

Coronavirus Higher Education Industry Briefing: April 21

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 476,000 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 seven days of conversation:
April 13–19 (based on EDT).

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

Online Conversation Summary

How We Categorize Conversation

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).

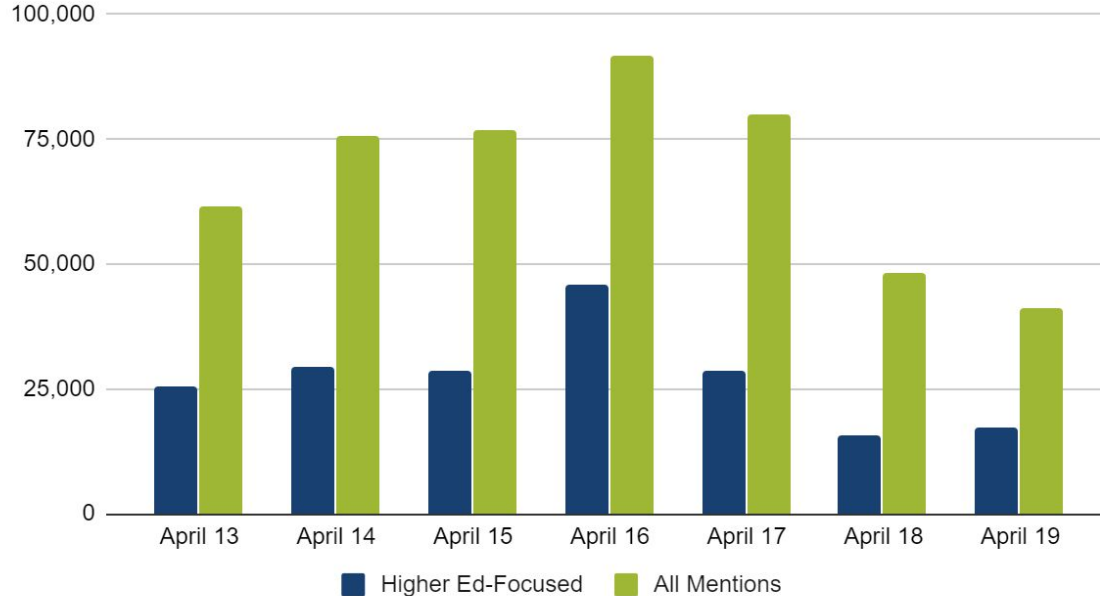
Conversation Volume Holds Steady

There were ~476,000 mentions during the seven-day period of April 13–19.

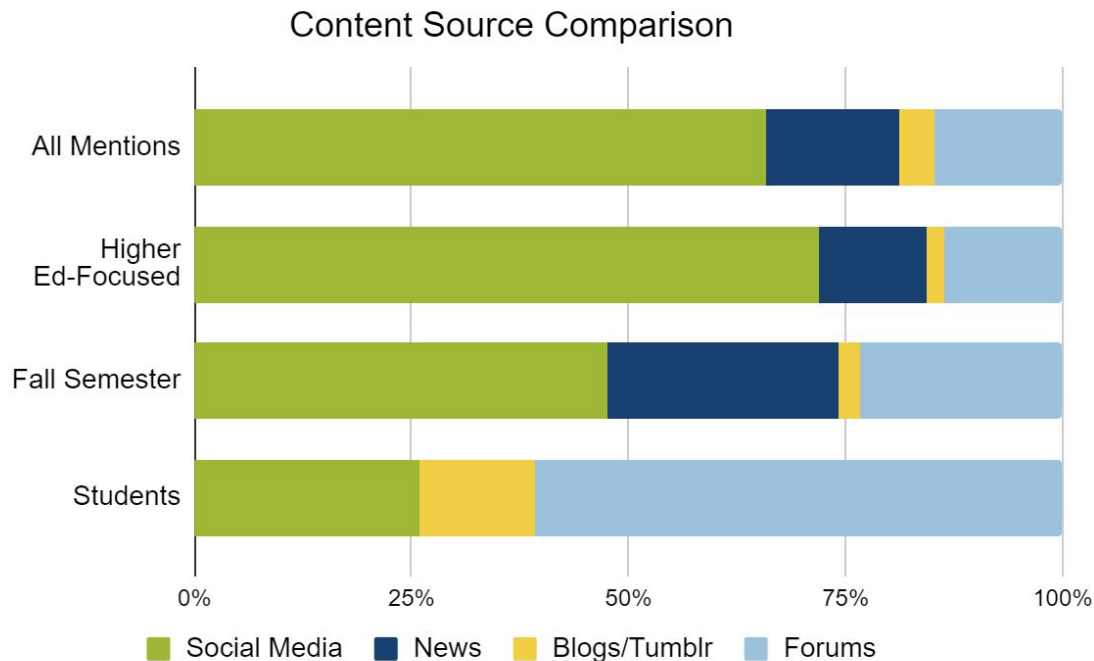
All mention conversation volume was similar to the same period one week earlier (April 6–12).

40% of all mentions were higher ed-focused.

Conversation By Higher Ed Focus



Conversation About Fall Occurred More in News and Forums



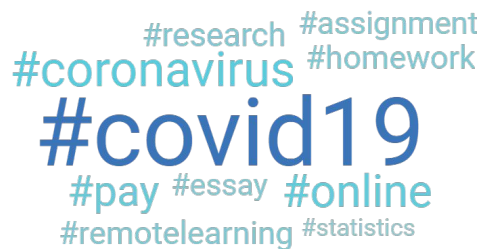
Distribution of content sources for all mentions, higher ed-focused mentions, and student conversation were similar to last week.

27% of mentions related to fall semester and beyond were in the news, compared to 12–15% of all mentions or higher ed-focused mentions.

*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.

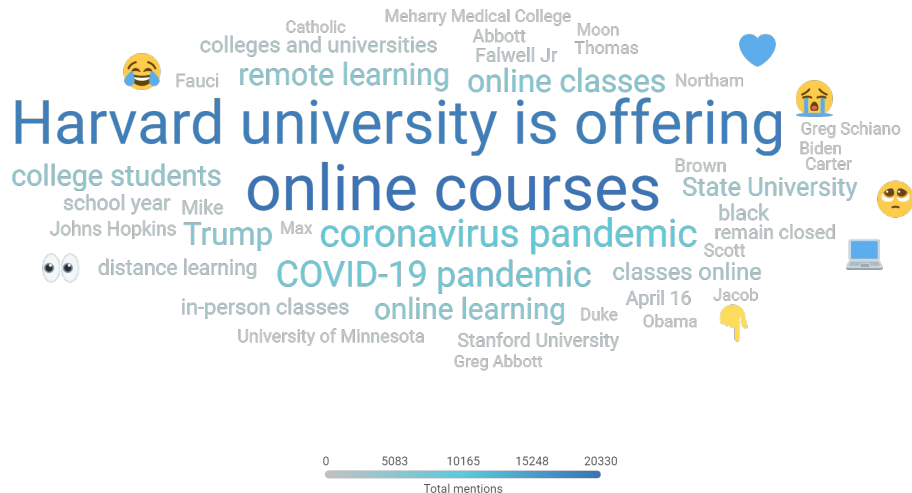
Generic Topic Trends Prompt Segmentation

Top 10 Hashtags, All Mentions



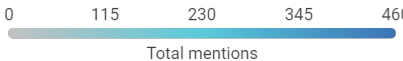
#COVID19, #Coronavirus, and #RemoteLearning are expected topics. The other seven hashtags are used by bots promoting scam services to students.

Top 60 Topics, Higher Ed-Focused

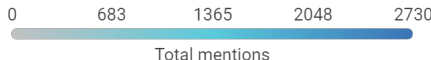
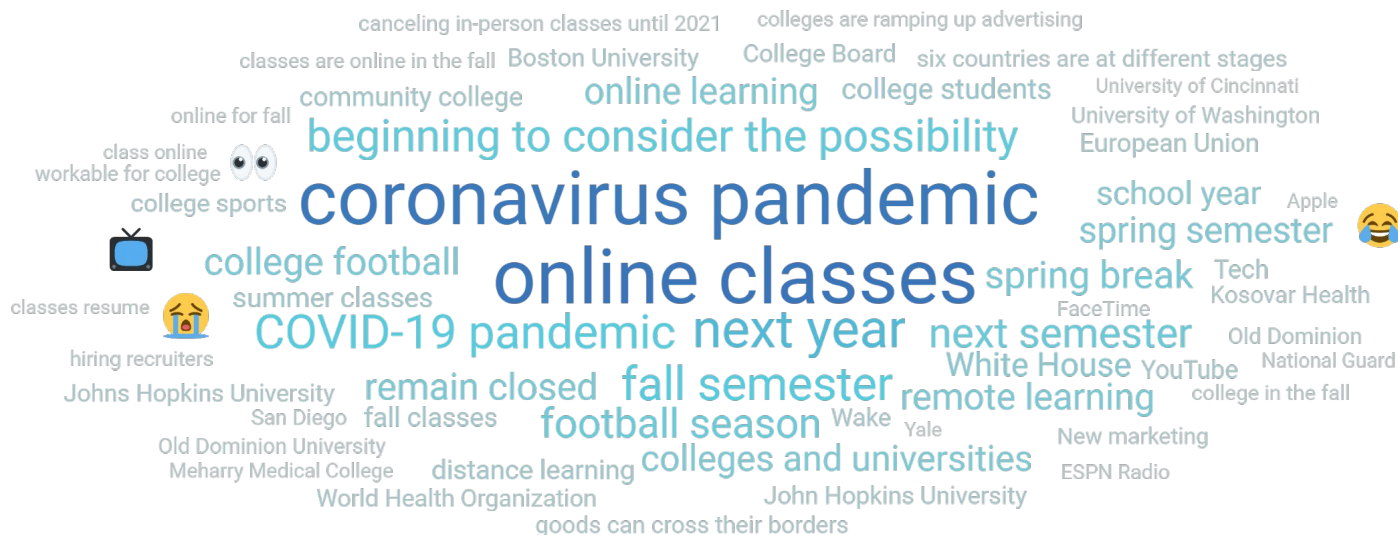


We dug into "Meharry Medical College" and "black" mentions. More on both in the blog post.

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Top 60 Topics in Mentions of Fall and Beyond



Negative Sentiment Decreased

Higher Ed-Focused

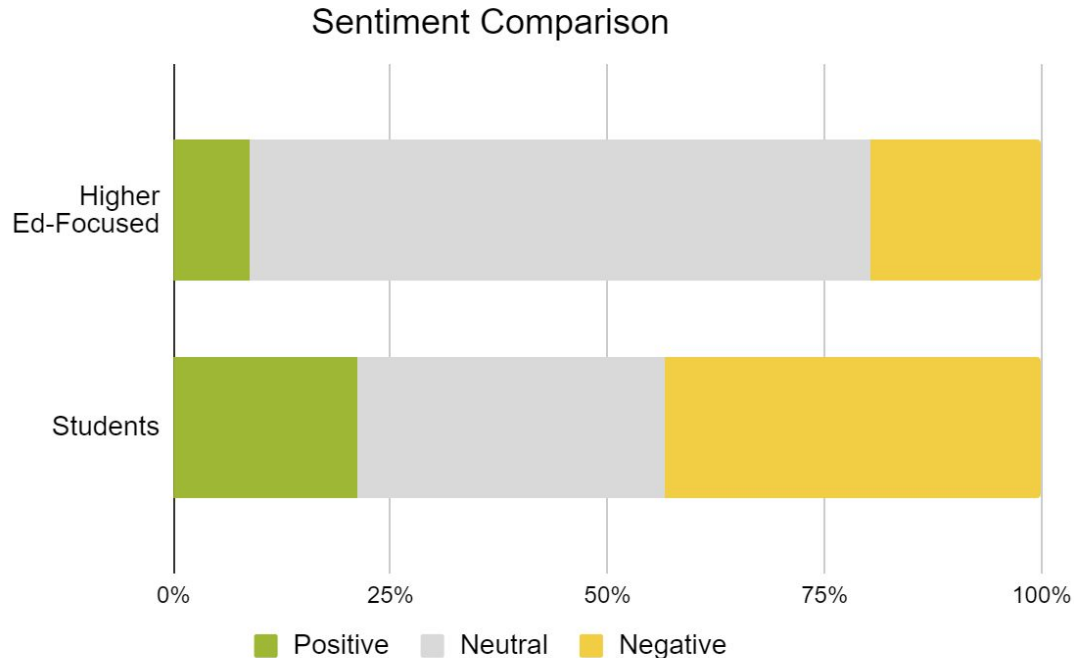
8 percentage points less negative compared to last week

- 9% Positive
- 71% Neutral
- 20% Negative

Students

19 percentage points less negative compared to last week's first-person conversation

- 21% Positive
- 35% Neutral
- 43% Negative



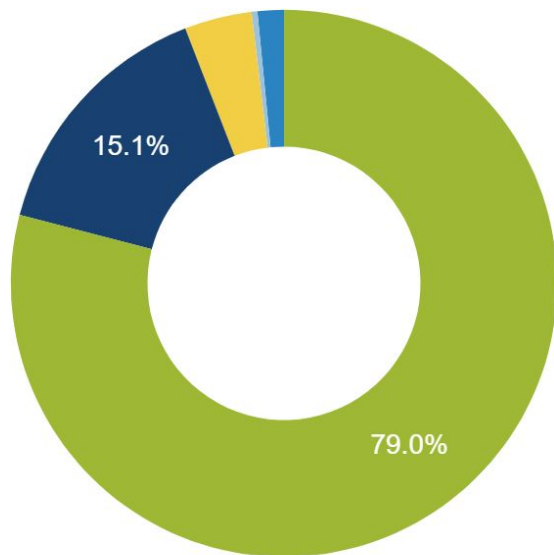
Audience Segmentation

What High-Priority Higher Education Audiences Are Saying

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 (3% of higher ed-focused conversation April 13–19) 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

Student Voices are Most Prominent

79% of the first-person campus audience conversation we identified was from students.

15% was from family members and friends.

n = 5,770

Family and Friends Find Moments of Joy

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

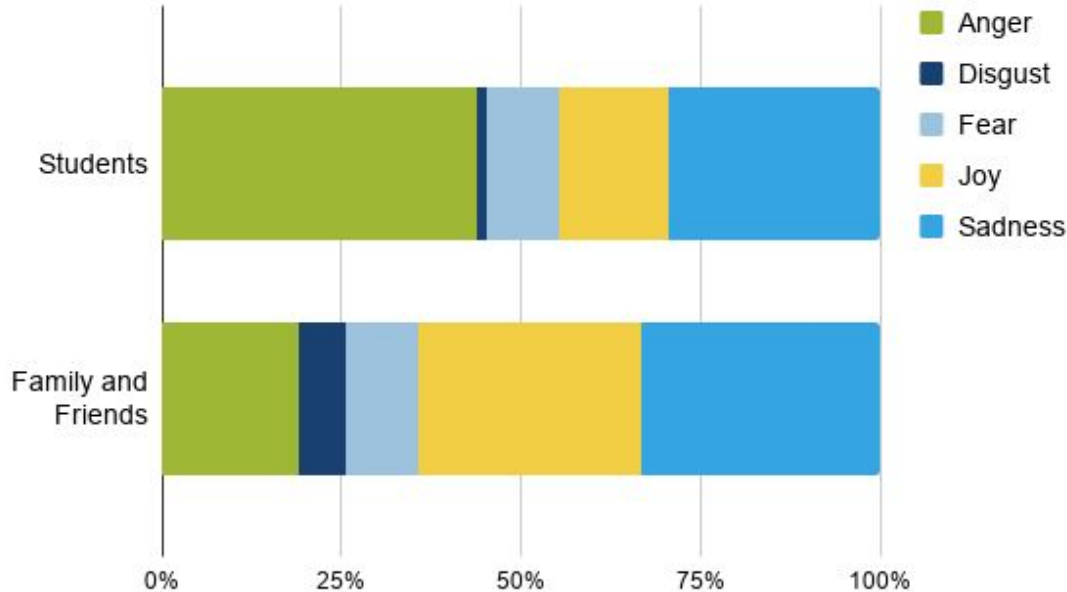
Some joyful moments:

- Sharing positive news stories about their children created by campuses
- Complimenting campus outreach to students

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

- The two most common phrases in these mentions are time and online classes

Emotion Comparison



Students Speculate About Fall 2020 on Reddit

On r/college, over 300 users have replied to the question, “How would you react if your college announced that the Fall 2020 semester will be online?” These are the top-rated responses.

- Be annoyed they have to continue living with their parents
- Panic (from a STEM student with multiple lab courses)
- Be very upset
- Cancel enrollment and wait another year (from community college student planning transfer)
- Be angry
- Take a semester off if it doesn't interfere with a scholarship
- Take a gap semester

Summary

- Conversation volume held steady compared to last week.
- Sources of conversation for all mentions, higher ed-focused mentions, and student conversation were similarly distributed compared to last week. Conversation about the fall semester was more concentrated in news and forums.
- Harvard's free online courses were a top topic, along with advertising for online cheating from bot-like accounts. Conversation from and about the Black community revealed reports of food and housing insecurity, marketing from for-profit institutions targeting HBCU students, and an online gathering of Black college students. Meharry Medical College was prominent in this conversation as well as higher ed-focused conversation.
- Students are still sad and angry, mostly related to their time and online courses. Family are almost as joyful as they are sad, partly because they're celebrating their students' accomplishments.

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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