

# The Students Are Not All Right



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SREB | April 2020

# Who is Campus Sonar?

We're a social listening agency  
dedicated to higher education.

We find and analyze online  
conversation, providing insights

that you can use to better  
understand your brand, audience,  
or a topic of conversation

So that you can manage your  
reputation, build *meaningful*  
relationships, and work more  
strategically.

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# Who we are

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## Liz

World traveling (currently grounded),  
live tweeting, vegetable gardening,  
higher ed enthusiast

## Steve

Donut loving, Seinfeld gif tweeting,  
social listening evangelist. Can often  
be found running (to burn off the  
donuts.)



# How did we get here?

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**Sunday, March 8:** Campus Sonar Research Manager Amber Sandall suggests we could be helping the industry understand the coronavirus impact



**Tuesday, March 10:** Amber runs a first draft of a Boolean query. It pulls in roughly 50,000 daily mentions.



**Wednesday, March 11:** Campus Sonar publishes first briefing, analyzing conversation since January, including more than 500,000 conversations from March 4-10.



**Thursday, March 12:** Campus Sonar decides to continue publishing briefings twice each week, on Tuesdays and Fridays.



**Friday, April 3:** Campus Sonar shifts to weekly industry briefings (Tuesdays).

# Methodology

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- Industry conversation about higher education + coronavirus
- United States, Reddit, YouTube
- Segmentation:
  - Higher Ed-Focused
  - Campus Audiences



# We can't see everything, but we see plenty

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## Included

- Social platforms, like Twitter and YouTube
- Forums, like Reddit and College Confidential
- Blogs and Tumblr
- News outlets

## Not included

- Social platforms, like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram, unless auto-shared to Twitter
- TikTok and Snapchat
- Any social platforms marked as private

# Beyond your inbox

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When you're dialed into your own conversation—especially in times of chaos—it can feel **personally** and **professionally** overwhelming.

There's value and comfort in understanding the effect of a pandemic on the entire industry.

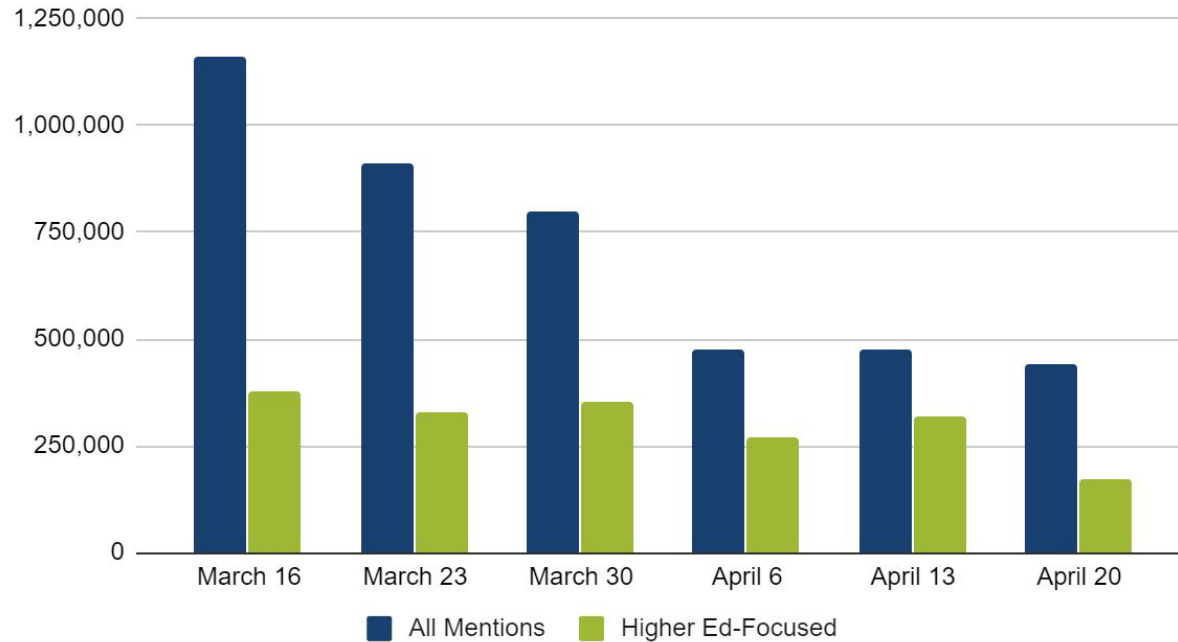
# What can you learn from 6 million conversations about COVID-19?

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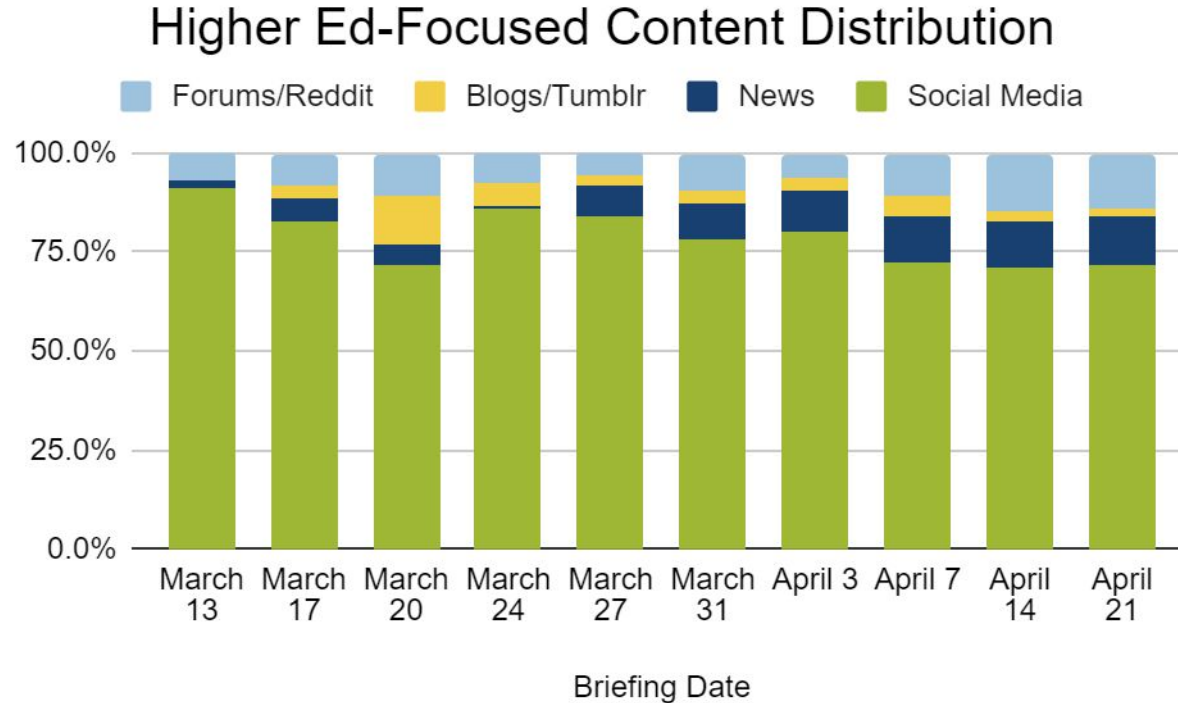


# Weekly COVID-19 & Higher Education Volume

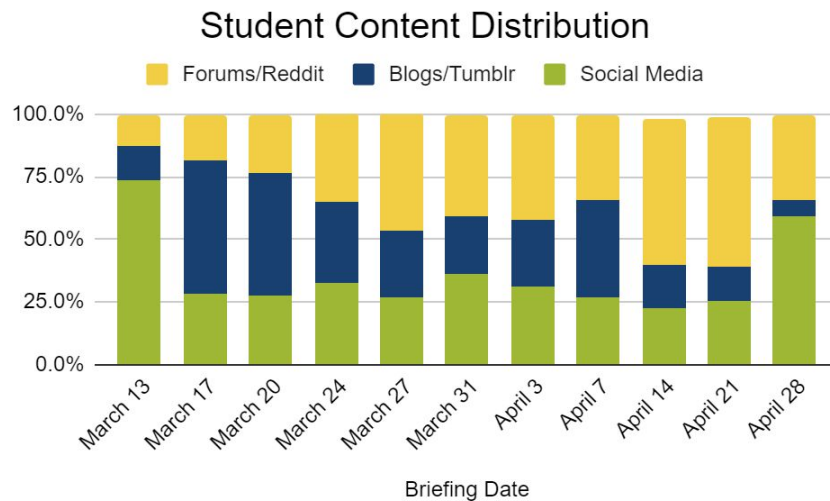
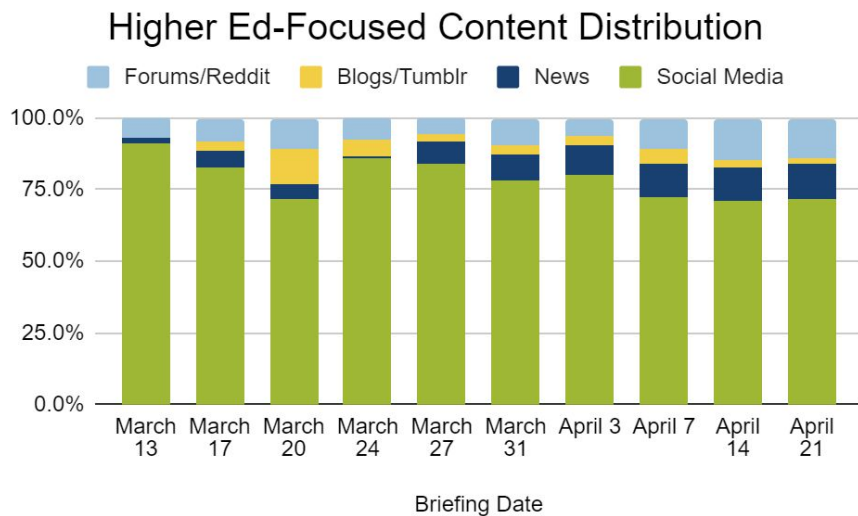
Weekly Conversation By Higher Ed Focus



# Where is this conversation taking place?

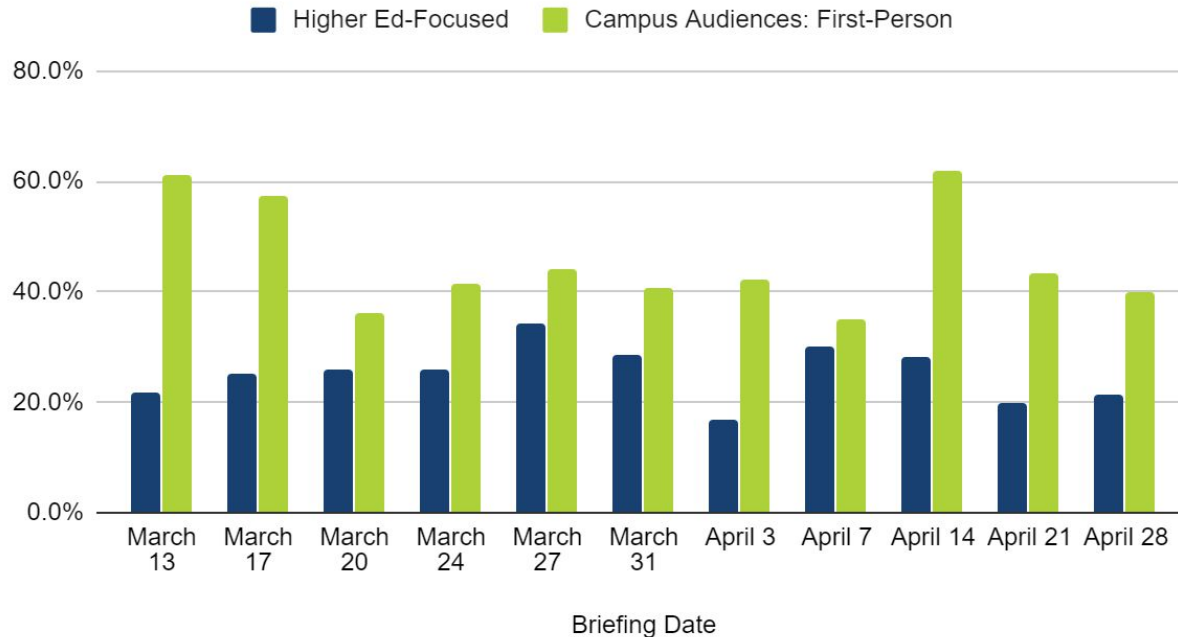


# Where is this conversation taking place?



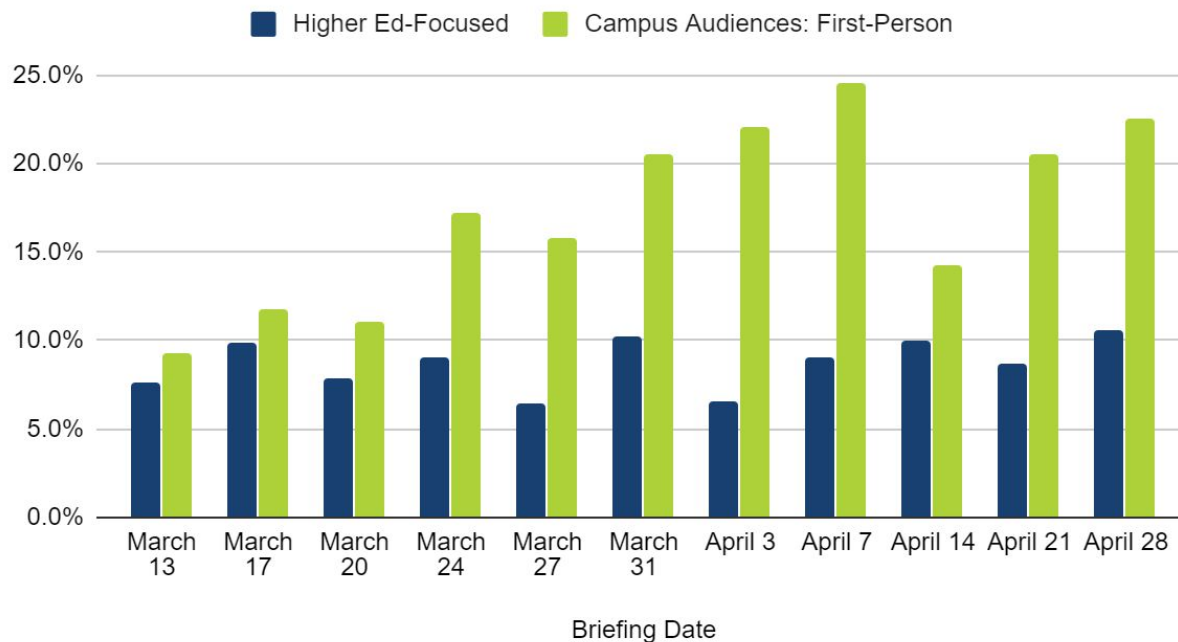
# How much of the conversation is negative?

## Negative Sentiment Percentage by Audience



# How much of the conversation is positive?

## Positive Sentiment Percentage by Audience

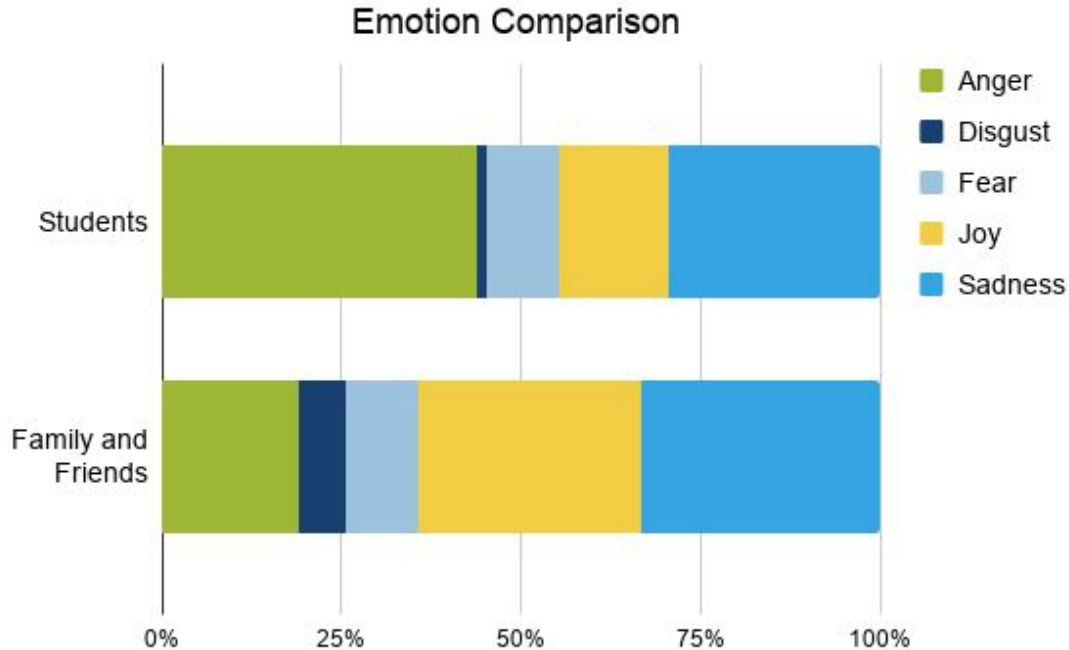


# Family and Friends Find Moments of Joy

Family and friends expressed joy in 31% of their posts, while 34% expressed sadness.

41% of student mentions expressed anger and 28% express sadness.

Source: April 21 Briefing



# Current Students

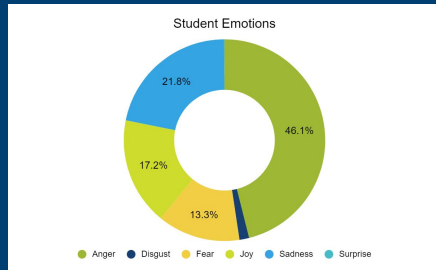
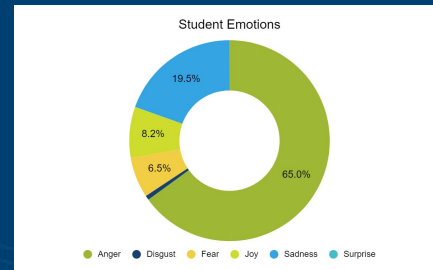
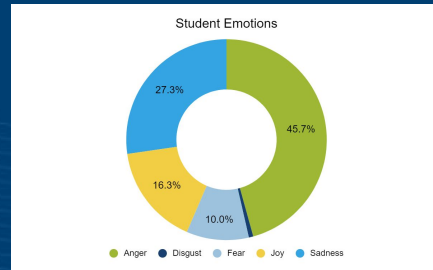
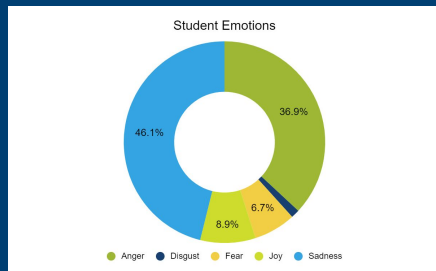
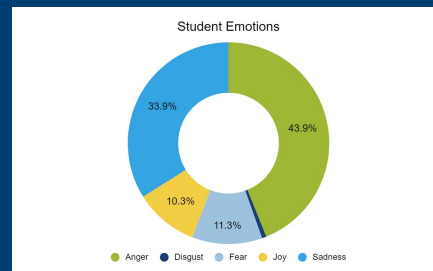
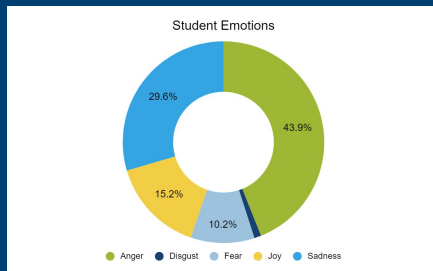
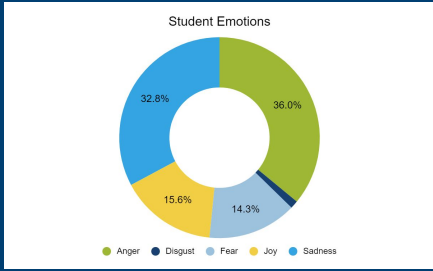
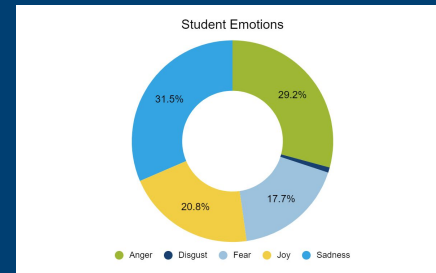
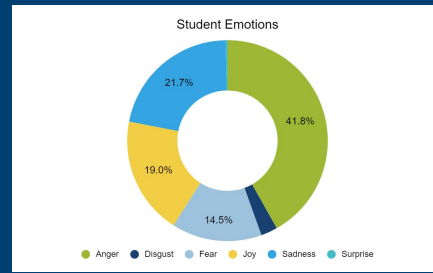
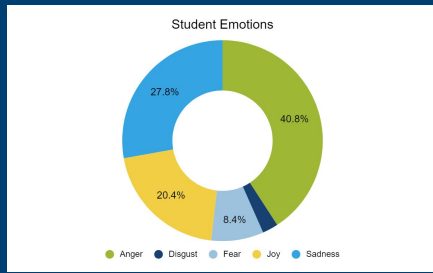
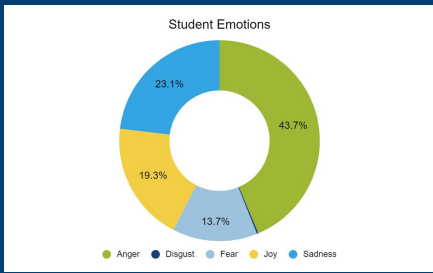
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# Sharing in places you may not expect

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- Yes, students are on Tumblr
- Reddit is consistently a source, not just in college forums
- Twitter is short snippets and memes





Students are consistently sad and angry

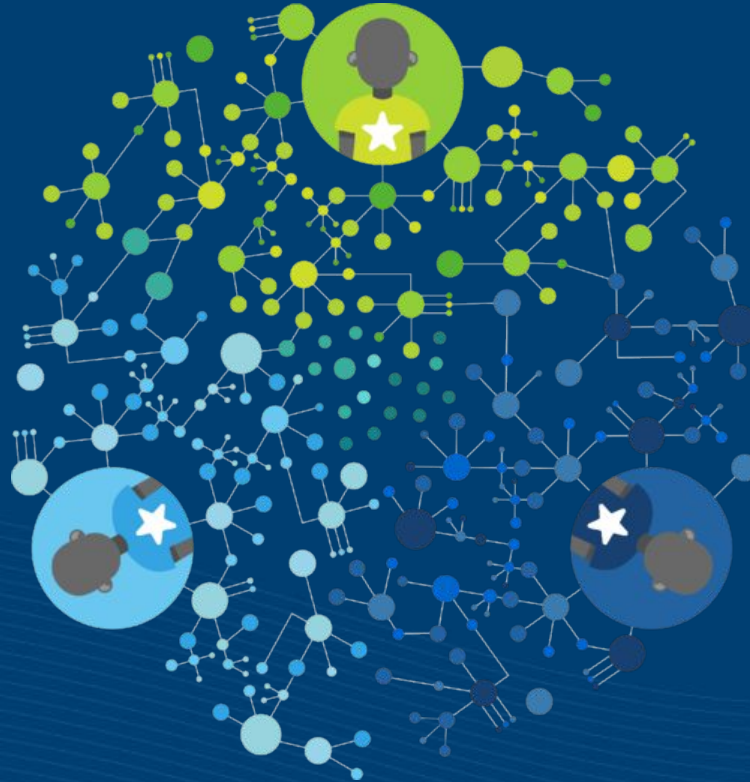
# Finances, mental health, and basic needs are a concern

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- Lost student employment or jobs in their campus community
- Lack of access to campus mental health services
- Lost income of family can result in food insecurity
- Not having a safe place to live

# Personal stories resonate and drive word-of-mouth

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# The Online Class Memes Matter

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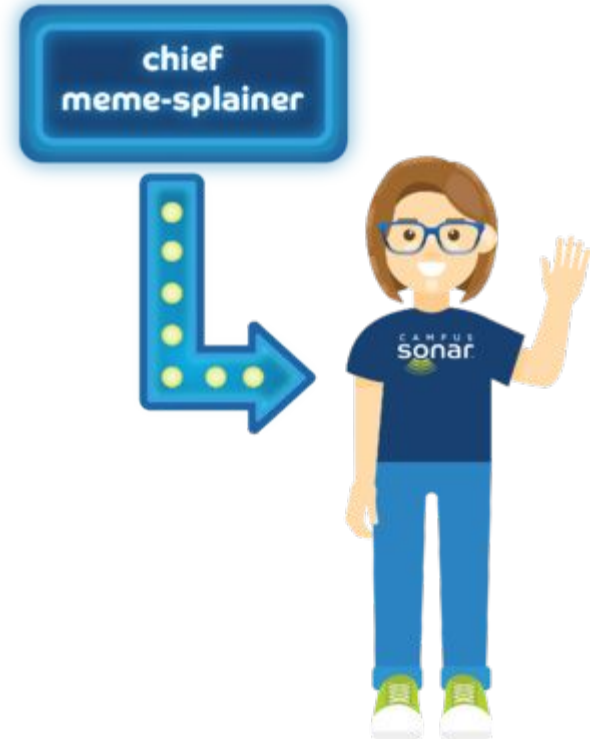
- From March 24–26, 67% of the conversations we identified were about the transition to online learning (n=324,490). (March 28 Briefing)
- The phrase “online classes” appeared in 45% of those conversations (n=144,950).
- Within “online classes” mentions, 6 memes accounted for more than a third of the mentions.
- The March 27 Briefing details the top 6 memes about online classes.
  - I’m only covering two in this presentation, because they’re not all exactly “safe for work.”

# Meme, Defined

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## Definition of *meme*

1. : an idea, behavior, style, or usage that spreads from person to person within a culture
2. : an amusing or interesting item (such as a captioned picture or video) or genre of items that is spread widely online, especially through social media



# Meme Formats

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## “Caption This”

An image or video clip posted with “caption this” or “bomoclaat,” then people share a caption putting it into context with their experience or beliefs.

## Viral Tweet

While not originally intended to be a meme, some text-only tweets become incredibly popular and go viral, essentially reaching meme status.

# A Thousand Emails About Classes

Teachers: \*sends a thousand emails about online classes\*

Me:

*Video: A toddler is already unhappy. She's crying. In an attempt to amuse herself with a nerf gun, she accidentally shoots herself in the face with the foam projectile, increasing her crying. Multiple levels of sadness and angst are expressed in just six seconds.*

teachers: \*send a thousand emails about online classes\*  
me:

 **TAURUS Inc.** • @Alpha\_Taurus\_ · Feb 3  
BOMBOCLAAT



0:02 12.2M views

11:07 PM · Mar 22, 2020 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

**74.8K** Retweets **177.9K** Likes

# More Confusing than “Actual School”

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Is it me or is online classes more confusing than actual school

1:40 AM · Mar 25, 2020 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

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**46.4K** Retweets   **210.3K** Likes




# Admitted Students

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# Anxiety and sadness reign supreme

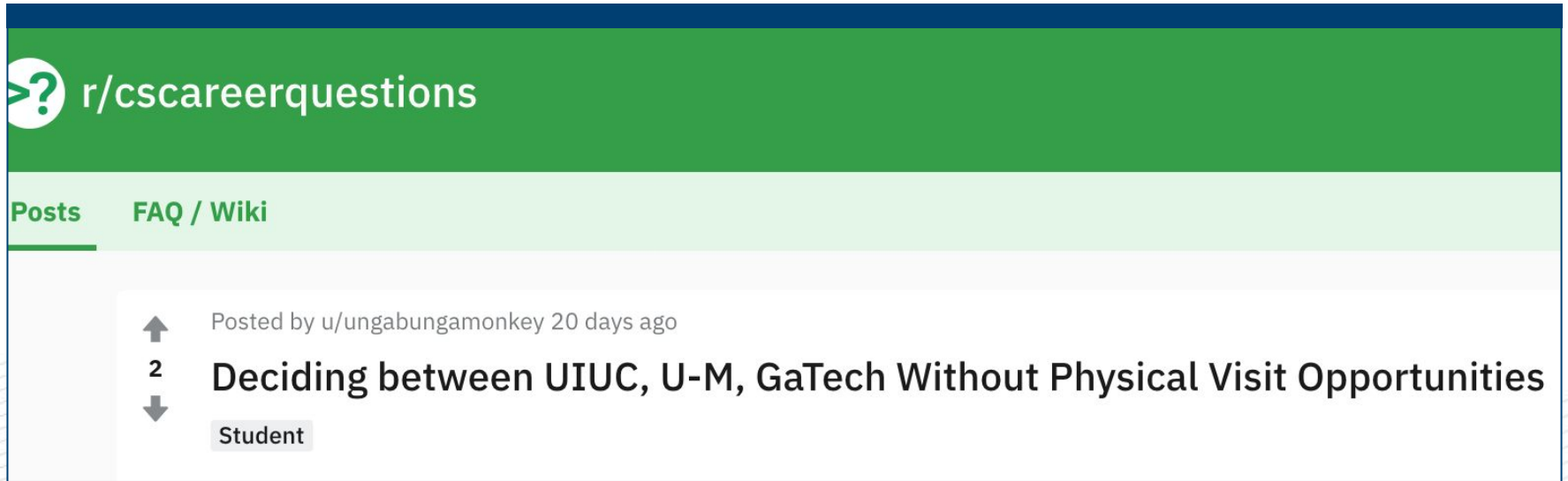
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**Thanks to COVID-19, an already stressful experience has become even more so.**

- Students are still mourning the loss of their high school milestones
  - Students are struggling to make a college decision without the benefit of campus visits and without understanding the structure of fall semester.
  - Students are increasingly pondering the idea of a gap year.
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# Where do you turn when you can't turn to campus?

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The screenshot shows the top of a Reddit post in the r/cscareerquestions subreddit. The header is green with a white question mark icon and the text 'r/cscareerquestions'. Below the header is a light green navigation bar with 'Posts' and 'FAQ / Wiki' options. The main content area is white and shows a post by user 'u/ungabungamonkey' posted 20 days ago. The post title is 'Deciding between UIUC, U-M, GaTech Without Physical Visit Opportunities' and the user is identified as a 'Student'.

>? r/cscareerquestions

Posts FAQ / Wiki

↑ Posted by u/ungabungamonkey 20 days ago

2

↓ **Deciding between UIUC, U-M, GaTech Without Physical Visit Opportunities**

Student

# Parents have questions too.



Posted by u/AndrewIsMyDog 1 month ago

9



**My daughter wants to go to Loyola New Orleans. She was accepted. Need input on the area.**

I'm a single mother in Southern California, though I am originally from North Carolina coastal (way long ago). I'm wondering what your thoughts on the area around the school are. Easy to get to from airport, decent hotels around? What about nearby apartments? Safety? It's possible I'll look to rent or buy a small place nearby (she's my only and I'm single so I'll probably visit a lot. )

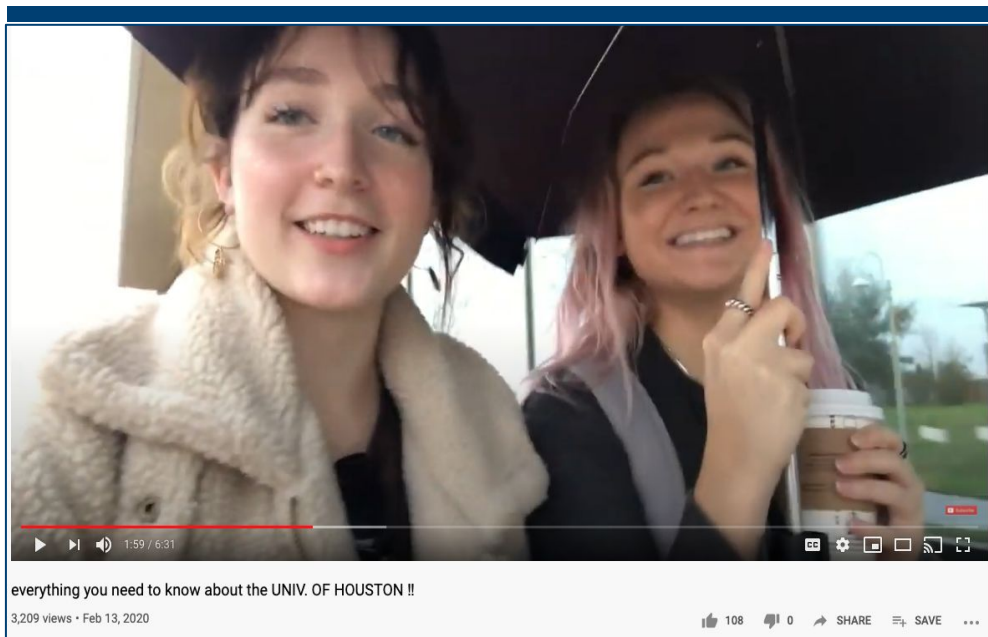


12 Comments

We are planning on visiting hopefully after the Mardi Gras activities. I'm guessing we will spend most of our time at the school and will drive through the main city area but if you have any idea of what we should look for I would appreciate that. I am not into the party life and my daughter doesn't drink though I am aware she has smoked pot on occasion. I welcome PMs too.

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

# Student influence has grown



**Maggie** 3 days ago

I was accepted but for my second choice major. Would I be able to take the classes required for my first choice major?? Then switch to first choice??



**monserrat hinojosa** 1 week ago

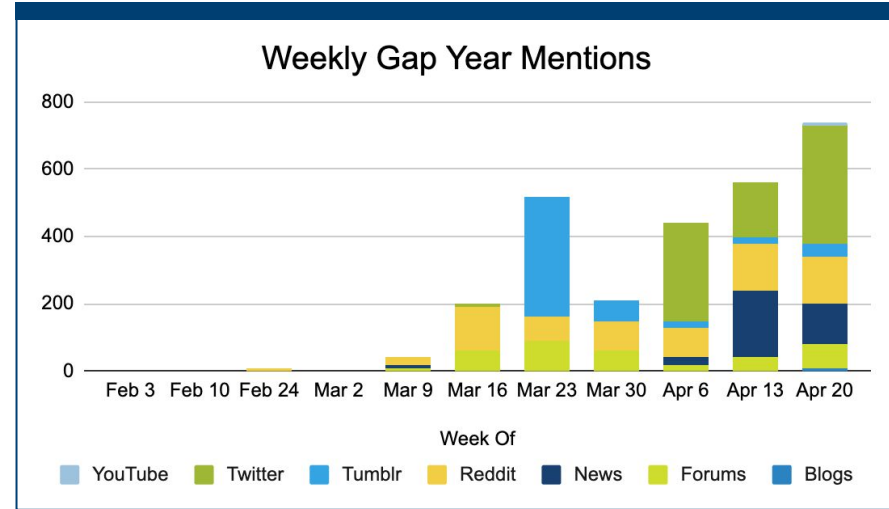
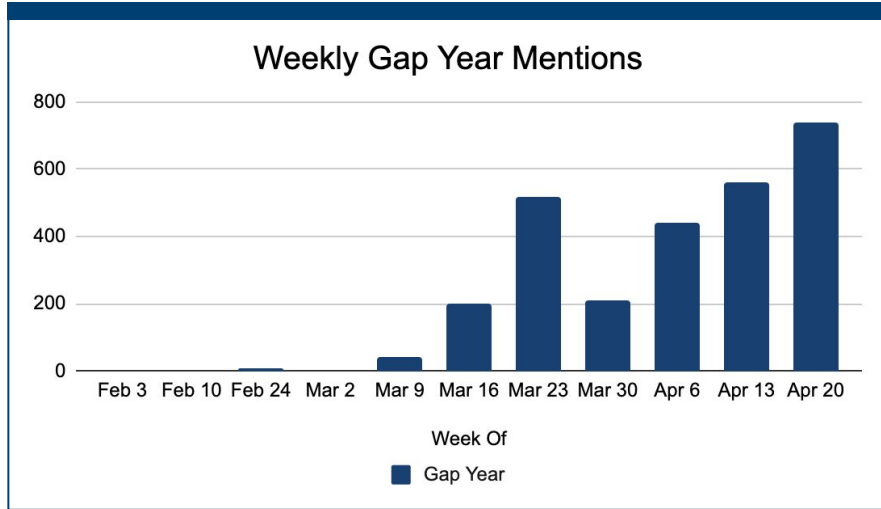
Can we join the honors college during our sophomore yr or freshman Spring semester? Because I'm planning on entering this fall but I haven't made up my mind about my major , so I'm just wondering.



**Leonel Salas** 3 weeks ago

How is the Diversity here? I'm planning to transfer here in the Fall? And how's the dining halls (or food)

# Increased interest in gap years



# Increased interest in gap years



8



Discussion Do I go to school next year or do a **gap year**?

r/ApplyingToCollege · Posted by u/zbeast300 **HS Senior** 5 days ago

| 5 Comments Give Award Share ...



9



College Questions How will gap years/**gap year** requests work this year?

r/ApplyingToCollege · Posted by u/Ooooooontz 5 days ago

| 4 Comments Give Award Share ...



3



Discussion What are your thoughts on taking a **gap year** because of this pandemic?

r/ApplyingToCollege · Posted by u/thegoatss 1 day ago

| 3 Comments Give Award Share ...



18



Discussion Is anyone here thinking about taking a **gap year**? What can I do during a **gap year**?

r/ApplyingToCollege · Posted by u/happysupersushi **HS Senior** 19 hours ago

| 4 Comments Give Award Share ...

# But moments of joy still exist

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**As students and parents recover from the shock of the pandemic, they're finding moments of joy (and appreciation) in the admissions process.**

- Students and parents continue to celebrate their accomplishments.
- Mirror their excitement. There's power in your community.



# As shock wears off, moments of joy emerge

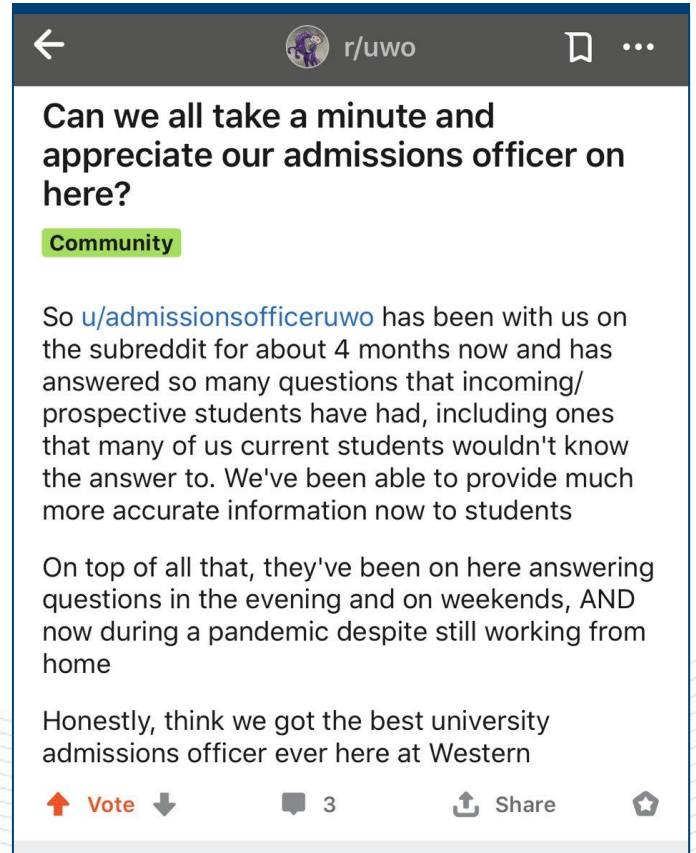


# Go where your admits are

Schools are increasingly turning to digital communities during this pandemic.

But prospects, admitted, and enrolled students are building their own communities organically, beyond the ecosystems you're building.

Don't be afraid to go where your students are.



# Marketing is a team sport. Build your bench.

 **hailey**   
@HaileyOwens19

my college visit to purdue was suppose to be today but it got canceled due to corona and i came home and my family had made me a purdue tour in our house 🙄



4:55 PM · Mar 27, 2020 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

24 Retweets 967 Likes


 **Purdue University**  @LifeAtPurdue · Mar 29

Replying to @HaileyOwens19

We are so sorry that your visit to Purdue was canceled. Purdue has missed seeing students come and visit. But we love this at home Purdue tour! If you want to check out more of Purdue here is the link to our virtual tour: [admissions.purdue.edu/visit/virtual...](https://admissions.purdue.edu/visit/virtual...)

Boiler up! ❤️💛🏭

1 25

 **Purdue Nursing** @PurdueNurses · Mar 30

Replying to @HaileyOwens19

Love it. Thinking outside the box, just like a Boilermaker.

2

 **Marion K Underwood** @MKUnderwood01 · Mar 29

Replying to @HaileyOwens19 and @davidjpurpura

We hope you will join us @PurdueHHS @PurdueNurses!

2

# What does this mean for you?

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# The TL;DR of this presentation

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## The Students are Not All Right

- Your current students are consistently angry and sad.
  - The source of that anger may not necessarily be you.
- Students often communicate their frustrations through memes.
- Accepted students (and their parents) are struggling with how to proceed as deposit deadlines approach.
- Students are still finding moments of joy. Mirroring their excitement is low hanging fruit. (*I hate myself for typing that phrase.*)

# You Can Do This Yourself

  
(Sort Of)

# Try it yourself!

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## **Twitter:**

*“Campus Name” AND (visit OR apply OR applied)*

Or

*“Campus Name” AND “online classes”*

## **Reddit, Tik Tok, and YouTube:**

Search for your campus name or keywords of interest

*Don't ignore the comments*

# Free Software Options to Get Started

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- Twitter search (advanced)
- Tweetdeck
- Hootsuite free
- Instagram search
- Follower Wonk
- Mention
- Social Mention
- IFTTT

**We've got blog posts for that:**

[Social Listening on a Budget](#)

[5 Free Social Listening Tools for Higher Ed](#)

[Common Questions Students Ask on Reddit and How to Respond](#)



# Thank you!

Stay in touch



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[@StephenApp](#)



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