

Insights from Online Conversation about Coronavirus and Higher Education

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 500,000+ online conversations in the United States about the coronavirus and higher education-related terms, including cancellations and the transition to online instruction.

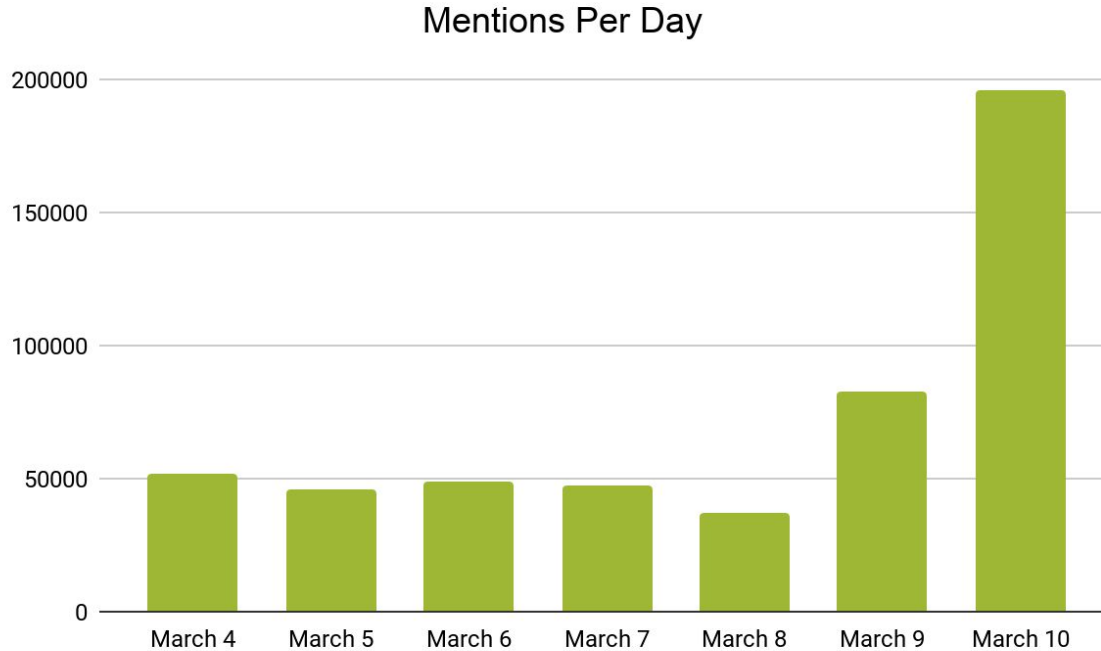
Analysis Period

We analyzed the 7-day period from March 4 to March 10.

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

General Conversation Summary

How much conversation?



- Steady conversation (~50,000 per day) March 4-8, just a slight dip on Sun, March 8
- Volume doubled from March 8th to 9th, and more than doubled March 9th to 10th.
- Volume increased 113% from the week prior
- Almost 283,000 individuals contributed to the conversation indicating widespread public interest

Where is the conversation?

While there have been over 94,000 news mentions, only 20% of them are exclusively about higher education.

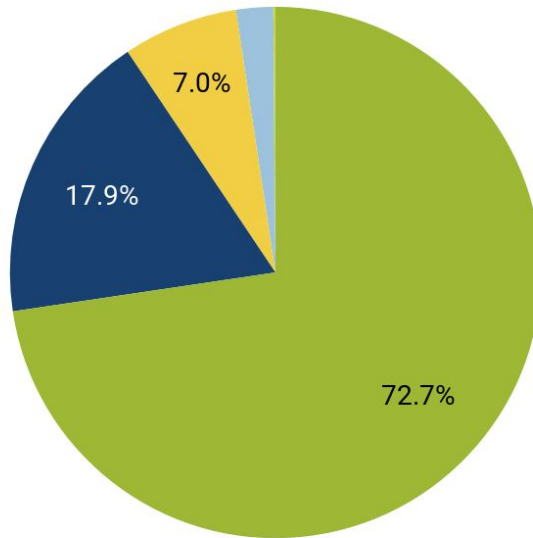
Most conversation is occurring on social media and it's growing faster than news.

Blog mentions are mostly on Tumblr.

Forum mentions are from a variety of sites, including campus-specific forums and niche communities like MyFitnessPal or Educause.

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Content Sources



● Social Media ● News ● Blogs ● Forums ● Reviews ● 4Chan/8Chan

Spotlight on Higher Ed is Emerging

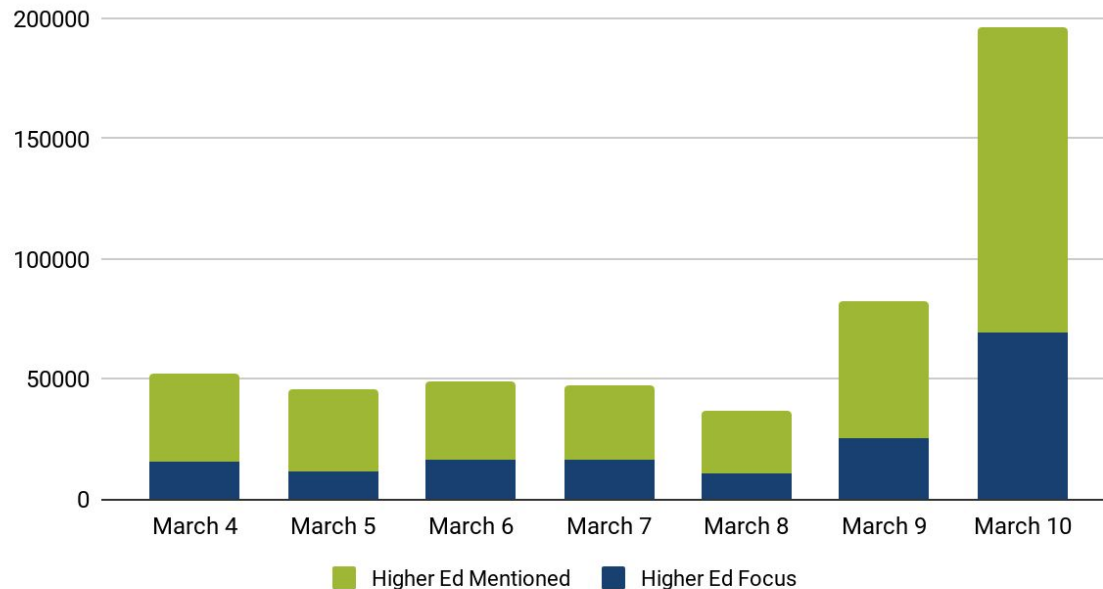
In many instances, higher education was an “also ran,” particularly in local news stories about the virus, which may list a campus closure or decision as an aside.

Beginning March 9, coronavirus conversation and news specifically about higher ed increased.

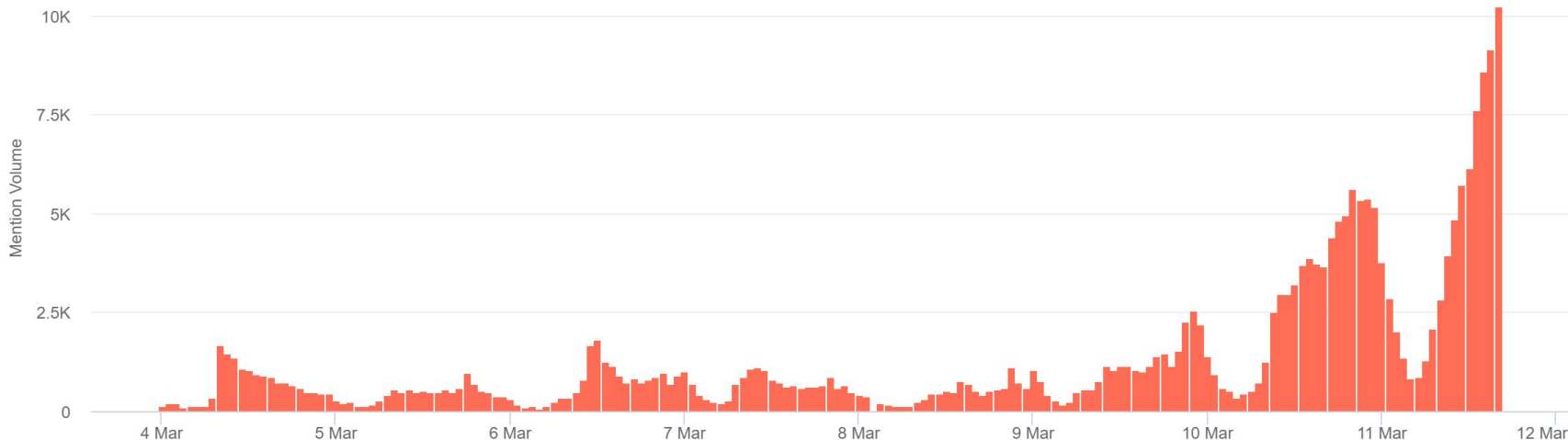
32% of the mentions in this dataset are higher ed-focused (i.e., a headline of a news article or mentioned in a social media post).

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Mention over time by higher ed focus



Higher Ed-Focused Conversation is Increasing



Hourly higher-ed focused coronavirus conversation volume, including March 11 conversation until 5:00pm ET



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Campus Community Conversation Summary



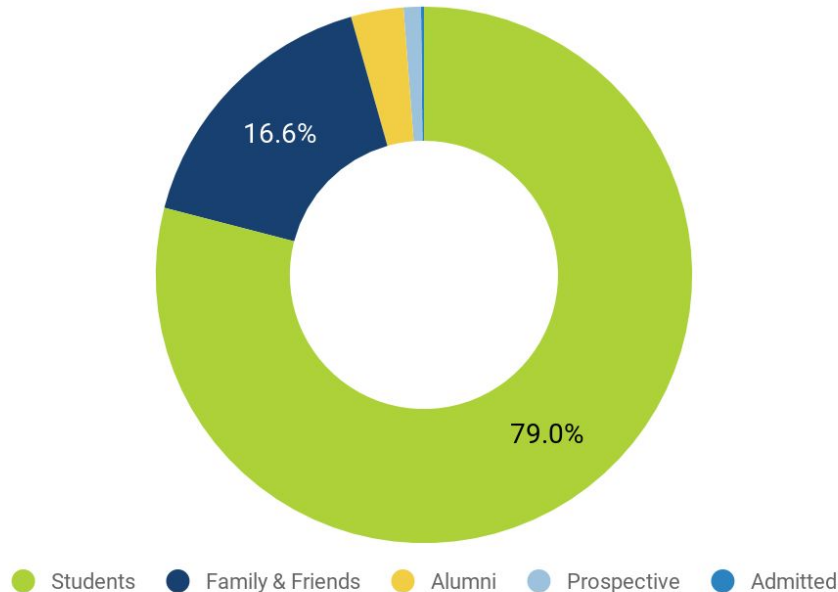
What are students and families saying?

Hidden Voices

- A small portion of the online conversation about coronavirus and higher education is first-person accounts from individuals who reveal an affiliation with the campus community in their message (students, family/friend, prospects, admits, alumni).
- Without proper segmentation, these lived experiences can be missed amongst news headlines and commentary.
- We analyzed the mentions from this audience (less than 5% of higher ed-focused conversation) 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.

Community Member Conversation

Campus Community Conversation by Audience



Students have the most to say, but family and friends also have thoughts to share on the topic.

Most conversation is on Twitter and Tumblr, but prospective students are talking about the issue more on forums

n = 6,886

Family & Friends



Topics vary by audience

Family & Friends

- Angry that the coronavirus has interrupted college visits for prospective students
- Heartbroken that students miss out on senior year spring or study abroad

Students

- Nervous and anxious about online courses, especially lab and performance classes, or experiential learning like student teaching or clinicals
- Concerned about graduating
- Some are excited they don't have to go to class anymore

Topics vary by audience

Prospective Students

- Wondering if admissions decisions will be delayed
- Wondering if institutions will change admissions criteria
- General anxiety

Alumni

- Commenting on the actions taken by their alma mater to stop the spread of the virus (generally positive or neutral)

Summary

- Online conversation about the coronavirus and higher education is increasing; we've not yet hit the peak.
- Social media conversations are growing faster than news mentions, adding more people and perspectives to the conversation every hour.
- Students are anxious and nervous. They want more information about how online classes will work, particularly for non-lecture format.
- Family and friends are heartbroken thinking about the experiences their students are losing. Some are angry about lost campus visit opportunities.
- Prospective students have high levels of anxiety.

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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