

# 2024 Student Encampment Protests

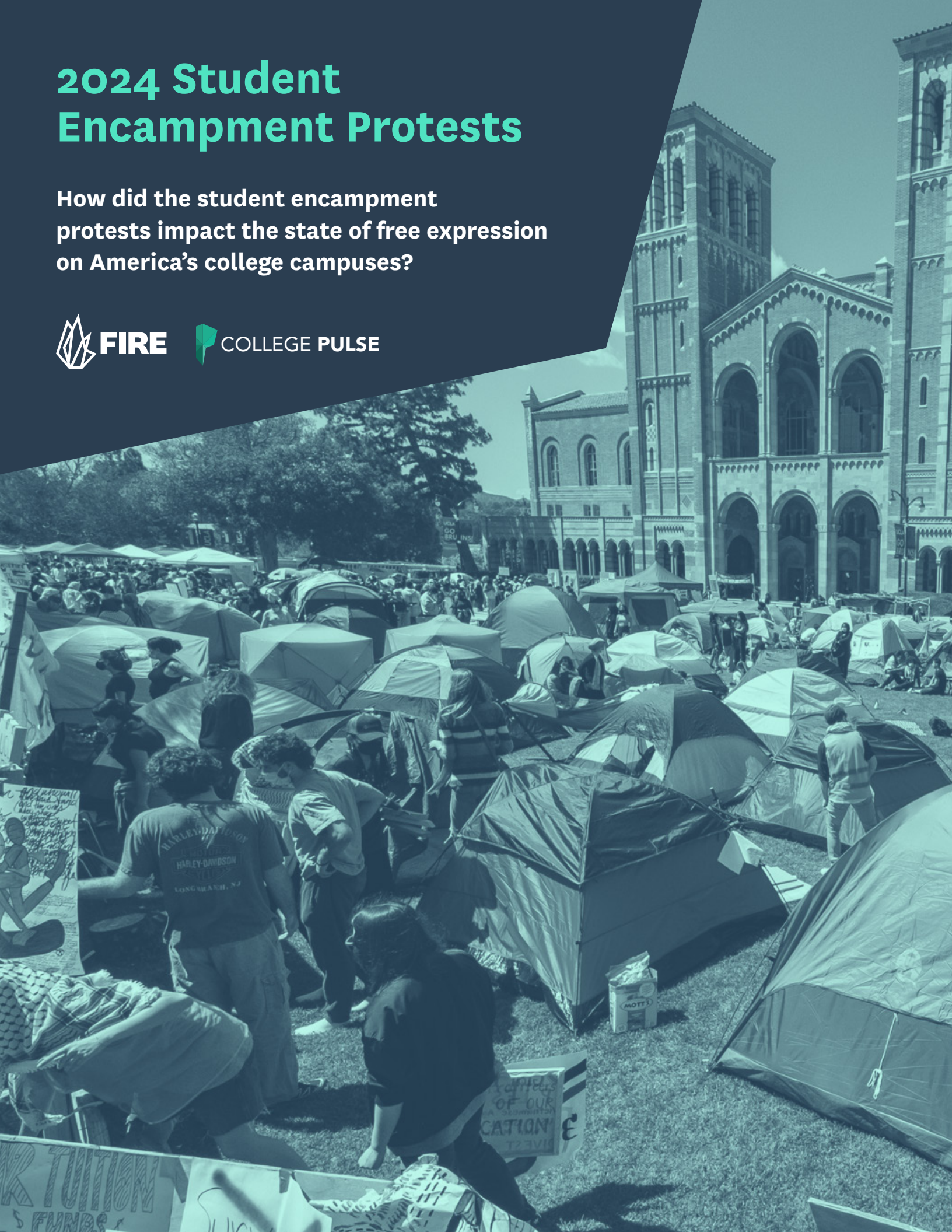
How did the student encampment protests impact the state of free expression on America's college campuses?



**FIRE**



**COLLEGE PULSE**



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# Executive Summary

On April 17, Columbia University called the New York City Police Department and authorized it to take down an encampment set up on campus by student protesters who opposed Israel’s military actions in Gaza. The school also authorized the police to arrest students participating in the encampment protest. The next day, Columbia students established another encampment. They were joined in solidarity by students across the country, who established encampments on more than 100 campuses. These events presented a unique opportunity to assess what impact, if any, encampment protests have on the expression climate of America’s colleges and universities.

For this survey FIRE and College Pulse sampled 3,803 undergraduate students at 30 four-year colleges and universities in the United States. We randomly selected 29 of these schools from the 257 schools we surveyed for the 2025 College Free Speech Rankings. We specifically selected Columbia University for inclusion because the encampment protests began there.

We conducted this survey between May 17, 2024, and June 25, 2024, and it has a margin of error of +/- 2%.

### Key findings:

1. Almost three-quarters of students (72%) said that it is at least “rarely” acceptable for college students to establish an encampment as part of a protest on campus, and 59% of college students said the same about occupying buildings.
2. Roughly 1 in 3 students (30%) have been disciplined, threatened with discipline, or know someone who has either been disciplined or threatened with discipline for expression on campus.
3. About two-thirds of students (65%) who have been disciplined, threatened with discipline, or know someone who has either been disciplined or threatened with discipline for expression on campus experienced this during a protest on campus in a public space such as the green or the quad.
4. “Administrative Support” — a measure of how strongly students think their administration supports free speech on campus — is significantly lower among students on campuses where encampment protesters were arrested than among students on campuses with an encampment but no arrests and among students on campuses without an encampment.
5. More than half of students (53%) said they feel “very” or “somewhat” uncomfortable discussing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with their peers. Students on campuses where encampment protesters were arrested are significantly more uncomfortable doing this than students on campuses without an encampment.
6. More than half of Muslim students (53%) said that the right to freedom of speech is “not at all” or “not very” secure on campus, and 48% of Muslim students said that the police response to encampments on campuses across the country makes them feel “very” or “somewhat” unsafe on their campus.
7. Roughly a quarter of Jewish students said that the right to freedom speech is “not at all” secure or “not very” secure (27%), that they feel “very” or “somewhat” unsafe on campus right now (28%), and that the police response to encampments on campuses across the country makes them feel “very” or “somewhat” unsafe on campus (26%).
8. One-third of liberal students said that the right to freedom of speech is “not at all” secure or “not very” secure on campus, whereas 26% of moderate students and 17% of conservative students said the same.

## About Us

### About College Pulse

College Pulse is a survey research and analytics company dedicated to understanding the attitudes, preferences, and behaviors of today's college students. College Pulse delivers custom data-driven marketing and research solutions, utilizing its unique American College Student Panel™ that includes over 850,000 college students and recent alumni from more than 1,500 two- and four-year colleges and universities in all 50 states.

**For more information, visit [collegepulse.com](https://collegepulse.com) or [@CollegeInsights](https://twitter.com/CollegeInsights) on X.**

### About FIRE

The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to defending and sustaining the individual rights of all Americans to free speech and free thought. These rights include freedom of speech, freedom of association, due process, legal equality, religious liberty, and sanctity of conscience — the most essential qualities of liberty. FIRE also recognizes that colleges and universities play a vital role in preserving free thought within a free society. To this end, we place a special emphasis on defending these rights of students and faculty members on our nation's campuses.

**For more information, visit [thefire.org](https://thefire.org) or [@thefireorg](https://twitter.com/thefireorg) on X.**

## Acknowledgments and Suggested Citation

Our gratitude goes to Sean Stevens and Nathan Honeycutt for questionnaire design, data analysis, and authoring this report. We would additionally like to thank Logan Dougherty, Angela C. Erickson, Komi Frey, Sigrid Fry-Revere, Emily Nayer, and Ryne Weiss for support with data validation.

Greg Lukianoff  
President and CEO, FIRE

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## Overview

Freedom of speech is the most widely known and cherished right recognized by the First Amendment.<sup>1</sup> The right to speak freely prevents the government from placing limits on most forms of expression, whether it is spoken or communicated through art, music, performance, the written word, or another method.

This right is not absolute. Speech that incites imminent lawless action is not protected by the First Amendment. Neither are true threats, fighting words, obscenity, or defamation. Misrepresentations to obtain money or some other material benefit, perjury, and speech integral to criminal conduct are also not constitutionally protected.<sup>2</sup>

Substantially disrupting an event or a speaker’s ability to complete their remarks — known as a “heckler’s veto” — is also not constitutionally protected.

The government can also impose reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on expression, provided these restrictions are content-neutral, narrowly tailored to serve a significant government interest, and leave open an ample number of alternative channels for the expression.<sup>3</sup> Such restrictions can include limits on: amplified sound, the number of people who can safely gather in a particular space, holding demonstrations early in the morning or late in the evening, the size of signs that can be placed on government property, erecting structures, and camping.<sup>4</sup>

State colleges and universities, as arms of the government, are bound by the First Amendment. Private colleges and universities are not. However, most private colleges and universities promise their students and faculty broad free expression rights.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, students and faculty on these campuses enjoy speech protections. These protections include the right to protest, which is grounded on two other First Amendment freedoms — the right to petition and the right to assemble — in addition to the right to speak freely.

There is no doubt that the student encampments erected in spring 2024 on campuses across the country represented a protest. But campus encampments are also subject to reasonable time, place, and manner

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1 Freedom Forum. (2023). 2023 Update Americans Voice Strong Support for Free Speech, Noisy Petition and Assembly: Faith in religion remains strong, but doubts about the press. Available online: <https://www.freedomforum.org/where-america-stands/2023-update/>.

2 See FIRE’s Unprotected Speech Synopsis. Available online: <https://www.thefire.org/research-learn/unprotected-speech-synopsis>.

3 Harris, S. (November 6, 2012). Misunderstanding ‘Time, Place, and Manner’ Restrictions. Available online: <https://www.thefire.org/news/misunderstanding-time-place-and-manner-restrictions>.

4 See *Clark v. Community for Creative Non-Violence*, 468 U.S. 288, 297 (Finding that a prohibition on sleeping overnight in a National Park was a reasonable time, place, or manner restriction).

5 An inspection of FIRE’s Spotlight Database — an evaluation of the speech policies at almost 500 American colleges and universities — reveals that 107 private institutions have a rating of “green light,” “yellow light,” or “red light,” meaning that they promise free expression rights to their students and faculty. In contrast, only 6 private institutions have a “Warning” rating, meaning that a college or university consistently states that it holds a certain set of values above a commitment to freedom of speech. FIRE’s Spotlight Database is available online: <https://www.thefire.org/research-learn/using-fires-spotlight-database>.

restrictions.<sup>6</sup> This means that even state colleges and universities can regulate large gatherings and overnight camping, provided the time, place, and manner restrictions are content-neutral. Students who violate reasonable, content-neutral rules risk arrest and/or disciplinary action. But if punishment is not viewpoint-neutral, proportional, and consistent with past practice, it violates an individual's expressive rights.

This report presents the results of a survey conducted by FIRE and College Pulse of 3,803 undergraduate students enrolled at 30 four-year colleges and universities across the country, and it is meant to complement the 2025 College Free Speech Rankings. We conducted this survey between May 17, 2024, and June 25, 2024, and it has an overall margin of error of +/- 2%. (Margins of error for subgroups are larger.)

In our sample, we included Columbia University, because this was the epicenter of the encampments, and we selected nine other universities that experienced encampments where encampment protesters were arrested (as of May 1, 2024). We also randomly selected 10 universities from among a group of universities where students established encampments but none were arrested, and we randomly selected another 10 from among a group of universities that experienced no encampments: This was effectively our control group. We broke the groups up this way so we could compare these different types of campuses and report any notable differences.

We selected all 30 universities on May 8, 2024, from among the 257 schools in the 2025 College Free Speech Rankings. Some of the selected schools subsequently saw encampments established and/or arrests of protesters. (See the Appendix for the full list of schools surveyed.)

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<sup>6</sup> Appleby, J. (May 3, 2024). Campus encampment bans rarely violate the First Amendment. Here's why. Available online: <https://www.thefire.org/news/campus-encampment-bans-rarely-violate-first-amendment-heres-why>; FIRE (April 25, 2024). Here's what students need to know about protesting on campus right now: As Israel/Gaza campus protests spread nationwide, FIRE answers questions about students' expressive rights. Available online: <https://www.thefire.org/news/heres-what-students-need-know-about-protesting-campus-right-now>.

## 2024 Student Encampment Protests

On October 7, 2023, Hamas attacked Israel, taking more than 1,000 hostages. Israel responded by declaring war on Hamas and sending its military forces into Gaza. The hostilities between Hamas and Israel inflamed already existing tensions over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on many campuses across America.<sup>7</sup>

For instance:

- In 2023, we recorded 156 deplatforming attempts on American college and university campuses, a record number. Fifty-four of them involved a controversy over expression regarding Israel or Palestine. This year, as of this writing, we recorded 110 deplatforming attempts, and 75 of them involved a controversy over expression regarding Israel and Palestine.<sup>8</sup> Until October 7, 2023, 11% of all deplatforming attempts involved controversies over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since that date, deplatforming attempts related to the conflict account for 54%.
- From January 1, 2000, until October 6, 2023, we recorded 81 attempts to sanction scholars for speech about Israel, Palestine, or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on American college and university campuses. This makes up 7% of the sanction attempts from that period. From October 7, 2023, until this writing, we recorded an additional 69 attempts regarding expression about Israel, Palestine, or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This makes up 72% of the total sanction attempts from that period and almost the same amount as we recorded in the previous 23 years.<sup>9</sup>
- From January 1, 2020, until June 15, 2024, 246 students or student groups at American college and university campuses faced attempted sanctions for expression related to Israel, Palestine, or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Of these 246 attempts, 167 (67%) occurred since October 7, 2023.<sup>10</sup>

Then in April, Columbia University asked the New York City Police Department to dismantle an encampment established that day by student protesters who opposed Israel's ongoing military campaign in Gaza. The police were also authorized to arrest the student protesters.<sup>11</sup> The next day, students established a new encampment on Columbia's campus. This time, then-President Minouche Shafik entered into negotiations with the protesters rather than call the police. Roughly a week later, these negotiations failed. Columbia then suspended the student protesters.<sup>12</sup>

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7 Honeycutt, N. & Lan, A. (2023). Were campus tensions around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict high before October 7?. Available online: <https://www.thefire.org/news/were-campus-tensions-around-israeli-palestinian-conflict-high-october-7>

8 See FIRE's Campus Deplatforming database, available online: <https://www.thefire.org/research-learn/campus-deplatforming-database>.

9 See FIRE's Scholars Under Fire database, available online: <https://www.thefire.org/research-learn/scholars-under-fire>.

10 Data reported reflect the Students Under Fire database as of June 15, 2024. The full Students Under Fire database is currently internal to FIRE but will be released in full in early 2025.

11 Otterman, S. (April 18, 2024). ). Columbia Sends In the N.Y.P.D. to Arrest Protesters in Tent City. Available online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/18/nyregion/columbia-university-tent-city-palestinian-protest.html>;

Otterman, S. & Blinder, A. (April 18, 2024). Over 100 Arrested at Columbia After Pro-Palestinian Protest. Available online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/18/nyregion/columbia-university-protests-antisemitism.html>.

12 Bamberger, C. (April 29, 2024). Columbia University begins suspensions for students at pro-Gaza encampment. Available online: <https://www.nydailynews.com/2024/04/29/talks-break-down-between-columbia-students-administrators-over-pro-gaza-encampment/>.

In response, students broke into and occupied Hamilton Hall — a building also occupied by student protesters during 1968 demonstrations against the Vietnam War. Columbia again called in the NYPD, who arrested more than 100 student protesters and dismantled the second encampment that was set up a day after the first was removed.<sup>13</sup>

Columbia ranks 250, or second-to-last, in FIRE’s 2025 College Free Speech Rankings with an overall score of 0.00 and an “Abysmal” speech climate.<sup>14</sup> It also has one of the worst “Administrative Support” scores, a component that measures student perception of how strongly their college or university administration protects free speech on their campus. On this measure, it ranks 247 out of 251 schools. Additional analyses of this year’s College Free Speech Rankings survey reveal that Columbia’s “Administrative Support” score plummeted during the encampment protests.<sup>15</sup>

The dismantling of the initial encampment at Columbia reverberated across the country. In solidarity with the students arrested at Columbia, students on at least 100 campuses established encampments. Many of these student protesters demanded that their college or university divest from companies that work with Israel or its military.<sup>16</sup>

The ability to distinguish between peaceful, lawful protest and unlawful protest is as important now as ever.

## Most Students Did Not Participate in the Protests

8 in 10 students on the 30 campuses surveyed reported that they have not participated in a pro-Palestinian protest on their campus. Roughly 1 in 10 students (12%) said they have participated in one, and 7% of students said they have not participated in a pro-Palestinian protest on their campus, but they have participated in a counterprotest.

Unsurprisingly, when they protested, Muslim and Jewish students differed strongly in the cause they supported. Almost a third of Muslim students (31%) said they have participated in a pro-Palestinian protest, while roughly a quarter of Jewish students (26%) said they have participated in a counterprotest. But most Muslim (64%) and Jewish (69%) students have participated in neither.

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13 NBC News. (May 1, 2024). Nearly 100 people arrested at Columbia, NYPD says after clearing Hamilton Hall. Available online: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/live-blog/campus-protests-live-updates-students-occupy-columbia-university-rcna149926>.

14 Columbia’s overall score was rounded up to 0.00 from -0.53.

15 Stevens, S.T. (2024). 2025 College Free Speech Rankings: What Is the State of Free Speech on America’s College Campuses? The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression. <https://www.thefire.org/research-learn/2025-college-free-speech-rankings>

16 Alonso, J. (April 24, 2024). Why Are Students Camping on University Lawns? A new wave of campus protests has hit institutions from California to Massachusetts, many emboldened by arrests at Columbia University. Available online: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/students/free-speech/2024/04/24/students-set-encampments-coast-coast>;

William, D. (April 30, 2024). OPINION: Protestors are writing the history books in Dunn Meadow. Available online: <https://www.idsnews.com/article/2024/04/opinion-dunn-meadow-protest-history-vietnam-war-apartheid-gulf-war-ii-student-demonstration>.



Ideological differences in protest participation are also stark. One-fifth of liberal students report having participated in a pro-Palestinian protest, whereas 4% of moderate students and 2% of conservative students said the same. Conservative students were more likely than liberal students to have participated in a counterprotest: 13% reported having done so, whereas 8% of moderate students and 5% of liberal students said the same.

## **Student Awareness of Campus Speech Policies Is Middling**

A majority of students surveyed reported some level of awareness of their college or university's speech policies on campus protests, including 34% who said they are at least "somewhat" aware of them. Roughly 3 in 10 (29%) said that they are "not very" aware, and 19% said they are "not at all" aware.

Excluding students who said they are "not at all" aware (N=733), we asked the students (N = 3,070) what kinds of protest actions are allowed on campus. Of these students, roughly 8 in 10 said they are aware that creating a petition (81%), holding a sign (80%), or handing out flyers (77%) is allowed on campus, and no more than 5% of students think that these actions are not allowed.

However, this level of knowledge leaves much to be desired. Between 15% and 20% of these students said they are "not sure" if these actions are allowed. Further, roughly 3 in 10 (31%) said they are "not sure" if occupying buildings on campus is allowed, and 15% said the same about defacing school property. Further, 15% think that encampments are allowed on campus while 36% said they are "not sure."

**TABLE 1: What protest actions do students think are allowed on campus?**

| <b>Protest action</b>                     | <b>Allowed on campus</b> | <b>Not allowed on campus</b> | <b>Not sure</b> |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Create a petition.                        | 81%                      | 3%                           | 16%             |
| Hold a sign.                              | 80%                      | 4%                           | 16%             |
| Hand out flyers.                          | 77%                      | 5%                           | 18%             |
| March for long distances.                 | 61%                      | 9%                           | 30%             |
| Distribute or post materials anonymously. | 50%                      | 13%                          | 37%             |
| Engage in a hunger strike.                | 32%                      | 12%                          | 56%             |
| Use amplified sound.                      | 28%                      | 25%                          | 47%             |
| Establish encampments.                    | 15%                      | 48%                          | 36%             |
| Burn an American flag.                    | 8%                       | 50%                          | 42%             |
| Occupy buildings.                         | 7%                       | 62%                          | 31%             |
| Deface school property.                   | 4%                       | 82%                          | 15%             |

Students at campuses without encampments and students at campuses where encampment protesters were not arrested reported less awareness of their college or university's speech code policies than students at campuses where encampment protesters were arrested. On campuses without an encampment, 56% of students said they are "not at all" or "not very" aware of their college or university's speech code policies. On campuses with an encampment, just less than half of students (49%) said the same. In contrast, on campuses where an encampment protest resulted in student arrests, 40% of students said they are "not at all" or "not very" aware of their college or university's speech code policies. It is not discernible from the survey data if this increased level of self-reported awareness of speech policies preceded the arrests on campus or resulted from them.

Colleges and universities can impose reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on speech. Determining whether or not a specific college or university applied reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on a student encampment requires reviewing how it handled similar situations in the past. For instance, if a school previously allowed students to establish an encampment, or "shantytown," to protest apartheid in South Africa but recently ordered students to dismantle a campus encampment protesting Israel's military actions in Gaza, this violates student speech rights.

## **Student Responses Vary on What Kinds of Protest Actions Are Acceptable and Who Can Engage in Them**

The survey also asked students about the acceptability of certain protest actions. We randomly assigned students to one of three conditions and asked how acceptable it is: for college students to engage in such actions (N = 1,290), for "pro-Palestinian college students" to engage in such actions (N = 1,298), or for "pro-Israeli college students" to engage in such actions (N = 1,215).

More than 9 in 10 students said that it is at least "rarely" acceptable for college students to create a petition, hold a sign, hand out flyers, march for long distances, and distribute or post materials anonymously. On the other hand, 59% of students said it is at least "rarely" acceptable for college students to occupy a campus building, and 35% said the same thing about defacing school property.

Ten percent of students said that it is "always" acceptable for students to establish an encampment, and a cumulative total of 72% said it is at least "rarely" acceptable for students to establish an encampment.

**Table 2: Acceptability of college students using the following protest actions.**

| Protest action                            | Always acceptable | Sometimes acceptable | Rarely acceptable | Never acceptable |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Create a petition.                        | 76%               | 18%                  | 3%                | 3%               |
| Hold a sign.                              | 69%               | 24%                  | 5%                | 3%               |
| Hand out flyers.                          | 69%               | 24%                  | 3%                | 4%               |
| March for long distances.                 | 59%               | 29%                  | 8%                | 4%               |
| Distribute or post materials anonymously. | 40%               | 39%                  | 13%               | 7%               |
| Engage in a hunger strike.                | 28%               | 32%                  | 24%               | 17%              |
| Use amplified sound.                      | 16%               | 47%                  | 26%               | 11%              |
| Establish encampments.                    | 10%               | 34%                  | 27%               | 28%              |
| Burn an American flag.                    | 9%                | 14%                  | 20%               | 57%              |
| Occupy buildings.                         | 6%                | 24%                  | 28%               | 41%              |
| Deface school property.                   | 2%                | 10%                  | 23%               | 65%              |

A clear, consistent pattern emerged between the types of actions students said are at least “rarely” acceptable when performed by pro-Palestinian college students and those they said are at least “rarely” acceptable when performed by pro-Israeli college students. Although in most cases the differences are not stark, a higher percentage of students consider every single protest action at least slightly more acceptable when performed by a pro-Palestinian college student than when performed by a pro-Israeli student.

Of course, the First Amendment cares neither who the speaker is nor what they say.

**TABLE 3: Percentage of college students who see each kind of protest action as at least “rarely” acceptable for pro-Palestinian versus pro-Israeli students.**

| Protest action                            | Pro-Palestinian college students | Pro-Israeli college students |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Create a petition.                        | 96%                              | 93%                          |
| Hold a sign.                              | 95%                              | 94%                          |
| Hand out flyers.                          | 95%                              | 94%                          |
| March for long distances.                 | 95%                              | 92%                          |
| Distribute or post materials anonymously. | 92%                              | 89%                          |
| Use amplified sound.                      | 87%                              | 85%                          |
| Engage in a hunger strike.                | 84%                              | 81%                          |
| Establish encampments.                    | 74%                              | 69%                          |
| Occupy buildings.                         | 60%                              | 51%                          |
| Burn an American flag.                    | 44%                              | 41%                          |
| Deface school property.                   | 35%                              | 27%                          |

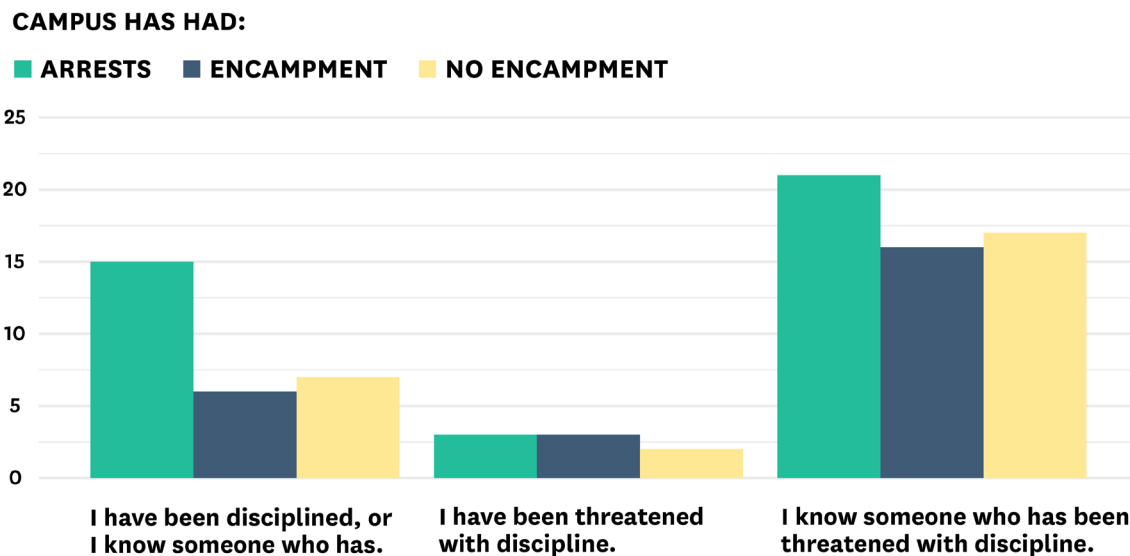
## At Least 1 in 10 Students Were Disciplined for Expression on Campus

1 in 10 students said they or someone they know have been disciplined by their college administration for expression. Another 3% said they have been threatened with discipline, and another 18% said they know someone who has been threatened with discipline. That means almost 1 in 3 students have either been disciplined, threatened with discipline, or know someone who has either been disciplined or threatened with discipline for expression on campus. The forms of expression for which students faced disciplinary action likely include a mix of protected and unprotected speech.

Among these students, 65% said that the expression for which they or someone they know have been disciplined or threatened with discipline happened during a public campus protest. For comparison, 9% of students reported having been disciplined for expression or having been threatened with discipline in their role as a member of a student group or organization. In no other context did more than 7% of students report having experienced discipline or the threat of discipline.

Students on campuses where encampment protesters were arrested reported more experience with disciplinary action for expression compared to students on campuses where an encampment was established but no arrests were made or on campuses where no encampment was established.

Figure 1. Percentage of students who said ...

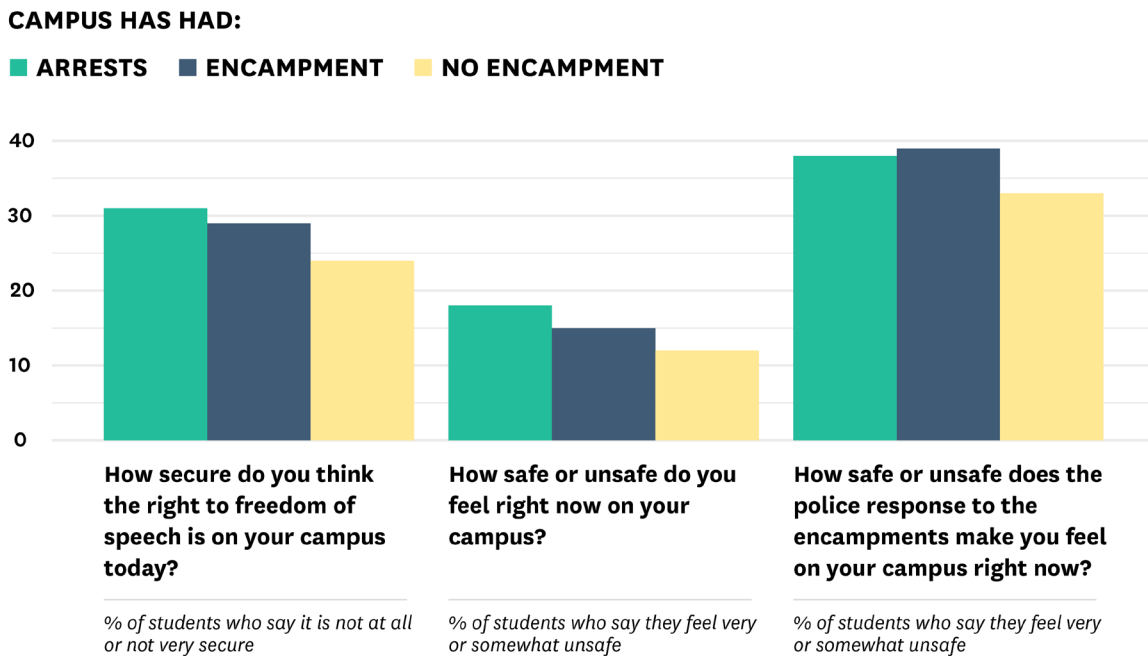


We also found ideological differences in student experience with disciplinary action for expression. Thirteen percent of liberal students reported either having been disciplined for expression or knowing someone who has been, whereas 5% of moderate students and 4% of conservative students said the same. Twenty-two percent of liberal students said they know someone who has been threatened with discipline for their expression, whereas 17% of moderate students and 12% of conservative students said the same.

## Liberal and Muslim Students Said Speech Rights on Campus Are Not Secure, Safety on Campus Is Threatened by Police Presence

More than a quarter of students (28%) said that the right to freedom of speech is “not at all” secure or “not very” secure on campus, 15% of students said they feel “very” or “somewhat” unsafe on campus right now, and 37% of students said the police response to encampments on campuses across the country makes them feel “very” or “somewhat” unsafe on campus. These feelings tend to be strongest among students on campuses where encampment protesters were arrested.

Figure 2. Percentage of students who say ...



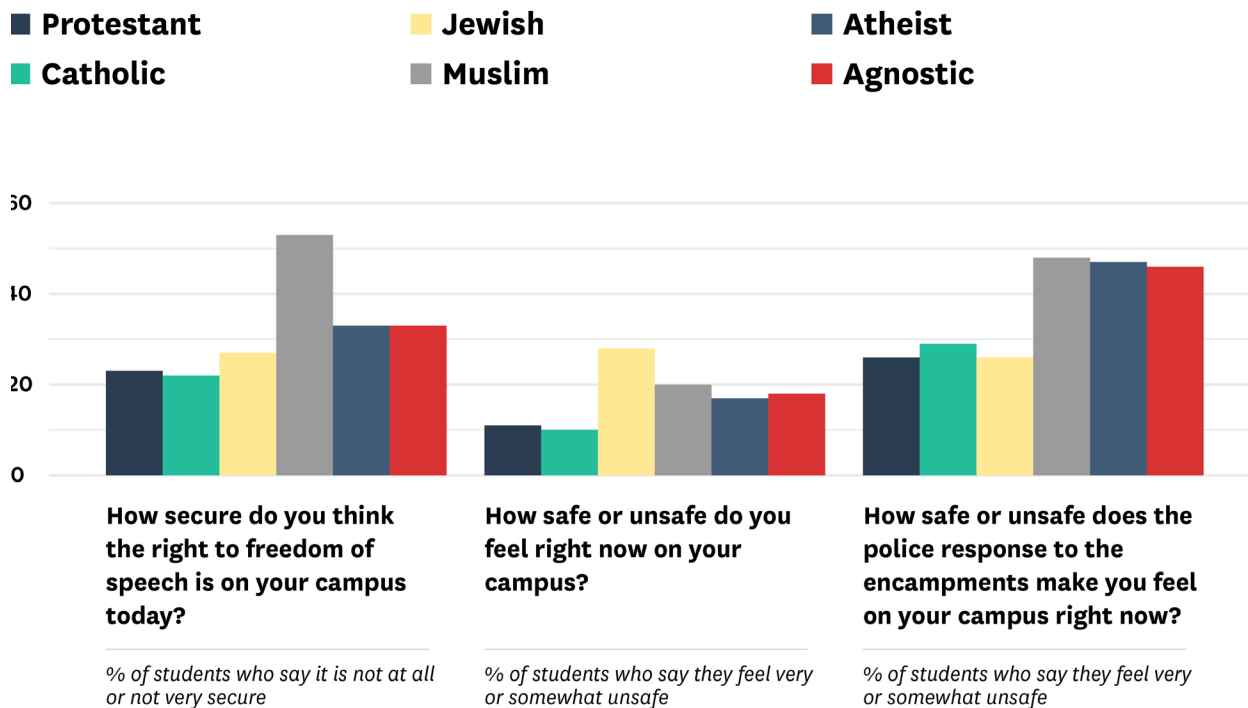
Most of these sentiments are particularly strong among liberal students. One-third of liberal students said that the right to freedom of speech is “not at all” secure or “not very” secure on campus, whereas 26% of moderate students and 17% of conservative students said the same. More than half of liberal students (52%) said that the police response to campus encampments across the country makes them feel “very” or “somewhat” unsafe on their own campus, whereas 23% of moderate students and 12% of conservative students said the same.

Muslim students reported similar feelings as liberal students. More than half of Muslim students (53%) said that the right to freedom of speech is “not at all” secure or “not very” secure on campus, and 48% of Muslim students said that the police response to nationwide campus encampments makes them feel “very” or “somewhat” unsafe on campus.<sup>17</sup> A fifth of Muslim students said they feel “very” or “somewhat” unsafe on campus right now.

In contrast, fewer Jewish students said that the right to freedom of speech is “not at all” secure or “not very” secure on campus (27%) or that the police response to encampments on campuses across the country makes them feel “very” or “somewhat” unsafe on campus (26%). However, more than a quarter of Jewish students (28%) said they feel “very” or “somewhat” unsafe on campus right now.

**Figure 3. Percentage of students who say ...**

**RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION:**



<sup>17</sup> Differences with all other religious groups significant at  $p < .05$ .



## A Majority of Students Are Uncomfortable Discussing the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict With Their Peers

A majority of students (53%) said that they are “very” or “somewhat” uncomfortable expressing their views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in conversation with other students. Levels of discomfort do not differ much between students at campuses where encampment protesters were arrested and those on campuses with an encampment but no arrests. However, students on campuses with an encampment (either with or without arrests) reported significantly more discomfort discussing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with their peers than did students on campuses without an encampment.<sup>18</sup>

Additionally, moderate students reported significantly more discomfort than liberal or conservative students discussing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with other students.<sup>19</sup> Conservative and liberal student discomfort do not differ significantly.

Students are more comfortable discussing other topics with their peers. A majority of students said they are “very” or “somewhat” comfortable expressing their views on abortion (64%) or police misconduct (62%). Only one statistically significant difference for these items emerged: Students on campuses with no encampments are more comfortable expressing their views on abortion than are students on campuses with encampments with no arrests.<sup>20</sup>

Comfort levels between students on campuses where encampment protesters were arrested, students on campuses with an encampment but no arrests, and students on campuses without an encampment do not differ. Liberal students, however, reported significantly higher levels of comfort expressing their views on abortion or police misconduct than did moderate or conservative students.<sup>21</sup>

## Administrative Support Is Lowest on Campuses With Arrests

Student confidence in their college administration’s ability to protect and promote free expression on campus varies:

- Two-fifths of students said that their administration is “not at all” or “not very” supportive of student protests on campus, while about a quarter of students (23%) said their administration is “very” or “extremely” supportive of student protests.
- About a third of students (32%) said that it is “not at all” or “not very” clear that their administration protects free speech on campus, while a third of students said it is “very” or “extremely” clear that it does so.
- Roughly a third of students said that it is “not at all” or “not very” likely that their administration would defend a speaker’s right to express their views, while about a quarter (26%) said it is “very” or “extremely” likely that their administration would defend a speaker’s right to do so.

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18 Differences significant at  $p < .01$ .

19 Difference significant at  $p < .001$

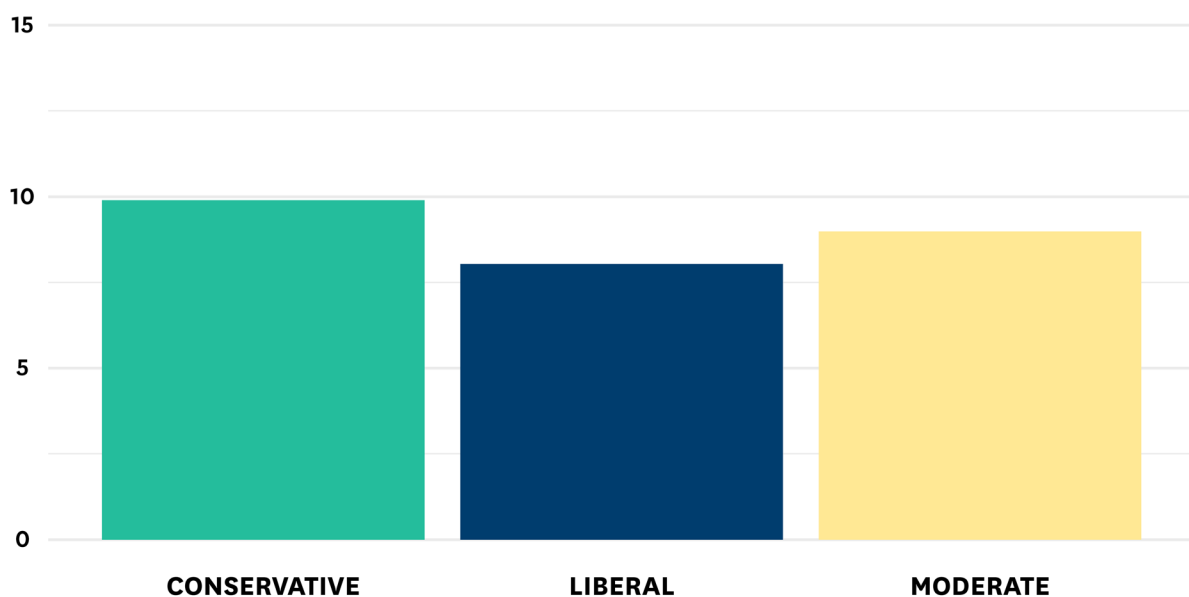
20 Difference significant at  $p < .01$

21 All differences significant at  $p \leq .01$ .

“Administrative Support” — a score computed by summing responses to all three questions that ask about students’ perception of their college administration’s support for freedom of speech on campus — is significantly lower at schools where encampment protesters were arrested than at schools with an encampment but no arrests or those without an encampment.<sup>22</sup> As with student awareness of speech policies, the survey data does not reveal whether “Administrative Support” was already low at schools where arrests occurred. Analyses performed on the 2025 College Free Speech Rankings survey data, however, show that “Administrative Support” scores plummeted at Columbia University and at Barnard College, where students were arrested, during the encampment protests.<sup>23</sup>

Liberal students also reported significantly lower “Administrative Support” scores than did moderate and conservative students.<sup>24</sup>

**Figure 4. “Administrative Support” scores by political ideology.**



Students also generally don’t believe faculty are likely to support freedom of speech: 28% said that faculty are “not at all” or “not very” likely to defend a speaker’s rights during a speech controversy, while 27% said that faculty are “extremely” or “very” likely to do so. However, students see faculty as more supportive than administrators of student protests. One-fifth of students said that faculty are “not at all” or “not very” supportive of student protests on campus, while roughly a third of students (34%) said that faculty are “very” or “extremely” supportive of student protests.

22 Both differences are significant at  $p \leq .02$ .

23 Stevens, S.T. (2024). 2025 College Free Speech Rankings: What Is the State of Free Speech on America’s College Campuses? The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression. [INSERT LINK](#)

24 Difference significant at  $p < .001$ .

“Faculty Support” — a score computed by summing responses to both questions that ask about students’ perception of faculty support for freedom of speech on campus — does not differ significantly between schools where encampment protesters were arrested, schools with an encampment, and schools without an encampment.

“Faculty Support” mostly does not differ by ideology, although conservative students were more likely than liberal students to report that faculty would be supportive of protests and would defend a speaker.<sup>25</sup>

## Trends in Campus Deplatforming and Scholars Under Fire Databases Since October 7, 2023

### The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in the Campus Deplatforming Database

FIRE’s Campus Deplatforming database tracks deplatforming attempts including efforts to disinvite speakers from campus speeches or commencement ceremonies, cancel performances of concerts, plays, or the screenings of movies, or have controversial artwork removed from public display. It also tracks attempts to disrupt a speech or performance that is in progress, regardless of whether those attempts succeed or fail.

Similar to attempts to sanction scholars, attempts to deplatform speakers or works for views related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict dominated our list of deplatforming attempts since October 7. The deplatforming database details 142 deplatforming attempts between January 1, 2000, and October 6, 2023, related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: That’s about 11% of all of the deplatforming attempts during that period. From October 7 until this was written on July 16, 2024, we logged an additional 112 deplatforming attempts: That’s about 53.8% of the deplatforming attempts during this period.

By the end of 2024, there’s a good chance the Deplatforming database will include more deplatforming attempts related to this issue that occurred after October 7 than before.

### Deplatforming before October 7, 2023

Of the 142 deplatforming attempts related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict before October 7, 68 target pro-Israeli expression, and 74 target pro-Palestinian expression.

Attempts targeting pro-Israeli expression were much more likely to include an attempted disruption: Half of all of deplatforming attempts targeting pro-Israeli expression include an attempted or successful disruption, whereas only 3% of attempts targeting pro-Palestinian expression include an attempted or successful disruption.

### Deplatforming since October 7, 2023

Of the 112 deplatforming attempts related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since October 7, 63 target pro-Israeli expression and 49 target pro-Palestinian expression.

A shocking 78% of the deplatforming attempts targeting pro-Israeli speech include an attempted or suc-

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25  $p < .001$ .

successful disruption, whereas only one deplatforming attempt targeting pro-Palestinian speech includes an attempted disruption.

## The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in the Scholars Under Fire Database

FIRE's Scholars Under Fire database tracks attempts to sanction scholars for speech that is protected by the First Amendment (or would be if it had occurred at a public university) since 2000. Consistent with our other findings, the data show that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has eclipsed all other campus controversies since October 7, 2023.

Scholars Under Fire documents 81 attempts to sanction scholars for speech about Israel from January 1, 2000, until October 6, 2023, or 7% of the sanction attempts from that period. From October 7, 2023, until this was written on July 12, 2024, we documented an additional 69 scholar sanction attempts related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: That's 72% of the total number of sanction attempts from that period.

Put another way, in the nine months following October 7, we saw the same number of attempts to sanction scholars for their speech about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as we did in the entire two decades spanning 2001-2021.

### Scholars Under Fire Before October 7, 2023

Of the 81 scholar sanction attempts related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict documented between January 1, 2000, and October 6, 2023, a large majority, 84%, target scholars for pro-Palestinian<sup>26</sup> speech, while 16% target scholars for pro-Israeli<sup>27</sup> speech.

Sanction attempts against scholars for pro-Israeli speech were more likely to result in a sanction, with 62% of those scholars facing some kind of sanction including two terminations. Sanction attempts against scholars for pro-Palestinian speech were successful 38% of the time and include eight terminations.

### Scholars Under Fire Since October 7, 2023

Of the 69 scholar sanction attempts related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict documented from October 7, 2023, to July 12, 2024, 80% target scholars for pro-Palestinian speech, while 20% target scholars for pro-Israeli speech.

Sanction attempts against scholars on both sides were equally likely to be successful, with 67% of attempts resulting in some sanction. Sanction attempts against scholars for pro-Palestinian speech more frequently resulted in termination: Nine scholars were terminated for pro-Palestinian speech, while only one scholar was terminated for pro-Israeli speech.

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26 Broadly construed, including anti-Israeli speech.

27 Broadly construed, including anti-Palestinian speech.

## Conclusions

These survey results show that students on campuses where encampment protesters were arrested have less confidence in their administration's support for freedom of speech than students at schools with an encampment but no arrests or students at schools without an encampment. And this year's College Free Speech Rankings survey found that "Administrative Support" scores plummeted on campuses with an encampment. Taken together, these findings suggest that a notable portion of students on campuses where encampment protesters were arrested think their administration violated protesters' free speech rights. On many of these campuses, the speech climate was not great to begin with, and students were more likely to face arrest on campuses with a pre-existing poor speech climate.<sup>28</sup>

This conclusion is supported further by the finding that roughly 1 in 5 students are "not at all aware" of their college campus' written policies on campus protests. What's more, among students with at least minimal awareness of these written policies, 15% said that encampments are allowed and another 36% said they are not sure whether encampments are allowed. Additionally, almost three-quarters of students said that it is at least "rarely" acceptable for students to establish encampments on campus, and 1 in 10 students said it is "always" acceptable.

Student protest has a long history on American college campuses. In the 1960's, students protested against the Vietnam War and the military draft on campuses across the country.<sup>29</sup> During the mid-1980's, students at Indiana University set up an encampment in protest of South African apartheid, demanding the university divest from companies profiting from work in South Africa.<sup>30</sup> Students also protested the Persian Gulf War in the early 1990's, the second Iraq War in the 2000's, and, more recently, racial inequality and injustice.<sup>31</sup> Colleges and universities tolerated many of these protests, declining to punish students in many instances when a protest violated reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions.<sup>32</sup>

For instance, in the spring of 1986, after IU's board of trustees voted multiple times against divesting from South Africa the prior fall, about 40 students established an encampment, or "shanty town," in Dunn

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28 Honeycutt, N. (May 15, 2024). Students more likely to face arrest on campuses with poor free speech climates. Available online: <https://www.thefire.org/news/students-more-likely-face-arrest-campus-poor-free-speech-climates>

29 Jimenez, K. (April 28, 2024). US has long history of college protests: Here's what happened in the past. Available online: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2024/04/28/us-has-long-history-of-college-protests-what-happened-in-the-past/7343111007/> ;

Mintz, S. (April 25, 2024). From Draft Cards to Hashtags: The changing face of student protest from the 1960s to today. Available online: <https://www.insidehighered.com/opinion/blogs/higher-ed-gamma/2024/04/25/protests-student-protests-vietnam-1960s-campus-higher-ed>.

30 Kellams, D. (September 21, 2021). Indiana University and South African Divestment. Available online: <https://blogs.libraries.indiana.edu/iubarchives/2021/09/21/sadivestment/>.

31 Dickey, J. (May 31, 2016). The Revolution on America's Campuses. Available online: <https://time.com/4347099/college-campus-protests/>;

Dodge, S. (January 30, 1991). Thousands of College Students Protest Persian Gulf War in Rallies and Sit-Ins; Others Support Military Action. Available online: <https://www.chronicle.com/article/thousands-of-college-students-protest-persian-gulf-war-in-rallies-and-sit-ins-others-support-military-action/>;

Moesel, A. (March 7, 2003). Students protest war against Iraq. Available online: <https://chicagomaroon.com/11965/news/students-protest-war-against-iraq/>.

32 Kellams, D. (September 21, 2021). Indiana University and South African Divestment. Available online: <https://blogs.libraries.indiana.edu/iubarchives/2021/09/21/sadivestment/>.

Meadow on campus. The structures emulated the housing in which many Black people in South Africa lived under apartheid. The university allowed the structures to remain standing through the end of the spring, throughout the summer, and into the fall semester. In December, the protesters voluntarily dismantled the “shanty town” and moved their protest efforts indoors.<sup>33</sup>

IU administrators handled this spring’s encampment protest very differently than they did the protest over South African apartheid a few generations ago.

After learning of students’ plans to establish an encampment in Dunn Meadow, administrators held a midnight meeting to amend the school’s Assembly Ground policy. The revised policy requires students to obtain administrative approval before “temporary or permanent installation of outdoor structures” occurs. It also prohibits students from using any “signage” or “tents.” The policy change was posted on a sign in the grass of Dunn Meadow and in a drop-down menu on the university website. When students began to set up the encampment, administrators called the police, who then dismantled it and arrested 33 students for trespassing. State police also confirmed that officers “with sniper capabilities” were positioned on rooftops overlooking the protesters.<sup>34</sup>

IU ranks 243 in the 2025 College Free Speech Rankings with an overall score of 24.69 and a “Poor” speech climate. Like Columbia, IU has a poor “Administrative Support” score: It ranks 231 out of 251 schools.<sup>35</sup>

At the University of Texas, Austin, President Jay Hartzell also called state police to prevent student protesters from establishing an encampment on campus.<sup>36</sup> Police arrested 57 protesters — and later dropped charges against 46 of them.<sup>37</sup> Campus protests continued since the police were first called to campus, and ultimately, more than 100 students were arrested.<sup>38</sup> Student and faculty backlash has been strong. More than 800 graduate students signed a petition demanding Hartzell resign, and more than 600 faculty members expressed their loss of confidence in the university’s president. Student protesters even showed up at the president’s house on campus.<sup>39</sup>

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33 Kellams, D. (September 21, 2021). Indiana University and South African Divestment. Available online: <https://blogs.libraries.indiana.edu/iubarchives/2021/09/21/sadivestment/>.

34 Knox, L. (April 30, 2024). Abrupt Changes to Protest Policies Raise Alarm: Indiana University changed a 55-year-old policy on student assembly hours before protesters set up an encampment. Free speech advocates are worried. Available online: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/students/free-speech/2024/04/30/indiana-protest-policy-change-raises-free-speech-concerns#>.

35 Stevens, S.T. (2024). 2025 College Free Speech Rankings: What Is the State of Free Speech on America’s College Campuses? The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression. <https://www.thefire.org/research-learn/2025-college-free-speech-rankings>

36 Students and faculty initially thought the state’s governor, Greg Abbott, had ordered the state police to prevent the encampment from being established on campus.

37 Hennessy-Fiske, M. & Svitek, P. (April 25, 2024). Criticism, praise of Texas governor after dramatic use of troopers on protesters. Available online: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2024/04/25/protests-texas-abbott-gaza/>.

38 Depart, Z. & Salhotra, P. (May 2, 2024). UT-Austin’s Jay Hartzell praised by GOP leaders as university presidents nationwide take heat over protest response: Hartzell’s protest response has also resulted in condemnations from students and faculty. Available online: <https://www.texastribune.org/2024/05/02/jay-hartzell-university-texas-republicans-protest/>.

39 Depart, Z. & Salhotra, P. (May 2, 2024). UT-Austin’s Jay Hartzell praised by GOP leaders as university presidents nationwide take heat over protest response: Hartzell’s protest response has also resulted in condemnations from students and faculty. Available online: <https://www.texastribune.org/2024/05/02/jay-hartzell-university-texas-republicans-protest/>.

UT Austin ranks 244 in the 2025 College Free Speech Rankings with an overall score of 22.32 and a “Poor” speech climate. Like Columbia and IU, UT Austin’s “Administrative Support” score is poor, ranking 240 out of 251 schools.<sup>40</sup>

Colleges can impose time, place, and manner restrictions on expression provided the restrictions are content-neutral, serve a significant government interest, and leave open an ample number of alternative channels for the expression. While protecting university activities from disruption may constitute a permissible time, place, and manner restriction, viewpoint discrimination is never permissible in a public forum.

As stated earlier, IU allowed students to set up encampments in protest of South African apartheid. By changing its policy the eve of a pro-Palestinian protest, IU suggested this break from past practice was motivated by the viewpoint of the protesters. UT Austin also seems to have been motivated by the protesters’ viewpoint, because it preemptively called the police on its students when it learned that some were planning to establish an encampment to protest Israel’s military actions in Gaza.

Both IU and UT Austin students reacted negatively to their administration’s response to the situation. Students at schools like Barnard College and Columbia also lost confidence in their administration, as evidenced by the fact that these schools’ scores on “Administrative Support” plummeted during the encampment protests.<sup>41</sup>

It appears that these schools, and very likely other schools, have lost student trust that they will protect free speech rights on campus. Regaining it is likely to be difficult.

During a recent discussion about open inquiry, institutional neutrality, and the loss of trust in America’s colleges and universities, Claremont McKenna College President Hiram Chodosh said, “You can’t earn trust back very quickly and you can’t create the conditions for dialogue in a reactive moment.”<sup>42</sup> He’s right: Regaining trust will require a concerted effort to change students’ minds.

Colleges and universities have not only lost the trust of their students. Confidence in American higher education among the general public is at record lows, and over the past year it dropped precipitously.<sup>43</sup> When Americans were asked why they have very little or no confidence in higher education, 41% mentioned political agendas and 7% mentioned political unrest.<sup>44</sup> The encampment protests likely contributed to this decline in confidence. According to a June FIRE poll, a large percentage of the general public do not sup-

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40 Stevens, S.T. (2024). 2025 College Free Speech Rankings: What Is the State of Free Speech on America’s College Campuses? The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression. INSERT LINK

41 Stevens, S.T. (2024). 2025 College Free Speech Rankings: What Is the State of Free Speech on America’s College Campuses? The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression. <https://www.thefire.org/research-learn/2025-college-free-speech-rankings>

42 University Presidents Discuss Open Inquiry & Institutional Neutrality: Heterodox Academy Conference 2024 in Chicago. Available online: <https://heterodoxacademy.org/videos/university-presidents-discuss-open-inquiry-institutional-neutrality/>.

43 Honeycutt, N. (June 11, 2024). Confidence in colleges and universities hits new lows, per FIRE polls: Young people, women, and Democrats reported the largest drops. Available online: <https://www.thefire.org/news/confidence-colleges-and-universities-hits-new-lows-fire-polls>.

44 Jones, J. (July 8, 2024). U.S. Confidence in Higher Education Now Closely Divided: Nearly as many U.S. adults have little or no confidence as have high confidence. Available online: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/646880/confidence-higher-education-closely-divided.aspx>.

port the encampment protests, do not believe the encampment protests have had any influence on how they view the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and believe that the students participating in the encampments should face some kind of disciplinary action.<sup>45</sup>

This loss of trust was exemplified when the former president of Harvard University, the president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the former president of the University of Pennsylvania testified before Congress about anti-Semitism on campus. When asked if they would discipline students who called for an intifada, the presidents gave a legally correct answer — that it depends on the context. But being legally correct did not matter. The administrators had already lost the trust of many of the representatives on the panel because of prior decisions to restrict other kinds of speech on campus. With the public watching, they were taken to task for their “evasive” answers.

That night, Liz Magill, then-president of the University of Pennsylvania, announced that the university must immediately “initiate a serious and careful look at our [speech] policies,” insinuating that after such a review the university’s speech policies would be revised in ways that would restrict free expression.<sup>46</sup> Four days later, she resigned along with the university board chairman. Harvard’s president, Claudine Gay, would soon resign as well after becoming embroiled in a controversy over plagiarism.<sup>47</sup>

This state of affairs is not tenable. Protests on campus this semester, however, seem inevitable. The conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza remains ongoing and the presidential election between Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump takes place on November 5. This is a combustible situation. To try and defuse it, administrators and faculty need to teach students about ways to engage in lawful protest, educate them about their school’s speech policies so they at least know when they’re violating them, and model civil discourse and dialogue across differences. Administrators also need to ensure policies on expressive activities are clear and consistent and that they and the faculty understand how to apply them without violating the constitutional rights of students.

It is clear from these results, and the findings from the 2025 College Free Speech Rankings, that students on a number of campuses across the country have lost confidence in their school’s administration to protect free speech on campus. Many administrators now face an uphill battle to earn their students’ trust back. Staying on the sidelines and not actively promoting free speech on campus is no longer an option.

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45 FIRE (June 20, 2024). POLL: Americans oppose campus protesters defacing property, occupying buildings. Available online: <https://www.thefire.org/news/poll-americans-oppose-campus-protesters-defacing-property-occupying-buildings>.

46 FIRE (December 6, 2023). Penn President Liz Magill signals profoundly misguided willingness to abandon free expression. Available online: <https://www.thefire.org/news/penn-president-liz-magill-signals-profoundly-misguided-willingness-abandon-free-expression>.

47 Crisp, E. (January 2, 2024). Stefanik takes victory lap over Harvard president’s exit. Available online: <https://thehill.com/homenews/4385227-stefanik-takes-victory-lap-over-harvard-presidents-exit/>.



# Appendix

## Methodology

This survey of 3,803 undergraduate students enrolled at 30 four-year colleges and universities across the country was designed by FIRE and administered by College Pulse between May 17, 2024 and June 25, 2024. It is meant as a complement to the 2025 College Free Speech Rankings. The overall margin of error is +/- 2%. Margins of error for subgroups are larger.

We included Columbia University as one of these 30 universities because it was the epicenter of the encampment protests. We randomly selected the other 29 colleges and universities from specific subcategories within the 257 schools FIRE ranked for the 2025 College Free Speech Rankings. In our sample, we included Columbia University, because this was the epicenter of the encampments, and we selected nine other universities that experienced encampments where encampment protesters were arrested (as of May 1, 2024). We also randomly selected 10 universities from among a group of universities where students established encampments but none were arrested, and we randomly selected another 10 from among a group of universities that experienced no encampments: This was effectively our control group. We broke the groups up this way so we could compare these different types of campuses and report any notable differences

The sample was drawn from College Pulse’s American College Student Panel™, which includes more than 850,000 verified undergraduate students and recent alumni from schools within a range of more than 1,500 two- and four-year colleges and universities in all 50 states. Panel members were recruited by a number of methods to help ensure student diversity in the panel population. These methods include web advertising, permission-based email campaigns, and partnerships with university-affiliated organizations.

College Pulse uses a two-stage validation process to ensure that all its surveys include only students currently enrolled in two-year or four-year colleges or universities. Students are required to provide an “.edu” email address to join the panel and, for this survey, had to acknowledge that they are currently enrolled full-time in a four-year degree program. All invitations to complete surveys were sent using the student’s “.edu” email address or through a notification in the College Pulse app, available on iOS and Android platforms.

College Pulse applies a post-stratification adjustment based on demographic distributions from multiple data sources, including the Current Population Survey (CPS), the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The “school universe weight” rebalances the sample based on a number of important benchmark attributes, such as race, gender, class year, voter registration status, and financial aid status. The sample weighting is accomplished using an iterative proportional fitting (IFP) process that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables to produce a representative sample of four year undergraduate students from the 257 colleges and universities surveyed.

College Pulse also applies a post-stratification adjustment based on demographic distributions from the Current Population Survey (CPS), the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). This “school weight” rebalances the sample from each individual school surveyed based on a number of important benchmark attributes, such as race, gender, class year, voter registration status, and financial aid status. The sample weighting is accomplished using

an iterative proportional fitting (IPF) process that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables to produce a representative sample of students at each individual school.

All weights are trimmed to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on the final results and to ensure over-sampled population groups do not completely lose their voice.

The use of these weights in statistical analysis ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the target populations. Even with these adjustments, surveys may be subject to error or bias due to question wording, context, and order effects.

For further information, please see: <https://collegepulse.com/methodology>.

## Topline Results

How secure do you think the right to freedom of speech is on your campus today?

- 7% Not at all secure
- 21% Not that secure
- 34% Somewhat secure
- 28% Very secure
- 10% Completely secure

How safe or unsafe do you feel, right now, on your campus?

- 3% Very unsafe
- 12% Somewhat unsafe
- 16% Neither safe nor unsafe
- 34% Somewhat safe
- 35% Very safe

How safe or unsafe does the police response to the encampments on college campuses across the country make you feel, right now, on your campus?

- 15% Very unsafe
- 22% Somewhat unsafe
- 22% Neither safe nor unsafe
- 23% Somewhat safe
- 19% Very safe

How clear is it to you that your college's administration protects free speech on campus?

- 10% Not at all clear
- 22% Not very clear
- 35% Somewhat clear
- 23% Very clear
- 10% Extremely clear

If a controversy over offensive speech occurred on your campus, how likely is it that your college's administration would defend the speaker's right to express their views?

- 8% Not at all likely
- 25% Not very likely
- 42% Somewhat likely
- 20% Very likely
- 6% Extremely likely

If a controversy over offensive speech occurred on your campus, how likely is it that your college's faculty would defend the speaker's right to express their views?

- 5% Not at all likely
- 23% Not very likely
- 45% Somewhat likely
- 21% Very likely
- 7% Extremely likely

How supportive, if at all, is your college administration of student protests on campus?

- 13% Not at all supportive
- 26% Not very supportive
- 38% Somewhat supportive
- 17% Very supportive
- 6% Extremely supportive

How supportive, if at all, is your college's faculty of students protesting on campus?

- 5% Not at all supportive
- 15% Not very supportive
- 45% Somewhat supportive
- 26% Very supportive
- 8% Extremely supportive

How comfortable or uncomfortable do you feel expressing your views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during a conversation with other students on campus?

- 20% Very uncomfortable
- 32% Somewhat uncomfortable
- 33% Somewhat comfortable
- 15% Very comfortable

How comfortable or uncomfortable do you feel expressing your views on abortion during a conversation with other students on campus?

- 12% Very uncomfortable
- 24% Somewhat uncomfortable
- 36% Somewhat comfortable
- 28% Very comfortable

How comfortable or uncomfortable do you feel expressing your views on police misconduct during a conversation with other students on campus?

- 10% Very uncomfortable
- 28% Somewhat uncomfortable
- 39% Somewhat comfortable
- 23% Very comfortable

Have you participated in any pro-Palestine protests on your campus?

- 12% I have participated in a pro-Palestine protest on my campus.
- 81% I have not participated in a pro-Palestine protest on my campus.
- 7% I have not participated in a pro-Palestine protest on my campus, but I have participated in a counter protest.

How aware are you, if at all, of your college campus' written policies on campus protests?

- 19% Not aware at all
- 29% Not very aware
- 34% Somewhat aware
- 13% Very aware
- 6% Extremely aware

To the best of your knowledge, do your college campus' written policies allow students to engage in the following protest actions on campus?  
 (Asked of 3,076 students. Not asked of students who said they are “not aware at all” of their school’s written policies on campus protests.)

| <b>Protest action</b>                     | <b>Allowed on campus</b> | <b>Not allowed on campus</b> | <b>Not sure</b> |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Create a petition.                        | 81%                      | 3%                           | 16%             |
| Hold a sign.                              | 80%                      | 4%                           | 16%             |
| Hand out flyers.                          | 77%                      | 5%                           | 18%             |
| March for long distances.                 | 61%                      | 9%                           | 30%             |
| Distribute or post materials anonymously. | 50%                      | 13%                          | 37%             |
| Engage in a hunger strike.                | 32%                      | 12%                          | 56%             |
| Use amplified sound.                      | 28%                      | 25%                          | 47%             |
| Establish encampments.                    | 15%                      | 48%                          | 36%             |
| Burn an American flag.                    | 8%                       | 50%                          | 42%             |
| Occupy buildings.                         | 7%                       | 62%                          | 31%             |
| Deface school property.                   | 4%                       | 82%                          | 15%             |

How acceptable, if at all, would you say it is for college students to engage in the following protest actions on campus?

(Asked of 1,290 students, randomly assigned to answer this question.)

| Protest action                            | Always acceptable | Sometimes acceptable | Rarely acceptable | Never acceptable |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Create a petition.                        | 76%               | 18%                  | 3%                | 3%               |
| Hold a sign.                              | 69%               | 24%                  | 5%                | 3%               |
| Hand out flyers.                          | 69%               | 24%                  | 3%                | 4%               |
| March for long distances.                 | 59%               | 29%                  | 8%                | 4%               |
| Distribute or post materials anonymously. | 40%               | 39%                  | 13%               | 7%               |
| Engage in a hunger strike.                | 28%               | 32%                  | 24%               | 17%              |
| Use amplified sound.                      | 16%               | 47%                  | 26%               | 11%              |
| Establish encampments.                    | 10%               | 34%                  | 27%               | 28%              |
| Burn an American flag.                    | 9%                | 14%                  | 20%               | 57%              |
| Occupy buildings.                         | 6%                | 24%                  | 28%               | 41%              |
| Deface school property.                   | 2%                | 10%                  | 23%               | 65%              |

How acceptable, if at all, would you say it is for pro-Palestinian college students to engage in the following protest actions on campus?

(Asked of 1,298 students, randomly assigned to answer this question.)

| Protest action                            | Always acceptable | Sometimes acceptable | Rarely acceptable | Never acceptable |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Create a petition.                        | 72%               | 18%                  | 6%                | 4%               |
| Hold a sign.                              | 70%               | 21%                  | 5%                | 5%               |
| Hand out flyers.                          | 67%               | 22%                  | 6%                | 5%               |
| March for long distances.                 | 58%               | 30%                  | 7%                | 5%               |
| Distribute or post materials anonymously. | 43%               | 35%                  | 14%               | 8%               |
| Engage in a hunger strike.                | 35%               | 30%                  | 20%               | 16%              |
| Use amplified sound.                      | 19%               | 44%                  | 24%               | 13%              |
| Establish encampments.                    | 18%               | 29%                  | 27%               | 26%              |
| Burn an American flag.                    | 13%               | 12%                  | 20%               | 56%              |
| Occupy buildings.                         | 9%                | 25%                  | 27%               | 40%              |
| Deface school property.                   | 5%                | 11%                  | 19%               | 65%              |

How acceptable, if at all, would you say it is for pro-Israeli college students to engage in the following protest actions on campus?

(Asked of 1,215 students, randomly assigned to answer this question.)

| Protest action                            | Always acceptable | Sometimes acceptable | Rarely acceptable | Never acceptable |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Create a petition.                        | 62%               | 23%                  | 8%                | 7%               |
| Hold a sign.                              | 59%               | 27%                  | 7%                | 6%               |
| Hand out flyers.                          | 58%               | 26%                  | 10%               | 6%               |
| March for long distances.                 | 47%               | 35%                  | 10%               | 8%               |
| Distribute or post materials anonymously. | 36%               | 38%                  | 15%               | 11%              |
| Engage in a hunger strike.                | 30%               | 30%                  | 21%               | 19%              |
| Use amplified sound.                      | 14%               | 42%                  | 29%               | 15%              |
| Establish encampments.                    | 10%               | 29%                  | 31%               | 31%              |
| Burn an American flag.                    | 9%                | 14%                  | 18%               | 59%              |
| Occupy buildings.                         | 5%                | 18%                  | 28%               | 49%              |
| Deface school property.                   | 3%                | 9%                   | 16%               | 73%              |



Have you or someone you know ever been disciplined by your college’s administration for expression on campus?

- 10% Yes, I have been disciplined or someone I know has been disciplined.
- 3% No, but I have been threatened with discipline.
- 18% No, but I know someone who has been threatened with discipline.
- 70% I have not been disciplined or threatened with discipline, and I do not know someone who has been disciplined or threatened with discipline.

Where did this expression occur? (Please select all that apply)

(Asked of 1,142 students. Not asked of students who said they have neither been disciplined or threatened with discipline, nor know someone who has been disciplined or threatened with discipline.)

| Campus location or context   | % of students selecting option |
|--|--------------------------------|
| In your dorm room.   | 6%                             |
| During a meeting with a professor.   | 3%                             |
| In a meeting with an administrator.  | 6%                             |
| In a written assignment for a class.   | 6%                             |
| During an in-class discussion.   | 7%                             |
| During a conversation with another student or students in a dining hall or lounge. | 5%                             |
| In the student newspaper.  | 5%                             |
| On the campus radio station.   | 2%                             |
| On a social media account linked to your name.                                     | 5%                             |
| As a member of the student government.   | 2%                             |
| As a member of a student organization.   | 9%                             |
| At a campus speech or panel discussion.  | 7%                             |
| During a protest on campus in a public space such as the “green” or the “quad.”    | 65%                            |
| Somewhere else.  | 5%                             |

# Colleges and Universities Sampled

| No encampment, no arrests            | Encampment only                           | Encampment and arrests                      |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Clemson University                   | DePaul University                         | Columbia University                         |
| Colorado School of Mines             | Pomona College                            | Emory University                            |
| Georgia Institute of Technology      | Scripps College                           | Northeastern University                     |
| Knox College                         | University of California, Irvine          | Stony Brook University                      |
| Santa Clara University               | University of Delaware                    | University of Minnesota                     |
| Texas A&M University                 | University of Maryland                    | University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill |
| University of Alabama                | University of North Carolina at Charlotte | University of Notre Dame                    |
| University of Tennessee              | University of Oregon                      | University of South Carolina                |
| University of California, Santa Cruz | University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee         | University of Wisconsin-Madison             |
| University of Tulsa                  | Williams College                          | Washington University in St. Louis          |



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