

# Coronavirus Higher Education Industry Briefing: April 14

Provided by Campus Sonar—a higher education social listening agency

# Overview

## Social Listening Is

The process of finding and analyzing publicly available online conversation. Common sources include social media, forums, blogs, and news sites.

## Coronavirus + Higher Education

This analysis draws from 390,000 online conversations in the United States and on Reddit and YouTube (which span beyond the U.S.) about the coronavirus and the higher education industry. We're not searching for conversations about specific campuses.

## Analysis Period

We analyzed six days of conversation:  
April 7–12 (based on EDT).

**This analysis does not include Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, or private social profiles.**

# Online Conversation Summary

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# How We Categorize Conversation

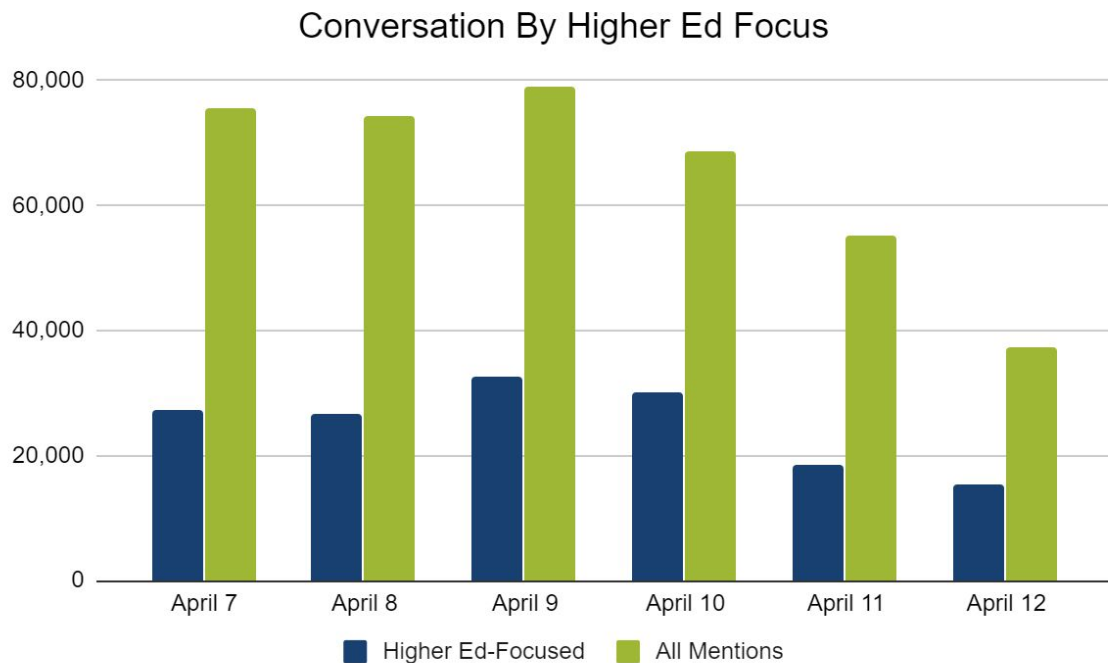
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## All Mentions

Captures every online mention that includes terms related to coronavirus AND the higher education industry. Higher ed may be just a small part of the mention (e.g., a news story discussing the impact of the coronavirus in a metro area with a mention of campuses that closed).

## Higher Ed-Focused Mentions

A subset of All Mentions. It captures when a campus or the industry is the focus of a mention about coronavirus (e.g., a headline of a news article or in a social media post).



# Weekly Conversation Declined

There were ~390,000 mentions during the six-day period of April 7–12.

Conversation decreased 42% compared to the same period one week earlier (March 31–April 5).

39% of all mentions were higher ed-focused.

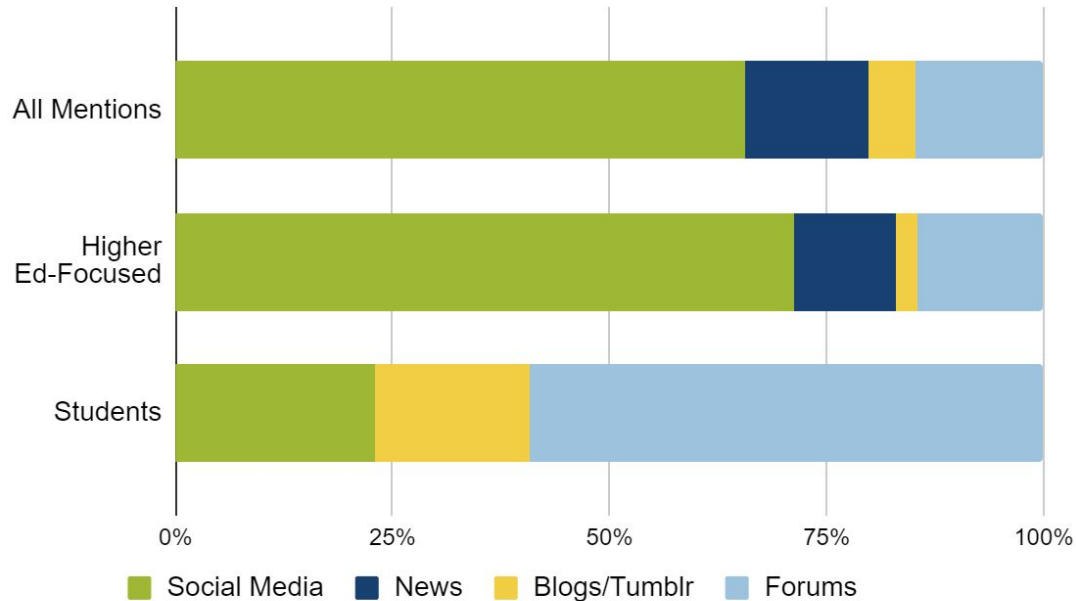
# Majority of Student Conversation on Reddit

Content sources for all mentions and higher ed-focused mentions were similar to last week.

- All Mentions: 66% social media, 14% news, 15% forums, 5% blogs
- Higher Ed-Focused: 71% social media, 15% forums, 12% news, 2% blogs

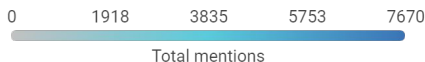
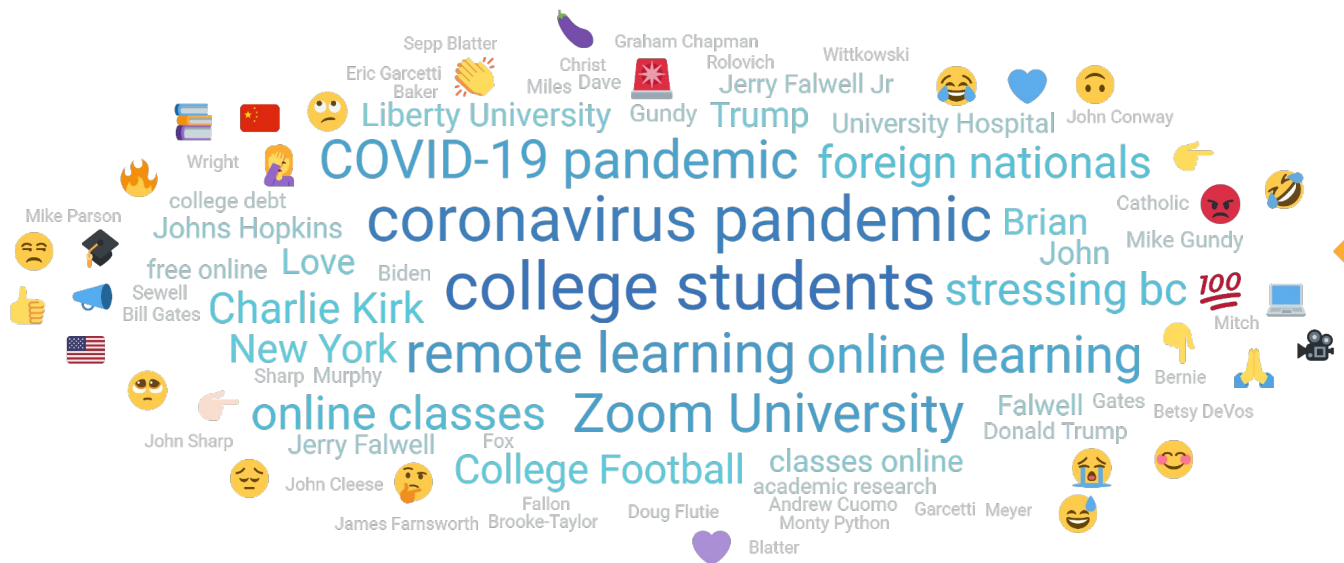
59% of student conversation was on forums (mostly Reddit), followed by 23% social media and 18% blogs/Tumblr. [@campussonar](#) • 6

Content Source Comparison

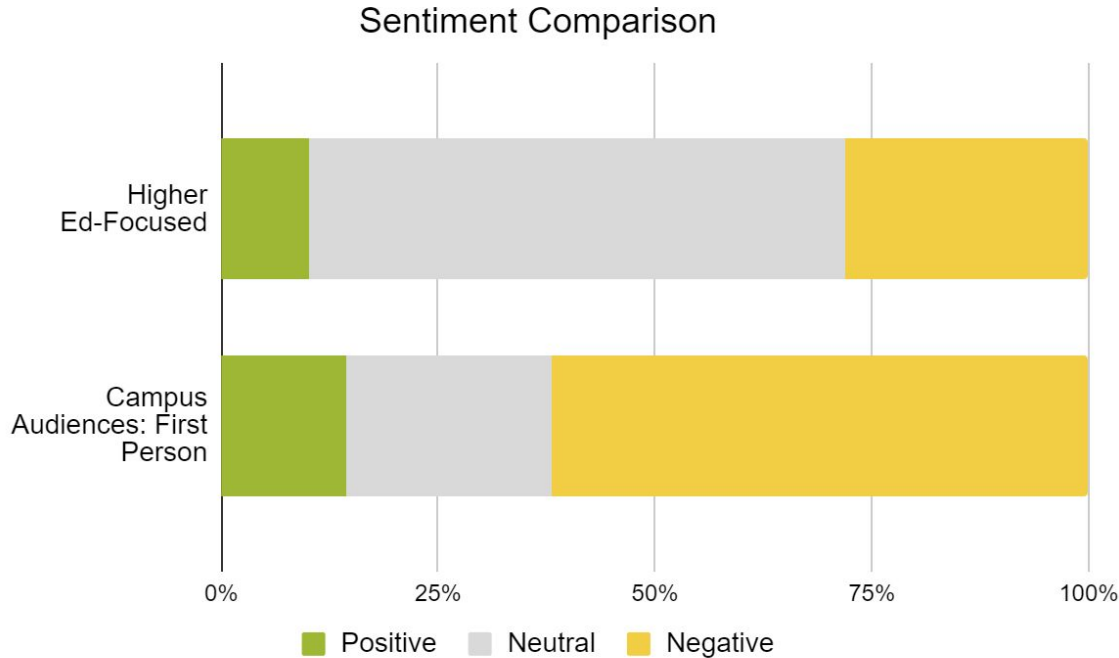


\*Due to data access restrictions in this analysis, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok aren't included. Your campus social media manager is the best source of information regarding conversation on those networks.

# Top 100 Higher Ed-Focused Topics



# Campus Audiences Were More Negative



Higher Ed-Focused:

- 10% Positive
- 62% Neutral
- 28% Negative

First Person Campus Audiences:

- 14% Positive
- 24% Neutral
- 62% Negative



# Exploring Student Voices

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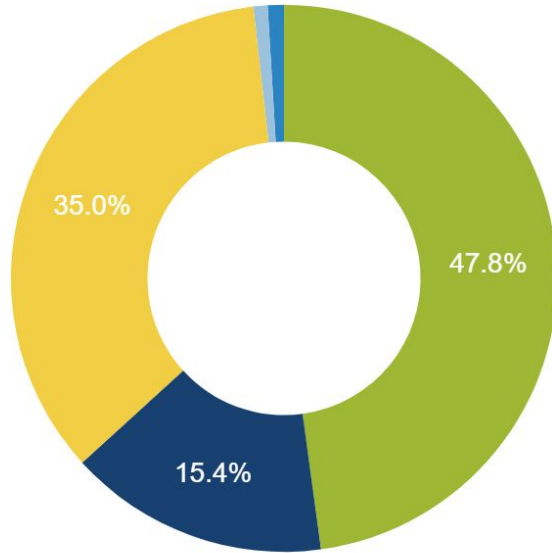
# What High-Priority Higher Education Audiences Are Saying

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## Hidden Voices

- A small portion of the online conversation about the coronavirus and higher education is first-person accounts from individuals who reveal an affiliation with the campus community in their message (students, family/friends, prospects, admits, alumni).
- Without proper segmentation, these lived experiences can be missed amongst news headlines and commentary.
- We analyzed the mentions from this audience (5.5% of higher ed-focused conversation April 7–12) to identify themes that provide insight into the thoughts and feelings of campus community members. Use this analysis to inform your communication and service delivery.

## First-Person Conversation By Audience



● Students ● Family & Friends ● Alumni ● Prospective ● Admitted

## Statement About Audience Volume Trends

Alumni voices were amplified by retweets of someone mourning a college friend who died from COVID-19.

Students were talking about a variety of topics, mostly on Reddit, where the top five words in posts are *school*, *time*, *work*, *people*, and *feel*.

n = 8,320

# Internship Changes and Fall Speculation

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- Many summer internships have been cancelled, which is causing stress for students.
- Resources are emerging to help students and campuses navigate abrupt changes to internship plans (see blog post for a list).
- Up to 7% of mentions were related to plans for fall, including:
  - What students will do if all classes are online
  - Sharing headlines of Boston University's contingency plan
  - Discussion of the financial effects of potential athletics cancellations, including football
  - Admitted students wondering about fall; don't seem to be hearing from campuses
  - General threads in popular subreddits with a lot of student speculation

# Summary

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- Conversation volume decreased sharply compared to last week.
- Sources of all mentions and higher ed-focused conversation was similar to last week; student conversation shifted more to forums (mostly Reddit).
- Top topics included politics, public health, healthcare, athletics, remote learning, a meme about Zoom University.
- First-person voices of campus audiences are much more negative than all higher ed-focused mentions.
- Students discussed unexpected changes to internships and speculated about the fall semester.

# 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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