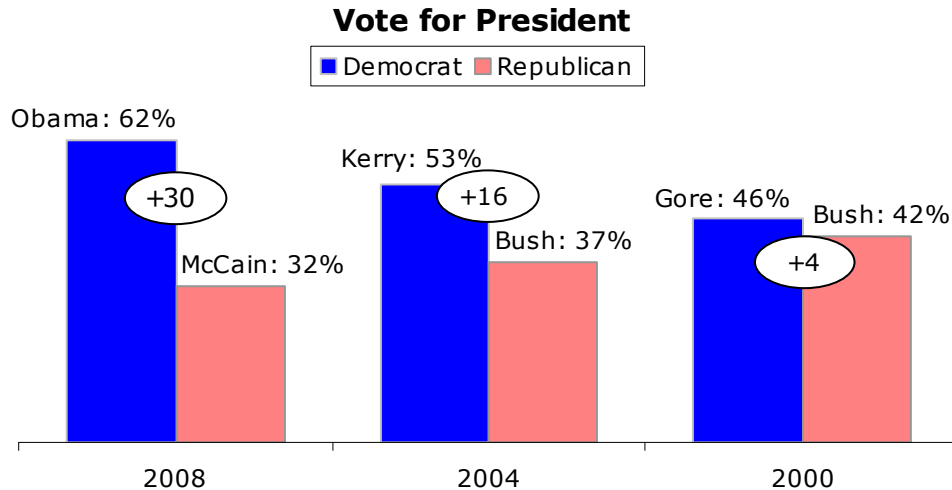
The 2008 Election

The 2008 election was a landmark election for the country overall and particularly on college campuses. The proportion of college students who report being registered to vote and who say they voted in 2008 is slightly lower than we found in the 2005 Panetta Institute survey, but slightly higher than we found in 2001. However, what makes the 2008 election so remarkable is Barack Obama's overwhelming margin of victory among college students. Related, since the 2005 Panetta Institute survey we have found a greater partisan divide, with more college students identifying as Democrats rather than Republicans. Another interesting aspect of the 2008 election is the focus that new media and online communications received. College students now rate Internet news Web sites as their top source for news about politics and civic affairs, when in the past, television had been their primary source for such information.

Fully 86% of college students report that they currently are registered to vote. This marks an increase from 79% who said they were registered in last year's Panetta Institute survey, and is close to the 2005 and 2001 survey results (88% and 83%, respectively).

Three in four (75%) college students report that they voted in the 2008 election, which is slightly less than reported voting in the 2004 Panetta Institute poll (78%) and slightly more than reported voting in 2000 (72%). Asians are significantly less likely to say that they voted (46%), as are freshman (70%), those who attend a college with a religious affiliation (68%), and independents (59%).

While the proportion of college students who reported voting is on par with previous Panetta Institute surveys, what is truly remarkable is Barack Obama's margin of victory over John McCain. In 2000, Al Gore beat George W. Bush by four points (46% to 42%), and in 2004, John Kerry widened the margin among college students to 16 points (53% to 37%). However, Barack Obama nearly doubled John Kerry's spread by defeating John McCain by 62% to 32%—a 30-point victory among college students. This margin of victory tracks with exit polling of all 18- to 29-year-olds, among whom Barack Obama won by an even larger 66%-to-32% spread.



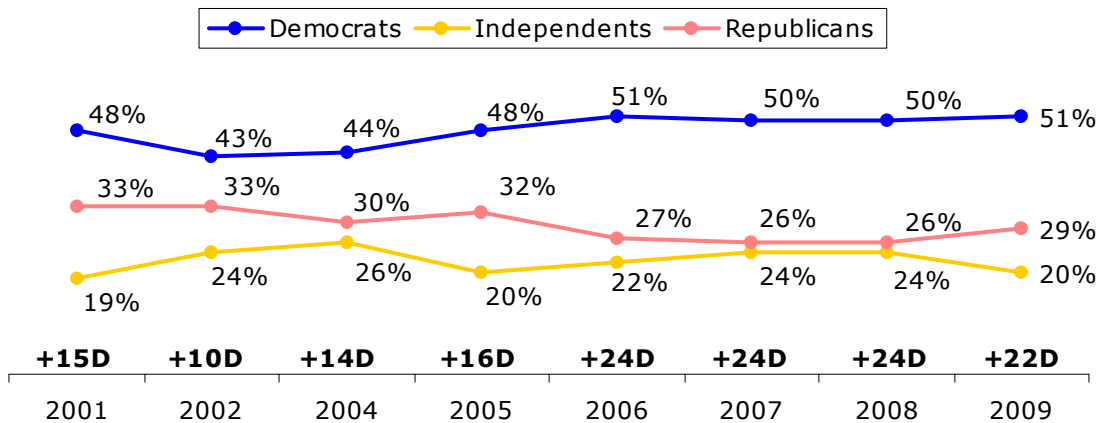
Subgroups tell the story of the election. The table on the following page shows the results of the 2008 Panetta Institute poll compared with the 2009 reported vote in this year's poll. While the results between the 2008 trial heat and the reported vote in 2009 are quite similar in most instances, particularly striking are the results among independents. In the 2008 Panetta Institute survey, Barack Obama held a 49%-to-26% lead over John McCain, with a significant proportion of independents undecided. However, the reported vote among independents in this year's survey gives Obama a 64%-to-22% advantage over McCain. When the middle of the electorate swings to one candidate with a spread of this magnitude, it is easy to understand how Barack Obama carried the day among college students.

Hart Research Associates

Presidential Trial Heats By Subgroup 2008/2009 Comparison				
	2008 Obama	2008 McCain	2009 Obama	2009 McCain
	%	%	%	%
All college students	59	27	62	32
Freshman	NA	NA	55	38
Sophomores (2008 Fresh.)	62	26	61	34
Juniors (2008 Soph.)	62	24	65	30
Seniors (2008 Juniors)	57	28	64	29
Social sciences	65	27	66	29
Humanities	62	22	65	29
Science/math/CS	57	30	61	33
Business	60	26	56	38
Men	58	29	54	39
Women	60	25	68	27
Northeast	64	21	69	27
South	62	24	56	35
Midwest	53	34	54	40
West	57	27	72	26
Whites	51	33	54	40
Hispanics	79	19	71	25
African Americans	87	4	90	6
Asians	68	17	83	10
Income: Below average	64	24	69	27
Income: Average	59	27	64	29
Income: Above average.	57	27	58	37
Democrats	87	6	88	8
Independents	49	26	64	22
Republicans	15	68	16	80
Church: Never	68	19	77	17
Church: Occasionally	67	22	68	27
Church: At least once/month	50	35	49	45

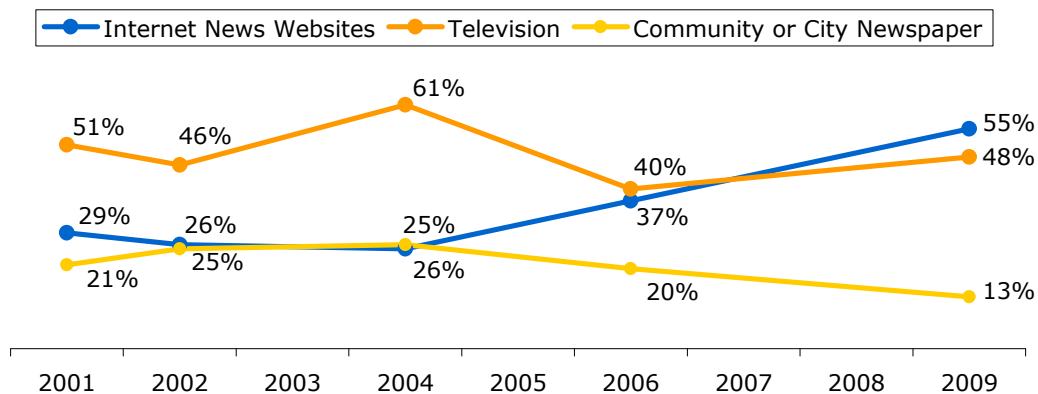
Tracking party identification over the history of the Panetta Institute survey shows a significant shift toward identification with the Democratic Party. Going back to the first survey in 2001, college students consistently have been more likely to identify themselves as Democrats; however, a significant shift in attitudes can be seen between the 2005 and 2006 surveys. Since 2006, a majority of college students identify with the Democratic Party, and the differential between the Democratic and Republican parties has grown from an average of 14 points from 2001 through 2005 to 24 points from 2006 to today.

Party Identification



In addition to a shift toward the Democratic Party, we also find that college students are turning more to the Internet for news about politics and civic affairs. Today, Internet news Web sites rank as the top source for college students, with 55% saying this is where they get most of their information. This is the first time that Internet news sites have overtaken television (48%), the traditional top news source. In another sign of the changing times, reliance on community or city newspapers has declined nearly in half from a high of 26% in 2004 to just 13% today.

Source Of Information



In looking at subgroup preferences between Internet news Web sites and television, men are more likely to prefer the Internet (62%) to television (48%), while women are divided (50% prefer Internet to 47% prefer television). Obama voters are more likely to prefer the Internet (60%) to television (46%), while McCain voters are more divided (53% prefer the Internet to 48% who prefer television). Asians are more likely to turn to the Internet (67%) than television (43%).

While 27% say that they turn to family and friends about politics and civic affairs,

Hart Research Associates

which actually is an increase from 2006, fewer college students report that they frequently discussed politics with their parents before they started college. Today, 43% say they discussed politics with their parents very or fairly often compared with 50% who said this was the case in 2001. This trend seems to correlate with political activity. For example, among those who are registered to vote, 45% report that they frequently discussed politics with their parents while only 32% of those who are not registered to vote say that this was the case.

Political Involvement

One in 10 (10%) students say they volunteered for a political campaign or organization during the 2008 election. This result is roughly on par with the 2004 election (9% volunteered), though higher than the 2001 election (6%).

Among students who volunteered for a campaign, half (50%) report volunteering on a presidential campaign. This is substantially different from the 2000 election, where just 28% said they worked for a presidential campaign. Among these volunteers, Obama campaign supporters vastly outnumber McCain supporters by nine to one (45% to 5%). This significant finding suggests that nearly 5% of all college students nationwide volunteered for the Obama campaign in 2008.

In addition to the presidential campaign, students volunteered for a variety of political races and campaigns. Among the 10% who volunteered for a political campaign or organization during the 2008 election, one in five (21%) reports volunteering on a state or local race, 8% volunteered for a U.S. House race, and 7% for a U.S. Senate race. Finally, among those who did volunteer, 17% volunteered with a group concerned with a particular issue campaign, and another 7% say they volunteered in other ways.

Three in four (77%) students volunteering in 2008 describe the experience as very (45%) or fairly (32%) rewarding. Only 22% say the experience was just somewhat rewarding, and no students surveyed described their experience as not at all rewarding.

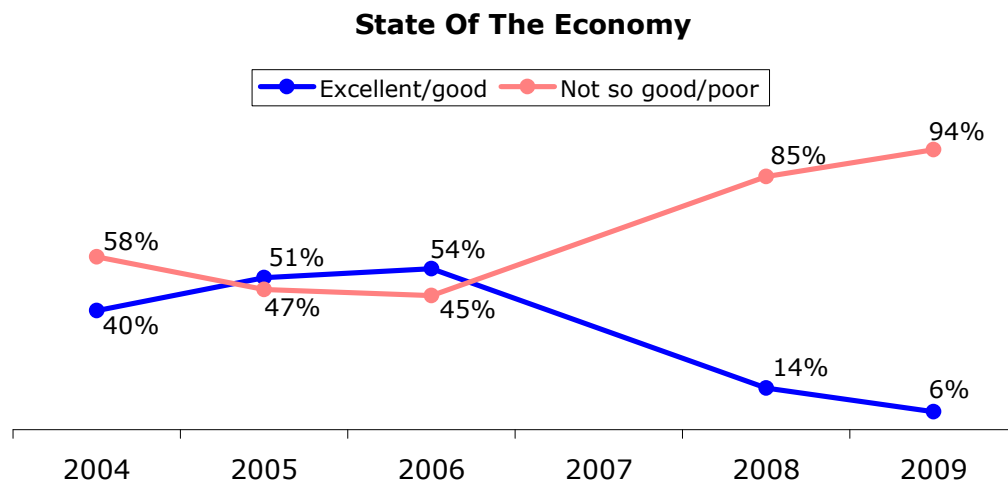
Students' interest in running for elected office remains in decline despite the political enthusiasm that the Obama campaign brought to young people this year. Interest in running for federal office has dropped slowly (down seven points) since 2001, with just one in four (24%) students interested. In years past, interest in running for state or local office was considerably higher than interest in running for federal office. However, interest in running for state or local office (28%) this year is only somewhat higher than interest in running for federal office.

The Economy And Employment Outlook

Like the country at large, college students are deeply pessimistic about the economy. Still, many college students remain optimistic about their personal financial future, even though most believe it will take a long time to recover from the current recession. Confidence in finding a job after college slipped some over the past years, but remains relatively high.

Overall Economic Outlook

Since the first Panetta Institute survey in 2001, confidence in the state of the economy has never hit such low levels. Today, only 6% of students describe the economy as excellent (less than 1%) or good (6%), while fully 94% say the economy is not so good (57%) or poor (37%). As the following chart illustrates, in the spring of 2006 a majority of students believed that the state of the economy was in excellent or good shape, but in 2008 this optimism dropped sharply to just 14%, and dropped further still this year.



College students' lack of confidence in the economy resembles that of adults nationwide: a *Washington Post*/ABC News poll ending roughly at the same time as the Panetta Institute survey found that just 7% of adults believe the economy is excellent or good, while 93% believe it is not so good or poor.

Despite economic concerns, a plurality (45%) of college students believe that they will end up financially better off than their parents, down just two points from last year. A significant 41% of students believe they will end up about the same as their parents financially—up eight points from last year—and just 14% believe they will end up worse off than their parents, the same as last year but up considerably over the past five years.

Students' attitudes toward their financial future vary considerably by family income. A strong majority (61%) of students from lower-income families and half (50%) of students from average-income families believe they will be better off than their parents. By contrast,

Hart Research Associates

only one-third (31%) of students from above-average-income families believe they will be better off, and 19% believe they will be worse off—eight points higher than below- and average-income families.

Two-thirds (68%) of students overall believe that it will take the country a long time to recover from the current economic downturn, with only 29% believing the economy will recover relatively quickly. Subtle partisan differences exist, with Democrats (71%) and independents (69%) the most concerned that the economy is in long-term trouble, while Republicans are less concerned (62%). Students from below-average-income families overwhelmingly believe that the economy is in long-term trouble (75%), with somewhat fewer students from average- (67%) and above-average-income families (64%) expressing the same belief.

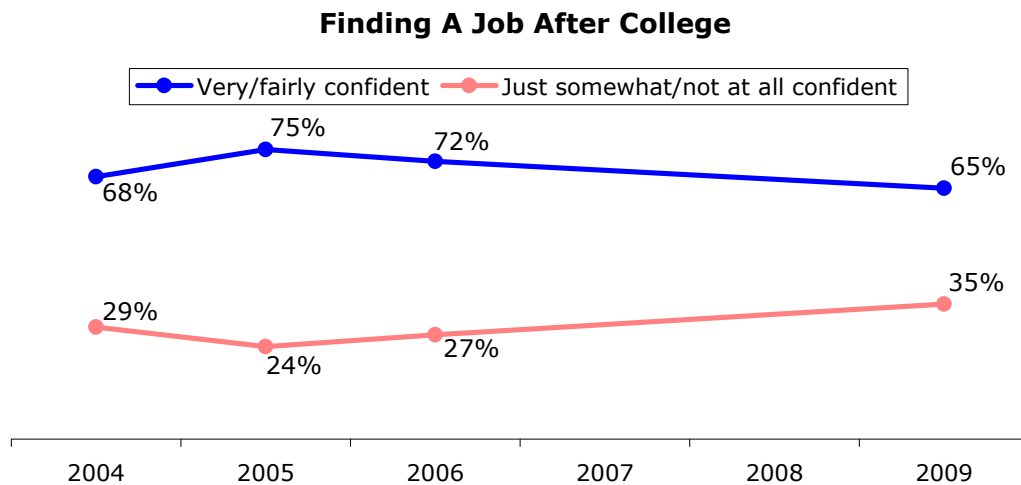
Government Involvement

When it comes to the recently passed economic stimulus legislation, students have a mixed view on whether or not it is a good idea. Just one-third (32%) of students say the legislation was a good idea, while 28% believe it was a bad idea—a plurality (37%) of students say they do not have an opinion on the subject. Democrats are most favorable to the legislation (44% good idea, 14% bad idea), with independents divided (25% good idea, 28% bad idea), and Republicans clearly opposing the legislation (16% good idea, 53% bad idea).

Examining students' views of the stimulus legislation further, we see that fully 71% are more concerned that the federal government will spend *too much* money and raise the deficit while trying to boost the economy rather than spend *too little* money and prolong the recession (27%). This is a surprising finding given that in general college students are supportive of government taking a more activist role. Republicans are the most concerned (86%) that the federal government will spend too much on the stimulus, but independents (71%) and Democrats (63%) also share this view.

Employment Outlook

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of students are at least fairly confident that they will be able to find adequate employment after graduating. While this level of confidence is relatively high given the current economic situation, it is in slow decline: in 2005 75% of students were at least fairly confident of finding a job after college, dropping three points in 2006 to 72%, and another seven points in 2009.



As college students near their graduation date, their confidence in finding a suitable job lessens. Lowerclassmen are the most confident in finding a job (70% very/fairly confident), with juniors (63%) and seniors (56%) noticeably less confident. However, in 2006 this pattern was somewhat reversed, as juniors (75%) and seniors (74%) were somewhat more confident than lowerclassmen (69%). This finding suggests that students on the verge of entering the job market are particularly uneasy given the current economy.

Interestingly, confidence in finding a job after graduation also varies considerably by academic major. Students majoring in hard sciences, math, or computer science are considerably more confident (70% very/fairly confident) than students majoring in social sciences (56%) or humanities (55%). Business students remain quite confident, with more than two-thirds (68%) at least fairly confident that they will find a suitable job.

Confidence also varies by race and ethnicity. African-American students are the most confident that they will be able to find a suitable job after college (72%), followed by white students (65%), Latino (58%), and Asian-American (55%) students.

When it comes to recommending a major to a younger sibling or friend who is about to enter college, a majority (55%) of students said they would recommend majoring in the physical sciences (science, math, or computer science), up from just 46% in 2006. Only 21% of students recommend majoring in business (down 10 points from 2006).

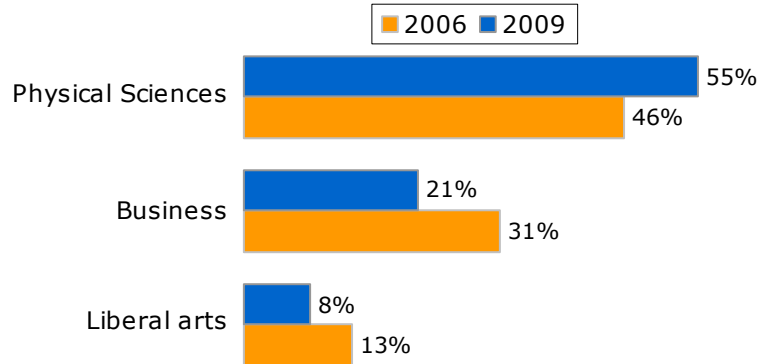
While it is not surprising that 73% of math and science majors would recommend

Hart Research Associates

their same major to future college students, it is somewhat surprising that a majority of social science (56%) and humanities (51%) majors would recommend majoring in the physical sciences over their own major. Like science and math majors, a majority (59%) of business students would recommend their own major to future students, with only 35% recommending math or science, and just 1% recommending social sciences.

Shift Toward Physical Sciences

Which area would you tell your younger sibling or friend to major in to best compete with students from other countries to get jobs?

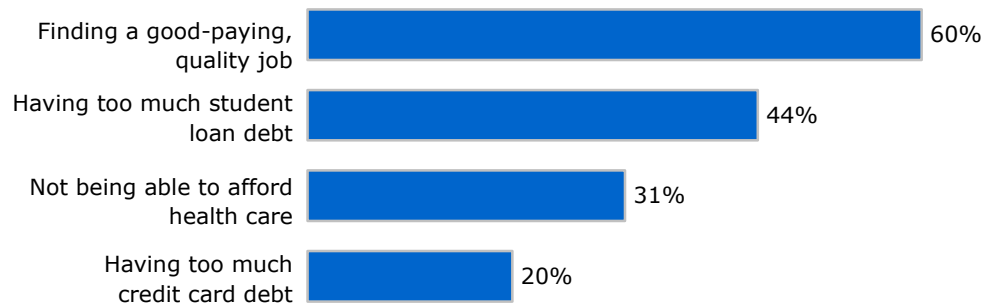


Post-College Plans And Concerns

In terms of day-to-day economic concerns, students overall seem less worried this year than in recent years. Finding a good-paying job easily tops the list of concerns. Fully 60% of students say they worry at least somewhat often about finding a job, but this is actually down six points from last year. A substantial 44% of students worry about having too much student loan debt, which is down five points from last year. Student worries about being able to afford health care dropped 11 points this year to just 31%. Finally, student worries about credit card debt are at a three-year low (20%), down seven points from 2008 and four points from 2007.

Post-College Worries

% saying they worry very/somewhat often



Hart Research Associates

Only half (48%) of students say they plan to start working full-time after graduating, with 39% saying they plan to go to graduate school instead. The remaining 13% of students say they plan to travel (3%), volunteer (2%), take time off (1%), or simply do not know what they will do after they graduate (7%). Seniors are the most likely to say they plan on working full-time after graduating (54%), while freshmen are the least likely to plan on joining the workforce (41%). Of note, seniors are the least likely to say they intend to go to graduate school following graduation (31%), while freshmen are the most likely (43%).

Plans after graduation also differ considerably by major. The majority (59%) of business students plan on working full-time after graduation, with just one-third (32%) planning on graduate school. Students majoring in social sciences lean toward graduate school (46%) over full-time employment (34%), as do students majoring in physical sciences or math (49% graduate school, 42% work full-time). Conversely, students majoring in humanities lean more toward getting a full-time job (40%) over graduate school (36%).

Among students not planning to get a full-time job after graduation, the current economic recession is a factor, though not a major one for most. Fully 36% of these students say the current job market influenced their decision a great deal (16%) or quite a bit (20%), while 28% percent say the current job market influenced their decision just some, and 36% say their decision was affected very little or not at all.

Prized Job Qualities

When it comes to finding a full-time job after college, students this year believe that qualities such as job security and pay are somewhat more important than in years past. Students believe that job security (64%) and work that is challenging and interesting (62%) are the most important qualities an employer can offer (score of nine or 10 on a 10-point scale). Interestingly, the importance of job security is up nine points from 2005, while challenging and interesting work is down slightly by six points. Students rank a number of secondary qualities relatively high, but considerably lower than job security and challenging work. These secondary qualities are important to many college students, but may not be absolutely essential to a job. Secondary qualities include good health and retirement benefits (49% very important), respectable and enjoyable co-workers (46%), good salary or wages (45%), rewards for outstanding work (41%), and work contributing to society and making a difference (41%). This year, more students believe that good salary and wages are very important than they did in 2005 (up seven points), while considerably fewer this year say the same about jobs that contribute to society and make a difference (down nine points).

Hart Research Associates

Finally, a job that is respected and valued by friends and family remains the least important employer quality to students, with just 17% of students saying it is very important.

Prized Job Qualities

% saying very important (9-10 on a 10 point scale)

