

2016 Survey of America's College Students

Conducted on Behalf of:
The Panetta Institute for Public Policy

By Hart Research Associates

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Hart Research Associates
1724 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-234-5570

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I. Introduction

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 Hart Research to conduct surveys among college students in the United States. 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 as follows.

- College students have returned to a more negative outlook on the direction of the country, with 55% now saying the country is headed off on the wrong track. This marks an increase from last year, when 43% felt similarly.
- Not only have college students turned more pessimistic about the direction of the country over the course of the last year, but 69% believe that America is on the decline and 73% say that compared with their parents' generation, it is harder for people in their generation to achieve the American dream.
- One clue to explain college students' darker attitudes about the future of the country is evident in their evaluation of the nation's economy, with the proportion of college students who say the economy is excellent or good dropping from 52% in 2015 to 44% today.
- Still, college students believe that many changes in society have been positive, most notably the increasing acceptance of people with different lifestyles (90% positive change) and increasing ethnic diversity (89%).
- Despite the more negative national mood provided by college students, their views toward Barack Obama have improved since last year both personally and professionally. In personal terms, 62% of college students view Barack Obama positively, while 21% view him negatively, whereas last year he stood at 55% positive, 29% negative. The president's job rating has also increased, from 65% to 75% over the last year. This 75% matches his all-time high.
- While the president's ratings have improved, college students have negative views toward the leading candidates seeking to replace President Obama. Hillary Clinton is net negative at 25% positive, 54% negative, with a significant decline in her ratings since last year. And Donald Trump is in uniquely negative terrain with college students—just 10% view him positively, while 79% have negative feelings toward him.
- Bernie Sanders is the exception among college students. He has a personal rating of 62% positive, 21% negative. In the Democratic primary, college students prefer Bernie Sanders over Hillary Clinton by 74% to 16%.
- Both Hillary Clinton (+34 points) and Bernie Sanders (+51 points) hold commanding leads over Donald Trump in general election matchups.

- College students express concerns about the negativity of the presidential campaign, but this has not caused a decline in how closely they are following the presidential race or how relevant they believe politics is to them. Fully 74% are closely following the presidential race (up from 62% last year) and 59% say that politics are relevant to them (on par with last year).
- Three in 10 (32%) college students report that they already are involved in a presidential campaign, and by two to one say that the campaign for president has made them more rather than less interested in politics.
- Economic and domestic issues are most important for college students in choosing a presidential candidate. College students' focus on economic and domestic issues aligns with that of the general public.
- In general, college students believe that the problems facing their generation are more likely to be national rather than international in scope (by 58% to 42%), and are more likely to prefer that the United States become less rather than more active in world affairs (33% to 19%), though a plurality prefer that the United States remain as active as it is now (48%).
- College students believe that global warming is becoming a more serious problem, with 55% now saying this is a very serious problem, up from 41% just last year.
- On issues related to freedom of speech, overall students feel that greater awareness around speech that can hurt others is a positive change, but come down strongly on the side of protecting free speech over making sure that people do not feel hurt by offensive speech. Though they draw clear distinctions regarding specific actions that institutions can take on issues related to freedom of expression, students feel that their own campus is generally striking the right balance.
- Interest in public service remains fairly stable on most measures compared with last year, though there is a slight decline in some areas. There is high interest in a number of national service programs should those become available to students interested in working in government.

Methodology

Hart Research contracted with an online survey vendor to administer the 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. Screening questions limited participation to students enrolled in a four-year higher learning institution. A total of 801 interviews were completed online. All interviews were conducted from April 22 to 28, 2016. Some demographics were weighted to achieve representative samples of four-year college students nationwide.

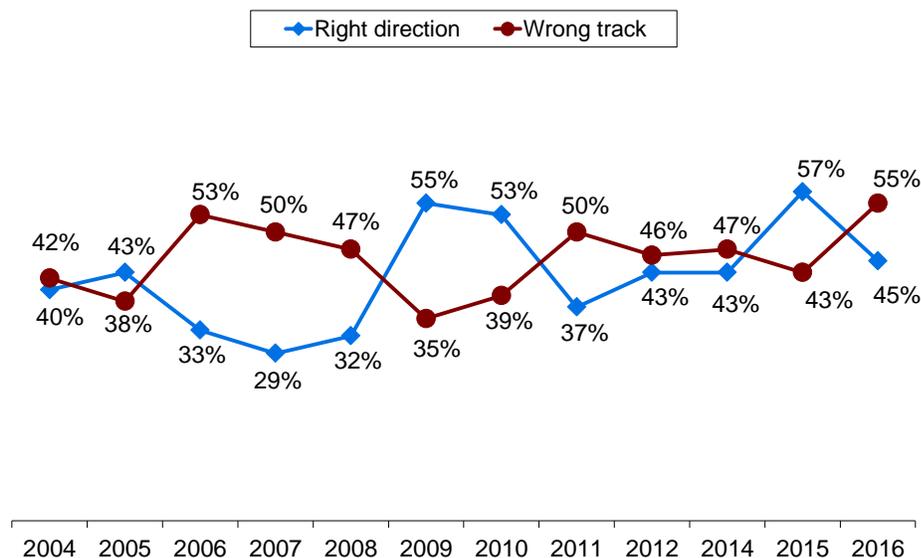
II. State of the Nation

College students' assessment of the country has taken a negative turn compared with a high water mark of optimism last year. Not only are students more pessimistic about the direction of the country today, but they also believe that America is on the decline and feel that compared with their parents' generation, it is harder for people in their generation to achieve the American dream.

In 2015, 57% said that the country was headed in the right direction, but now 55% believe that the country is off on the wrong track. While each class has become more negative in their outlook since last year, freshman show the biggest shift, with 57% of first-year students saying the country was headed in the right direction in 2015 dropping to just 37% today. Politically, Democrats (from 68% to 52%) are more likely to have shifted away from a positive view of the country's direction than independents (52% to 41%) or Republicans (40% to 32%). African-American college students also are more likely to have become more pessimistic in their outlook, dropping from 72% who said the country was headed in the right direction in 2015 to 54% now.

While the presidential campaign has taken a decidedly negative tone, those following the campaign very closely are no more or less likely to say the direction of the country is headed in the right direction than those who are not really following the campaign (46% among both groups say the country is headed in the right direction). However, in 2015 fully 71% of college students who reported following the presidential campaign very closely said the country was headed in the right direction, compared with just 50% who were not following the campaign closely. This indicates that the campaign could be negatively coloring perceptions about the country.

Direction of the Nation



About seven in 10 (69%) college students believe that America is on the decline, while just 31% believe that the country is on the rise. Here there is consensus across the political spectrum that the country is on the decline, with strong majorities of Democrats (61%), independents (77%), and Republicans (81%) expressing this point of view. The economy is a large factor in the perceptions of the country, with 80% of those who say that the nation's economy is not so good or poor believing that America is on the decline. Those who believe that the economy is excellent or good are also more likely to believe that America is on the decline, but the verdict is much more mixed, with 55% stating that America is on the decline and 45% who feel that America is on the rise.

Not only do college students believe that America is on the decline, but they also believe that it is harder to achieve the American dream compared with their parents' generation. The proportion believing it is harder to achieve the American dream has increased steadily from 58% in 2008, to 64% in 2011, to 73% today. And the perception that it is harder to achieve the American dream is felt both among those from lower- to lower-middle-class families (79%) as well as upper-middle to upper-class families (73%).

Concerns about issues affecting the direction of the country also are of great import when it comes to choosing between the presidential candidates. Economic issues (36%) and domestic issues such as health and education (35%) top the list,

with social issues (17%) and foreign policy (12%) being lower priorities for selecting a president. While some have suggested that young people in general may care more about social issues than adults overall, the data show that just as is the case for all adults, the economy matters a great deal more to college students. Men, independents, Republicans, and business majors are more likely to mention economic issues, while Democrats, those in the humanities, and those in science/math/computer science are more likely to highlight domestic issues. While less important overall, social issues are more important issues to address for those in the social sciences and humanities, while foreign policy is more of a concern for Republicans.

Most Important Issues in Choosing Candidate				
	<u>Economic Issues</u>	<u>Domestic Issues</u>	<u>Social Issues</u>	<u>Foreign Policy Issues</u>
	%	%	%	%
All college students	36	35	17	12
Men	42	34	11	13
Women	30	37	22	11
Democrats	30	42	22	6
Independents	42	34	11	13
Republicans	44	22	11	23
Social sciences	33	29	25	13
Humanities	16	47	25	12
Science/math/CS	34	41	11	14
Business	47	28	14	11

III. The Political Landscape

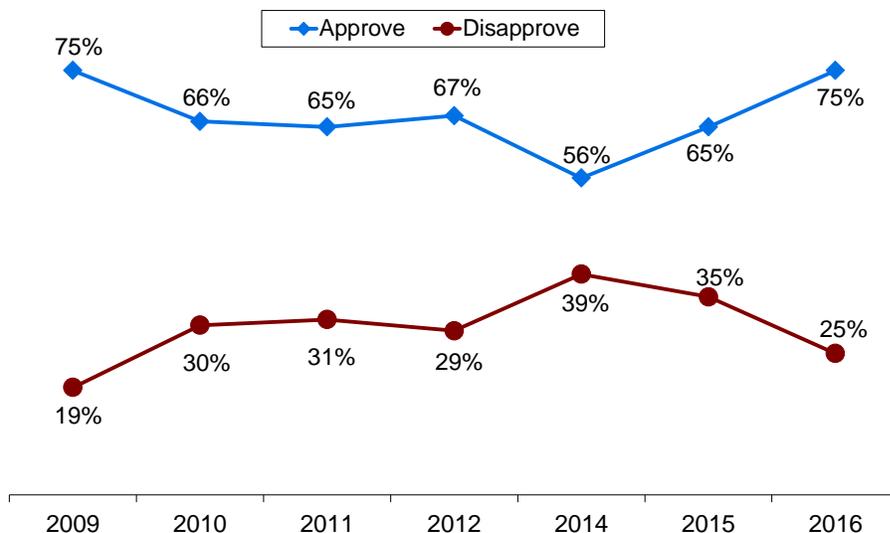
While college students have become more negative in their view of the country compared with a year ago, their attitudes toward Barack Obama have improved. This improvement for the president is in stark contrast with other leading political figures, including many who are trying to replace him as president.

In personal terms, 62% of college students have positive feelings toward Barack Obama, while 21% view him negatively. This personal rating shows an improvement over last year, when 55% had positive feelings and 29% had negative feelings toward him.

Overall, three in four (75%) college students approve of the job that Barack Obama is doing as president, up from 65% in 2015. The 10-point increase among college students from last year matches the highest job rating for Barack Obama

over the course of his presidency, only equaled during the honeymoon period of April 2009 at the beginning of Obama’s first term. Among those with the largest increases in support for President Obama are women (+16 points, from 64% to 80%) and college students in the political middle—independents (+18 points, from 60% to 78%) and moderates (+15 points, from 63% to 78%).

The Job Barack Obama Is Doing as President



The president’s job rating has improved in recent months among the general public, but college students are still much more favorable toward the president than are Americans overall. In an April NBC/WSJ survey, 49% of registered voters approve of the job that the president is doing. The overall comparison among all registered voters illustrates the president’s unique appeal on campus, but in partisan terms, college students of all political stripes are more likely to approve of the president than all registered voters. In particular, 78% of independents on campus approve of the job that the president is doing compared with just 48% of independent voters.

Proportion who Approve of Barack Obama’s Job Performance		
	College Students	All Voters
	%	%
All college students/voters	75	49
Democrats	95	84
Independents	78	48
Republicans	29	11

About seven in 10 (69%) college students approve of the job that Barack Obama is doing in handling foreign policy. This also marks a significant increase in support from 2015, when 57% approved of the job that Obama was doing internationally. Again, there are stark partisan divides on this issue, with 89% of Democrats and 67% of independents approving of his handling of it, while just 29% of Republicans feel similarly. Students who believe that the United States should be more active in world affairs are somewhat more likely to approve of the job that President Obama is doing in handling foreign policy than those who want the United States to be less active (70% and 62% respectively).

The 2016 Election

While college students remain mixed on their satisfaction with the country's political leadership, they continue to believe that politics are relevant to them, and many are following the presidential race closely. Turning to the November 2016 elections, with Bernie Sanders being the outlier to his benefit, college students provide harshly negative assessments of the leading candidates running for both major parties' nominations. Yet while Hillary Clinton trails Sanders in support, both Clinton and Sanders hold commanding leads over likely Republican nominee Donald Trump.

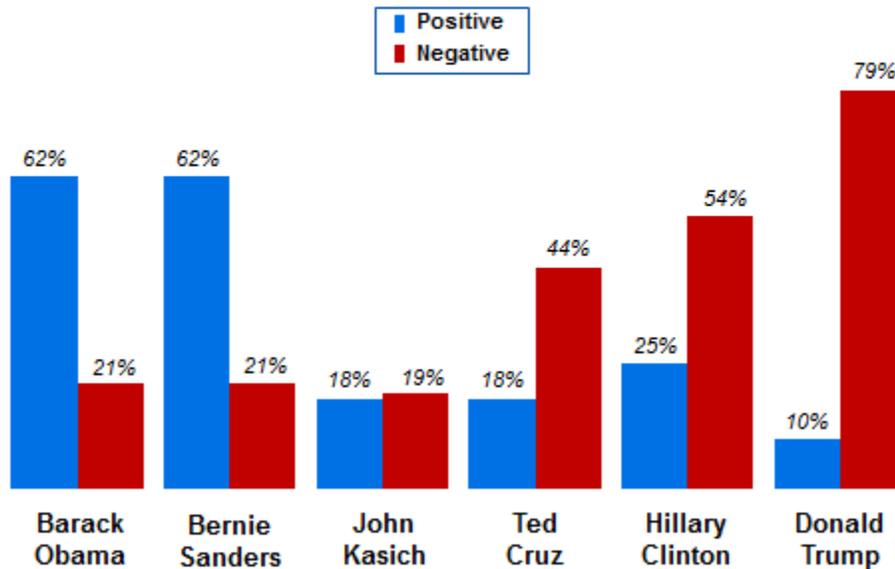
College students provide a mixed assessment of the quality of the country's political leadership, with 48% saying that they are satisfied with the country's political leadership and 52% saying they are dissatisfied. This evaluation may have more to do with feelings about President Obama than other political leaders, as 60% of Democrats are satisfied with the country's political leadership, compared with 42% of independents and just 25% of Republicans.

Indeed, when college students evaluate the president, along with the leading Republican and Democratic candidates for president, Bernie Sanders is the only candidate for whom college students have strong positive feelings. The survey was conducted prior to Ted Cruz and John Kasich dropping out of the Republican primary, but regardless, the data show that among college students Bernie Sanders has a uniquely positive profile. Consider that not only does he have an 86% positive, 3% negative rating among Democrats, but independents also have favorable feelings toward the Vermont senator (53% positive, 15% negative), with Republicans being largely negative (18%, 63%).

By contrast, not only is Hillary Clinton in net-negative territory with college students overall at 25% positive, 54% negative, but her ratings have declined significantly from a year ago, when she stood in much more favorable terrain at 45% positive, 32% negative. Now among Democrats she is just 38% positive, 38% negative, while independents, who are positive to Sanders by more than three to one, feel decidedly negative about the former Secretary of State (15% positive, 60% negative), and look much more like Republicans (7% positive, 83% negative) in this regard. Of particular concern for Hillary Clinton is that her ratings among Democratic college students stood at +56 last year (68% positive, 12% negative), and now Democrats are divided evenly.

However, while the past year has not benefited Hillary Clinton on campus, the likely Republican nominee, Donald Trump, is viewed far more negatively than any other candidate. Just 10% of college students have positive feelings toward Trump, while 79% view him negatively. The strongly negative feelings toward Trump transcend all demographic groups, including men (73% negative) and women (85%), whites (76%), African Americans (84%), Hispanics (87%), and Asians (78%), and those with both lower incomes (86%) and higher incomes (78%). These negative feelings are also seen across the political spectrum, with 92% of Democrats, 73% of independents, and even a majority of Republicans (57%) viewing the likely Republican nominee negatively.

Personal Ratings of Political Leaders



Despite, or perhaps because of, their low opinion of many of the candidates running for president, a majority (59%) of college students say that politics is very or fairly relevant to them. This proportion is unchanged from 2015, and matches an all-time high on this measure in polling for the Panetta Institute. Democrats (62% very or fairly relevant) and Republicans (64%) are nearly as likely to believe that politics are relevant to them, while independents are less likely to feel that way (48%). Those who report that they are registered to vote are much more likely to find politics relevant to them than those who are not (65% compared with 37%). And while 94% of those who are following the presidential race very closely say that politics are relevant to them, just 16% of those who are following the race less closely say this is the case.

Fully 74% of college students say that they are following the 2016 presidential race very or somewhat closely, while 26% say that they are following the race less closely. Interest in the presidential race has increased from 62% a year ago. Again, those who report that they are registered to vote are much more likely to be following the race for president than those who are not registered (79%

to 54%). And partisans on both sides—Democrats (78%) and Republicans (74%)—are more likely to be following the election than independents (62%).

Not only are college students following the race closely, but more than three in 10 (32%) indicate that they have become active in a presidential campaign, with another 21% who say they will probably get involved in the future. Democrats (35%) are somewhat more likely to report being involved already than independents (28%) and Republicans (29%), and Sanders supporters in the Democratic primary are more likely than Clinton supporters to be involved (by 37% to 28%). While men and women are equally as likely to be involved (32% respectively), Hispanics (41%) are more likely than other college students to be involved. Those who report being registered to vote are again much more likely to report a connection to politics than those who are not registered—37% of registered voters report already being involved, compared with just 10% of non-registered students.

And by a two-to-one margin, college students say that the campaign for president has made them more interested in being involved in politics generally rather than less interested (42% to 21%, with 37% who say no difference either way). Among those who are more likely to say the campaign has made them more interested are freshmen (+32), students from a higher socioeconomic class (+30), Democrats (+31), and liberals (+35). Those who are following the presidential race very closely say that the campaign has made them more rather than less interested by 66% to 9%.

Yet all of the interest generated by the election is not painting a positive picture of the political system. When college students were asked in their own words to describe why they have become more or less interested in politics, the answers are sobering. The following quotes are verbatim responses from college students who say that the campaign for president has made them more interested in being involved in politics. Strikingly, their interest is not fundamentally about a positive narrative, but about the negative tenor of the campaign and concern about the future of the country.

“Being mostly told political opinions from my parents, over the past few years I have started coming up with my own ideas about social issues and how things work. Due to the rising concern over these issues, and their influences on politics, I guess the relevance of my own ideas and how they relate to the country just pulled me into the topic of politics.”

“Our political system is so backwards and corrupted that the current campaign for president is making me genuinely worried about the future of the country. It's made it nearly impossible to ignore politics as a bystander.”

“My college has hosted three different candidates from both sides of the Republican/Democrat divide, and being able to hear each person's ideas and goals has opened my mind to how important politics is and gotten me interested in discovering my own opinion on the issues that are important to these politicians.”

“The campaign has made me more involved because several issues threaten my beliefs that motivate me to take action.”

To further illustrate the concern that college students are expressing about the campaign, the following word clouds characterize the responses among those who are more interested (in blue) and less interested (in red) in politics due to the campaign. It is striking how similar the responses are for both groups, with a lack of positivity among those who say the campaign for president has made them more interested in politics. Indeed, this election season feels far removed from recent prior elections, particularly 2008 and the Obama campaign theme of hope and change.





While Donald Trump now appears to have secured this July's Republican nomination in Cleveland, the survey was conducted prior to the other candidates dropping out, and the data reveal that Donald Trump is not the preferred Republican nominee among Republican college students. In fact, among Republicans on campus, Ted Cruz is the preferred candidate in the Republican primary with 38% of the vote, leading both Trump (27%) and John Kasich (16%). Overall, Cruz enjoys an 11-point advantage over Trump, but he leads Trump among women by 14 points (40% to 26%), while he is seven points ahead of Trump among men (36% to 29%).

On the Democratic side, the race for the nomination continues to march on, with national polling showing Clinton with a slight advantage. But on college campuses, Bernie Sanders is the overwhelming choice for the Democratic nomination. Among college students who identify as Democrats, Bernie Sanders leads Hillary Clinton by 74% to 16%. Sanders leads across the board, from freshmen (77% voting for Sanders) to seniors (67%), from liberals (79%) to moderates (68%), from whites (79%), to African Americans (65%), to Hispanics (64%). And there is no gender gap, with Sanders receiving the support of 74% of both men and women.

Yet while Hillary Clinton trails Sanders on campus by a wide margin, she is likely to be the Democratic nominee. And when college students focus on the general election, she fares very well against Donald Trump. Underscoring Sanders's appeal on campus, 64% of college students would be optimistic or satisfied if Bernie Sanders were elected president. This compares with three in 10 (31%) who say that they would be optimistic or satisfied with Hillary Clinton as

president. However, just 12% of college students say that they would be optimistic or satisfied if Donald Trump were president, while 88% would be uncertain or pessimistic, including fully 67% who would be pessimistic and worried.

In addition to a decline in her personal ratings, Hillary Clinton also faces significant challenges related to her background and experience and the type of qualities that college students are looking for in a president. By 60% to 40%, college students believe that this is a time to look for a person as president who will bring greater changes to the current policies even if they are less experienced and tested, rather than someone with more experience. Democrats overall (62%) are more likely than Republicans (56%) to want someone who will bring greater change. However, Democrats who support Clinton in the primary prefer someone with experience by 60% to 40%, while Sanders supporters prefer someone who will bring greater change by 66% to 34%.

And by a similar margin, college students would rather have a president who sticks to their core values and positions over someone who will compromise with the other party by 62% to 38%. On this measure, college students differ from the general public, who, according to a Pew Research survey conducted in March, prefer someone who will compromise by 50% to 42%. Among college students, Democrats (61%), independents (58%), and Republicans (68%) all want someone who will stick to their core values and positions. While Clinton supporters in the Democratic primary are divided (53% stick to their positions, 47% compromise), Sanders voters prefer someone who will stick to their core values and positions by 62% to 38%.

Yet while some of the atmospheric work against Hillary Clinton's candidacy, she fares very well against Donald Trump among college students. As a starting point, 78% of college students say that voters of their generation are ready to elect a woman as president, which is up from 71% in 2008. Men and women (77% and 78% respectively) are nearly as likely to say that this is the case. And in a general election matchup against Donald Trump, Clinton voters are more likely to feel this way than Trump voters (82% to 66%). Conversely, just 49% of college students say that voters of their generation are ready to elect a person who has never held a position in government, which reflects Donald Trump's biography. While 63% of Trump voters say that voters of their generation are ready to elect someone with

this attribute, 44% of Clinton voters feel similarly. And just 60% of Republicans say that they believe voters of their generation are ready to elect someone who has never held a position in government.

Against this backdrop of two likely general election candidates who are viewed more negatively than positively (incredibly negatively, in Donald Trump's case), college students prefer Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump by a 34-point advantage (60% to 26%). Surprisingly, despite the unique antipathy that college students have for Donald Trump, he fares no worse in a head-to-head matchup with Hillary Clinton than the Republican nominees did in 2008 and 2012. Consider that in personal terms, Donald Trump is net negative by 69 points, while in Panetta Institute polling in 2012, Mitt Romney was net negative by 21 points (21% positive, 42% negative), and in 2008, John McCain was net positive by four points (32% positive, 28% negative). Some of this can also be attributed to the negative attitudes that students have toward Hillary Clinton. It is worth noting that Bernie Sanders's lead over Trump is 72% to 21% (51 points compared to a 34 point advantage for Clinton).

As the following table illustrates, compared with Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012, Hillary Clinton does better among women but worse among men. It is notable how stable and comparable the data among the subgroups are over time, even though the profiles of both parties' nominees are very, very different.

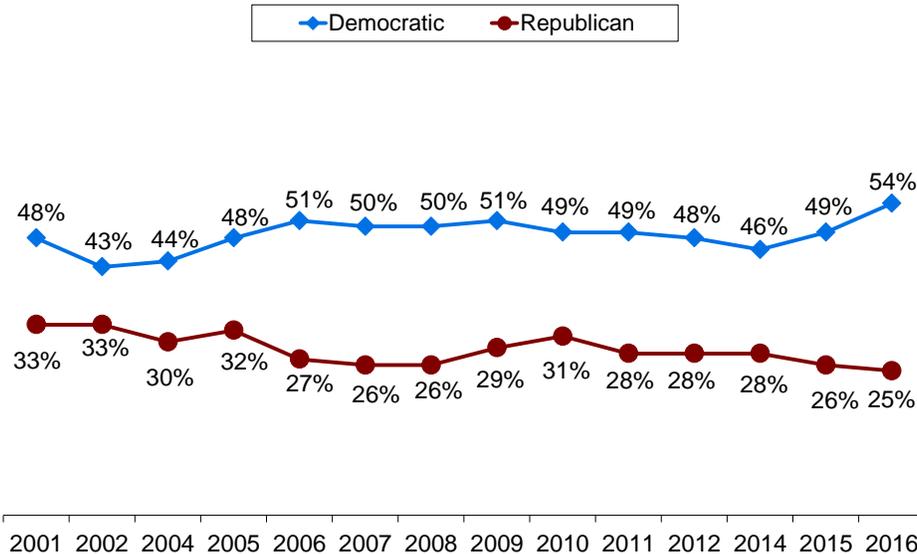
Presidential Trial Heats by Subgroup						
	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Trump</u>	<u>Obama</u>	<u>Romney</u>	<u>Obama</u>	<u>McCain</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
All students	60	26	58	25	59	27
Men	50	34	58	26	58	29
Women	70	18	57	24	60	25
Northeast	68	21	65	21	64	21
South	56	30	56	25	62	24
Midwest	54	30	51	31	53	34
West	65	21	60	22	57	27
Whites	52	34	51	32	51	33
Hispanics	75	13	62	16	79	19
African Americans	80	7	82	5	87	4
Asians	68	12	69	8	68	17
Social sciences	69	19	57	26	65	27
Humanities	66	24	61	22	62	22
Science/math/CS	62	23	58	24	57	30
Business	52	36	49	30	60	26
Democrats	84	5	88	4	87	6
Independents	47	30	52	13	49	26
Republicans	22	67	10	70	15	68

Not only do Democrats enjoy a large advantage in the race for president, but college students also favor the Democratic candidate for Congress by the largest margin in the history of the Panetta Institute poll. By 60% to 28%, college students say that they plan to vote for the Democrat rather than the Republican in their congressional district. Women, those in the Northeast, those studying science/math/computer science, and those in the lower or lower-middle class socioeconomically are most likely to have moved more to a preference for a Democratic candidate for Congress compared to two years ago.

Congressional Trial Heat by Subgroup				
	2016	2016	2014	2014
	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican
	%	%	%	%
All students	60	28	45	30
Men	53	31	41	32
Women	67	25	49	27
Northeast	70	21	48	22
South	54	32	41	31
Midwest	56	31	49	29
West	62	27	47	34
Whites	51	38	36	38
Hispanics	74	18	58	25
African Americans	82	10	66	8
Asians	72	11	59	17
Social sciences	64	26	57	24
Humanities	57	24	49	26
Science/math/CS	65	24	41	34
Business	53	38	44	30
Democrats	94	3	83	1
Independents	36	19	24	17
Republicans	8	88	3	87
Social class: lower/lower middle	71	14	53	19
Social class: average	58	31	45	30
Social class: upper middle/upper	54	35	39	40

In this year's survey, we also find that the gap between identification with the Democratic and Republican parties is at its widest point, a trend that began last year and has become more pronounced this year. Last year, college students were more likely to identify with the Democratic Party over the Republican Party by 23 points, which has increased to 29 points today. In the early years of the Panetta Institute poll, the Democratic advantage was in the low double digits but steadily increased. Tracking this movement will be something to watch closely to see how the 2016 election may continue or change this trend.

Partisan Identification over Time



To follow news about politics and civic affairs, college students get most of their information from Internet news websites (55%), television (44%), social media (32%), or family and friends (23%). Seniors are most likely to favor Internet news websites, while freshman still rely more on news websites than social media, but the divide is not as great.

Most Information about Politics and Civic Affairs

	<u>Internet News Websites</u>	<u>Television</u>	<u>Social Media</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
All college students	55	44	32
Freshman	52	45	37
Sophomores	52	38	35
Juniors	54	50	28
Seniors	59	43	28

Only 13% say that they get most of their information from community/city or campus newspapers. Back in 2001, 26% said this was the case. Yet those who rely most on newspapers are more likely to be engaged and involved in politics and more willing to be a part of a public service program.

- Eighty-six percent (86%) of newspaper readers are registered to vote, compared with 80% of all students;
- Thirty-five percent (35%) of newspaper readers say they are following the presidential race very closely, compared with 25% of all students;

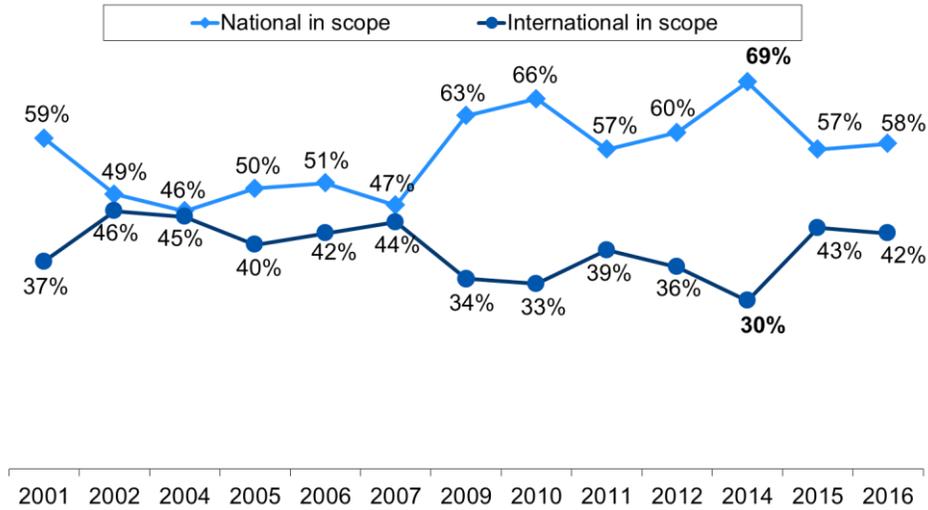
- Newspaper readers are more likely than their peers to say that they are very interested in working in government (22% to 14%);
- They are also more likely to say they would run for office at some point in the future. Forty-six percent (46%) say they would be interested in running for federal office, and 61% say the same for local office. Among all students, those numbers are 31% and 35%, respectively;
- Forty-two percent (42%) of newspaper readers have considered pursuing a service-oriented experience after college, compared with 27% of all students;
- Newspaper readers are more likely to have been involved in community service activities (76%) compared with all students (68%);
- And newspaper readers would be more receptive than their peers to a program that provides financial assistance in exchange for national service, with 74% very or fairly interested in such a program, compared with 58% of all students.

IV. International Issues

Today's college students are more focused on solving the problems they see at home than abroad. They see the challenges their generation will face as chiefly national issues, and shy away from expanded engagement on the international scene.

Students continue to focus on problems that face the country on a national scale rather than issues on the international level. This preference has remained steady over the past year, with 58% of students saying that their generation will mostly face problems that are national in scope, while 42% say their problems will be international in scope, compared with 57% and 43% in 2015.

Most of the problems my generation will face are:



Responses to this question are linked to several aspects of political identity. Those who believe that the United States should become more involved in world affairs also are more likely to see their generation's problems as international in scope (59% to 41%), while those who want to see the United States pull back from world affairs see their problems as national (66% to 34%). When it comes to political preference, those in the international camp tend to occupy the middle. While Democrats and Republicans express fairly similar opinions on this question, with 41% and 37% respectively saying their problems will be mostly international, about half (49%) of independents say the same.

College students also prefer that the United States become less rather than more involved in world affairs. By 14 points, students believe that the United States should be less, rather than more, active internationally (33% to 19%). In this instance, college students correspond to attitudes among voters nationally, who are more likely to prefer that the United States become less active in world affairs by 15 points, according to an April NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll. Students who support Donald Trump in the presidential election are more likely to prefer an inward focus (18% more active, 40% less active), though Clinton supporters also feel this way, albeit by a smaller margin (18%, 32%). While white college students are much more likely to want the United States to be less active (37%) rather than

more active (15%), both Hispanics (28% more active, 22% less active) and Asians (25%, 21%) are more likely to want a more engaged foreign policy.

Students' sources of news also affect their view of American involvement in world affairs. Those who get their news by newspaper are among the most supportive of expanded involvement, saying the United States should be more active by four points (33% to 29%). By contrast, those who get most of their news on the Internet are sharply opposed to more action, with only 15% supporting a greater American presence in world affairs and 37% calling for less.

While students generally want the United States to pull back from world affairs, they believe that the country should allow Syrian refugees into the United States if they go through a security clearance by 71% to 29%. This compares with just 49% who feel this way among adults in a December 2015 CBS/*New York Times* survey. Political opinions heavily influence responses among college students, with only 44% of Republicans, 42% of conservatives, and 43% of Trump supporters saying that Syrian refugees should be allowed into the country, compared with 86% of Democrats, 88% of liberals, and 83% of Clinton voters. Hispanics (80%) and Asians (79%) are also more supportive.

When it comes to the balance between intelligence gathering and privacy rights, college students are far more concerned that the United States will go too far and violate the privacy of average citizens, marking a major departure from attitudes among Americans overall. By two to one (67% to 33%), students say that they are more worried that the country would violate privacy rights in efforts to combat terrorism. Only a third (33%) of respondents say that they are more worried that the United States would not go far enough in monitoring the activities of potential terrorists. By way of comparison, in a March 2016 NBC/*Wall Street Journal* survey, 47% of voters said that they are more concerned that the United States would not go far enough to monitor potential terrorists, with only 44% saying they are more concerned that the United States would go too far. While Republicans and conservative students are less likely than others to have privacy concerns, majorities of both groups are still more worried about the issue than about lax monitoring of potential terrorists (53% and 59% respectively).

V. Domestic Issues

College students continue to support progressive policy positions on a series of questions relating to domestic issues. More students today consider global warming to be a serious problem than in the past. By a significant margin, students continue to support legal abortion. Students also believe that many changes in society have been positive.

The proportion of college students who describe global warming as a serious problem continues to rise. In 2010, 71% of students said that global warming was a very serious or somewhat serious problem. That number increased to 80% in 2015, and now stands at 86%. Even more notably, the proportion of students who say that global warming is a very serious problem has increased by 14 points in just the past year, from 41% to 55%. The increase is reflected across all subgroups. Seventy-one percent (71%) of Democratic students now call global warming a very serious problem, up 15 points from 2015, compared with 24% of Republican students, up seven points in a year. The largest increase in the proportion of college students who see global warming as a very serious problem is among Hispanics, jumping from 47% in 2015 to 75% in 2016. Students in the West, the least likely group to call global warming a very serious problem of any region last year, are now the most likely to say so, at 62% (increasing by 27 points in the last year). Perhaps part of this can be attributed to recent extreme weather events in the Western part of the country such as the California drought.

Global Warming is a Very Serious Problem			
	2016	2015	Differential
	%	%	±
All college students	55	41	+14
Whites	48	39	+9
African Americans	49	47	+2
Hispanics	75	45	+30
Asians	66	42	+24
Democrats	71	56	+15
Independents	50	37	+13
Republicans	24	17	+7
Northeast	59	46	+13
South	51	40	+11
Midwest	47	43	+4
West	62	35	+27
Public school	57	40	+17
Private school	47	44	+3

The proportion of college students who support legal abortions increased since last year, with 69% now believing that abortion should be legal in all or most cases, compared with 61% last year. The partisan divide on this question is stark, with 87% of Democrats believing abortion should be legal in all or most cases and only 33% of Republicans saying the same, while 65% of independents hold this view. However, many more Republicans believe that abortion should be illegal in most cases (45%) than in all cases (22%). Sanders supporters in the Democratic primary are most likely to take the more progressive stance on the issue of choice. Forty-nine percent (49%) of students who support the Vermont senator say that abortion should be legal in all cases, and 85% say that it should be legal in all or most cases. This compares with 33% of Clinton voters who say abortion should always be legal and 77% who say it should be legal in all or most cases.

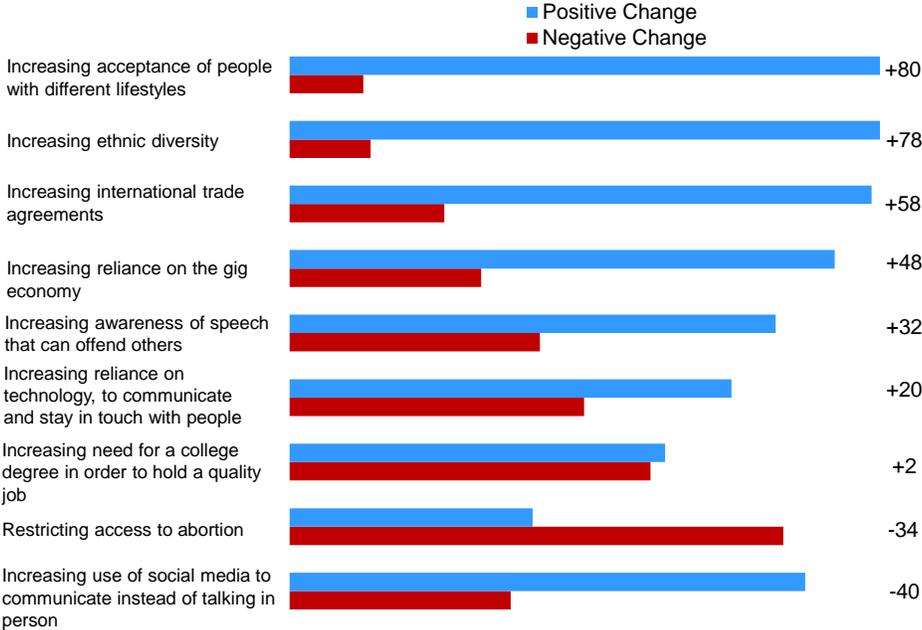
In the fight to fill Antonin Scalia's Supreme Court seat, college students side with President Obama, saying Republicans are wrong to refuse holding confirmation hearings on a nominee by two to one (67% to 33%). Democrats and independents are both overwhelmingly opposed to Senate Republicans' actions, with Democrats disapproving by 78% to 22% and independents disapproving by 68% to 32%. Republican college students side with Senate Republicans in blocking any nomination, but their support for this position is more muted. While 57% say that they think Senate Republicans are right to block any nominee, 43% of Republicans say that their own party's leaders are wrong.

Students are divided evenly on whether the federal minimum wage should be raised to \$15 an hour, with 50% favoring and 50% opposing such an action. Rather than opposing raising the minimum wage itself, it seems that many students take issue with the \$15 figure, taking past surveys into account. Last year, when students were asked whether they supported a minimum wage increase to \$10.10 an hour, their response was overwhelmingly positive, with 72% favoring the rise. Students who come from families of lower socioeconomic status solidly support a \$15 an hour minimum wage, with 60% favoring it and 40% opposing this increase. While upper-middle and upper-class students are divided evenly on the issue at 50% to 50%, those with an average financial background are the least likely to support the \$15 minimum wage, at 45% in favor and 55% oppose. While only

43% of whites favor a \$15 minimum wage, 68% of African Americans, 57% of Hispanics, and 58% of Asians feel that \$15 an hour should be the new minimum wage.

Despite their overall pessimistic assessment of the country today, college students are more likely to believe that a wide range of changes in American society have been positive. Fully nine in 10 students think that the increasing acceptance of people with different lifestyles has been a positive change (90% to 10%). Republicans and conservatives overwhelmingly see this as a positive change, approving of this growing acceptance by a 52-point margin and a 48-point margin, respectively. Students are similarly welcoming of more ethnic diversity, with 89% saying that it is a positive change, compared with only 11% who say it is a negative change. One societal change that does not garner the support of students, however, is the trend toward restricted access to abortion. College students are more likely to say this is a negative rather than a positive change by two to one (67% to 33%). And while college students embrace technology to stay in touch with people (+20 positive change), they believe that the increasing use of social media to communicate instead of talking in person is a negative change by 40 points.

Changes in Society



VI. Freedom of Speech

College students generally believe that the increasing awareness of speech that can offend others is a positive change for society. However, on campus, students overwhelmingly side with protecting freedom of speech over the concern that some people could be hurt by offensive speech. Most generally feel that their campus is striking the right balance when it comes to freedom of expression. College students take a more nuanced, thoughtful approach on specific actions that institutions of higher education are taking to address freedom of expression on campus and are generally positive to actions that increase awareness, but do not respond favorably to actions that place limits on freedom of expression.

In general, by 66% to 34% college students are more likely to say that increasing awareness of speech that can offend others is a positive rather than a negative change in society. Men (62% positive change), women (70%), whites (62%), African Americans (75%), Hispanics (76%), and Asians (69%) all believe that this is a positive change. There is less consensus in the political-ideological arena, where Democrats (77%), liberals (78%), independents (60%), and moderates (63%) all are more likely to see this increasing awareness as a positive change, while Republicans (49% positive change, 51% negative change) and conservatives (50% positive change, 50% negative change) are divided.

When college students focus on priorities for college campuses today, by a 70% to 30% margin, they are clear that the more important priority is protecting freedom of speech, even when it offends some people over making sure people do not feel hurt by offensive speech. Protecting freedom of speech is a more important priority across all demographic and political groups.

Moreover, 67% of college students are more worried that colleges will go too far in suppressing freedom of speech by limiting what people can say on sensitive issues rather than that colleges will not do enough to protect individuals from hateful and offensive speech (33%). Here there is a bit more gradation across subgroups. With the exception of African Americans, who are divided evenly, all subgroups are more likely to be worried that colleges will go too far in suppressing freedom of speech, but those studying the social sciences, Democrats, and liberals are more muted in this regard.

Which worries you more?		
	Colleges Will Go Too Far	Colleges Will Not Do Enough
	%	%
All college students/voters	67	33
Men	73	27
Women	62	38
Whites	74	26
African Americans	50	50
Hispanics	59	41
Asians	56	44
Social Sciences	54	46
Humanities	67	33
Science/math/CS	74	26
Business	70	30
Democrats	58	42
Independents	67	33
Republicans	85	15
Liberals	58	42
Moderates	67	33
Conservatives	83	17

Two in three (66%) college students believe that their campus specifically is striking the right balance when it comes to freedom of expression. The feeling that their campus is striking the right balance is shared by men (62%) and women (70%), whites (67%), African Americans (64%), Hispanics (65%), and Asians (66%), Democrats (72%) and Republicans (58%), and liberals (69%) and conservatives (59%). The minority of students who do not believe that their campus is striking the right balance are more likely to believe that their campus is going too far in suppressing freedom of expression (21%) than that their campus is not doing enough to protect individuals (13%).

Despite college students' overall feeling that protecting freedom of speech is a greater priority than making sure that people do not feel hurt by offensive speech, students make distinctions on a number of possible actions that colleges and universities can take to address freedom of expression on campus. Students generally believe that mandatory sensitivity training for faculty is a step in the right direction rather than the wrong direction (+42 right direction) and also feel that this is the case for reporting hurtful speech to campus police (+24 right direction). So, there is support for actions that generally promise greater awareness without taking any rights away from others.

However, students are divided evenly on the idea of removing faculty who have made statements that offend some students. Women, Democrats, and non-whites are more likely to believe that this is a step in the right direction, while men, non-Democrats, and whites are more likely to believe that this is a step in the wrong direction. On the question of renaming buildings named for controversial historical figures, overall students believe that this is a step in the wrong direction by 10 points. There are similar dividing lines here as well, though Asian students are more likely to align with whites in saying that this is a step in the wrong direction.

On two measures that are more restrictive on freedom of expression, college students strongly believe that the actions are steps in the wrong direction. By 50 points, college students say that removing reading assignments that some students may find offensive is a step in the wrong direction, and by 48 points, students feel similarly about refusing to invite speakers to campus whose views some might find offensive. On both of these actions, students across the board are more likely to feel that these are steps in the wrong direction, with whites and non-Democrats feeling most strongly about this.

Actions Taken Relate to Freedom of Expression
DIFFERENTIAL (STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION-WRONG DIRECTION)

	<u>All College Students</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Democ-rats</u>	<u>Indepen-dents</u>	<u>Republi-cans</u>
	±	±	±	±	±	±
Mandatory sensitivity training for faculty	+42	+24	+57	+62	+32	+5
Reporting hurtful speech to campus police	+24	+7	+39	+42	+10	-5
Removing faculty who have made statements that offend some students	0	-18	+18	+21	-8	-35
Renaming buildings named for controversial historical figures	-10	-21	+1	+8	-14	-42
Refusing to invite speakers to campus if some find their views offensive	-48	-47	-49	-38	-57	-63
Removing reading assignments from a syllabus that some students may find offensive	-50	-53	-49	-44	-63	-56

Actions Taken Relate to Freedom of Expression
DIFFERENTIAL (STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION-WRONG DIRECTION)

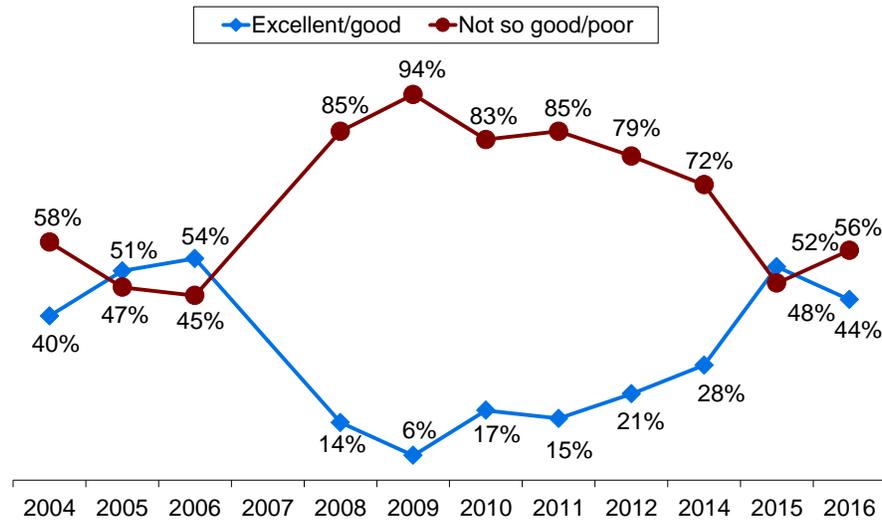
	<u>All College Students</u>	<u>Whites</u>	<u>African Americans</u>	<u>Hispanics</u>	<u>Asians</u>
	±	±	±	±	±
Mandatory sensitivity training for faculty	+42	+30	+69	+52	+74
Reporting hurtful speech to campus police	+24	+15	+45	+45	+20
Removing faculty who have made statements that offend some students	0	-16	+51	+25	+18
Renaming buildings named for controversial historical figures	-10	-16	+24	+9	-23
Refusing to invite speakers to campus if some find their views offensive	-48	-63	-11	-33	-25
Removing reading assignments from a syllabus that some students may find offensive	-50	-61	-26	-39	-39

VII. Economic Outlook

College students' views on the economy have turned slightly more negative in the past year. Both their opinions of the overall economy and their personal confidence in finding a job that is acceptable to them have fallen modestly since 2015.

Feelings on the state of the national economy have taken a dip in the past year, but they still remain well above those recorded two years ago when attitudes had barely recovered from the lows of the recession. Forty-four percent (44%) of college students rate the national economy as excellent or good, while 56% say that it is not so good or poor. In 2015, more students said the economy was excellent or good by a four-point margin (52% to 48%), which was the first year that more students rated the economy positively than negatively since 2006.

State of the Economy



Lower- and lower-middle-class students have a more negative opinion of the economy than their upper-class peers. Only 34% of lower- and lower-middle-class students say that the economy is excellent or good, compared with 52% of those from the highest socioeconomic groups who say the same. White students are more likely than students from other racial groups to rate the economy negatively, with 60% saying the economy is either not so good or poor, compared with 40% who say it is excellent or good. African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians all are significantly more likely to rate the economy positively than whites, at 54%, 47%, and 62% respectively. Among Democratic students, Clinton supporters are much more positive toward the economy than Sanders supporters. By a 40-point margin, those who prefer Clinton in the primary say the economy is excellent or good (70% to 30%). Sanders supporters say the economy is not so good or poor by 57% to 43%.

Students' confidence in their ability to find a good job has also declined slightly in the past year. While the proportion who say they are very or fairly confident remains essentially unchanged (68% in 2016 compared with 70% in 2015), the proportion who are very confident has declined to 24% from 31% a year ago. However, seniors, who are the closest to entering the workforce, are as likely to describe themselves as very confident about their job prospects as their predecessors were last year (29% of seniors in both years were very confident).

Social sciences and humanities majors are significantly less confident than their peers in the science, math, and business fields. Sixty percent (60%) of social science majors and 56% of humanities majors say that they are very or fairly confident, while 76% of students in the STEM fields and 71% of business majors answer similarly.

Finding a good-paying job remains the most frequent concern among college students, with 69% saying that they worry about it very or somewhat often. Having too much student loan debt also is a large concern, with 57% of students saying they worry about it often. While this proportion is down slightly from the 60% who reported concerns about their loans last year, it is still fairly elevated from prior years. College students are comparatively less concerned about healthcare and credit card debt, but African-American and Hispanic students tend to report concerns about credit card debt at a higher rate than their white and Asian classmates. Forty-two percent (42%) of African Americans and 47% of Hispanics say they are either very or fairly concerned about having too much credit card debt.

Students are more likely to say that they are interested in working in the private sector than in a variety of alternative careers. STEM majors are the most likely to be interested in the private sector, with 29% expressing the highest level of interest, just ahead of business majors (27%). Social science majors are nearly as likely to say that they are very interested in entering the private sector (21%) as working for a not-for-profit (20%) or in the government (19%). Humanities majors are equally likely to say that they are very interested in teaching in public schools as they are to enter the private sector (both 19%). African American and Hispanic students are more likely than their white and Asian counterparts to say that they are very interested in working for a not-for-profit (22% and 21% compared with 12% and 13%, respectively).

VIII. Public Service

Enthusiasm among college students for public service remains largely unchanged since last year and on most measures, near the higher end of interest that the Panetta Institute survey has tracked. However, on measures related to participation in public service, the survey reveals a slight downward trend. That said, college students report high levels of interest in a number of national service programs if they were available to them.

Interest in running for office (for both federal and local or state office) remains essentially unchanged from last year. Thirty-one percent (31%) of college students now say they would be interested in running for federal elected office (down from 32% in 2015), while 35% report interest in running for local or state elected office (down from 36% last year). As we have tracked in the past, on both measures men are more likely than women to express an interest in running for office.

Desire to participate in service-oriented experiences such as Teach for America, VISTA, and AmeriCorps has dropped 10 points from last year, from 37% to 27%. In 2015, 63% had not considered pursuing service-oriented experiences after earning their degree, which increased to an all-time high of 73% this year (the previous record low was 72% in 2014). African Americans, freshmen, and those who view the economy as excellent/good are more likely to report a drop in interest here.

While 44% of college students say that someone has spoken to them about getting involved in politics or public service, 56% say that no one has done so, which matches an all-time high. Importantly, those who report being very interested in working in government are less likely to say that no one has spoken to them (39%). Involvement in activities to help the local community, such as volunteering time or helping solve local problems, is also declining somewhat, with 68% of respondents saying that they have been involved in such community activities during college, compared with 72% in 2015.

Interest in programs that provide a grant or financial assistance to help pay for college in exchange for two years of national service is slightly lower than last year (from 63% to 58% who are very or fairly interested). Interest is highest among students who are very interested in government (77%), those who get their

news from the newspaper (74%), and those following the 2016 presidential election very closely (68%).

Given a choice between specific areas in which students could serve in national service, 56% prefer teaching over serving in the military (12%) or doing another form of national service (32%). Two-thirds (68%) of students are interested in the idea of participating in a program that provides college students with job training and preferred status when applying for federal government jobs after graduation. Those who are very interested in government have the largest interest in such a program (91%). And students overwhelmingly believe that national service programs with people from a variety of backgrounds increases rather than decreases understanding of people from different backgrounds (85% to 5%).