

Coronavirus Higher Education Industry Briefing: March 24

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 460,000 online conversations in the United States and on Reddit and YouTube (which span beyond the U.S.) about coronavirus and the higher education industry. We're not searching for conversations about specific campuses.

Analysis Period

We analyzed four days of conversation: March 20–23 (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).

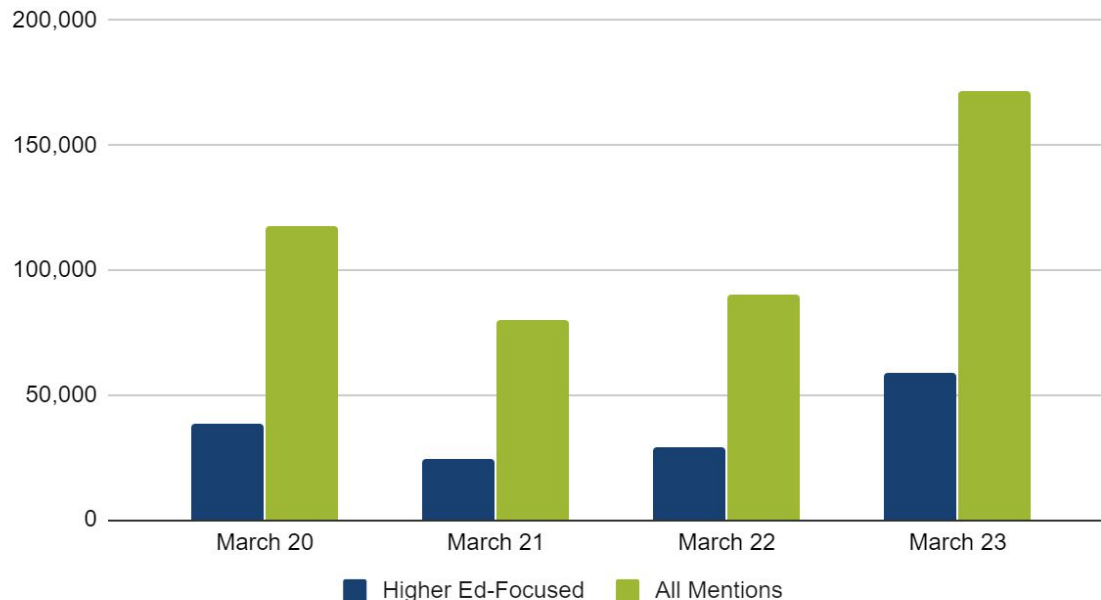
Predictable Weekday and Weekend Patterns

There were ~460,00 mentions during the four-day period of March 20–23.

It appears we've entered a standard cadence of conversation volume: more on weekdays, less on weekends.

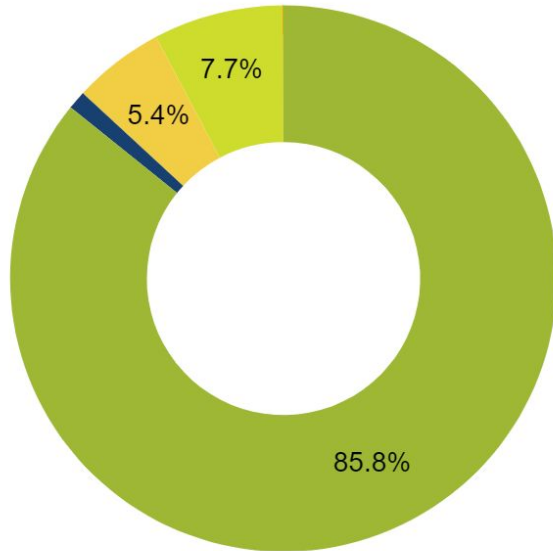
33% of all mentions were higher ed-focused.

Conversation By Higher Ed Focus



Content Sources: Higher Ed-Focused

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



News Coverage Decreased

Social media remained the dominant conversation source.

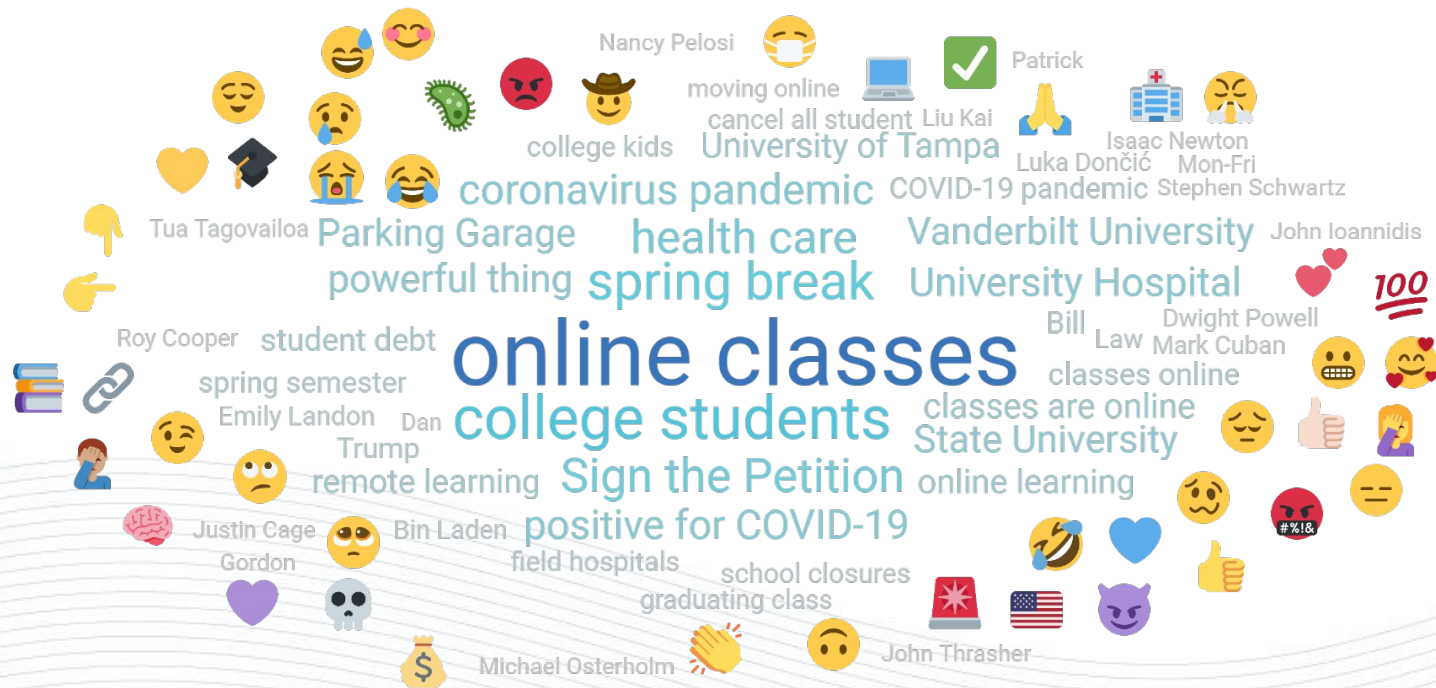
As news coverage decreases (10x less than our March 17 briefing), media began to focus on the contributions of campus experts to public health and policy conversations, rather than reporting on campus operations.

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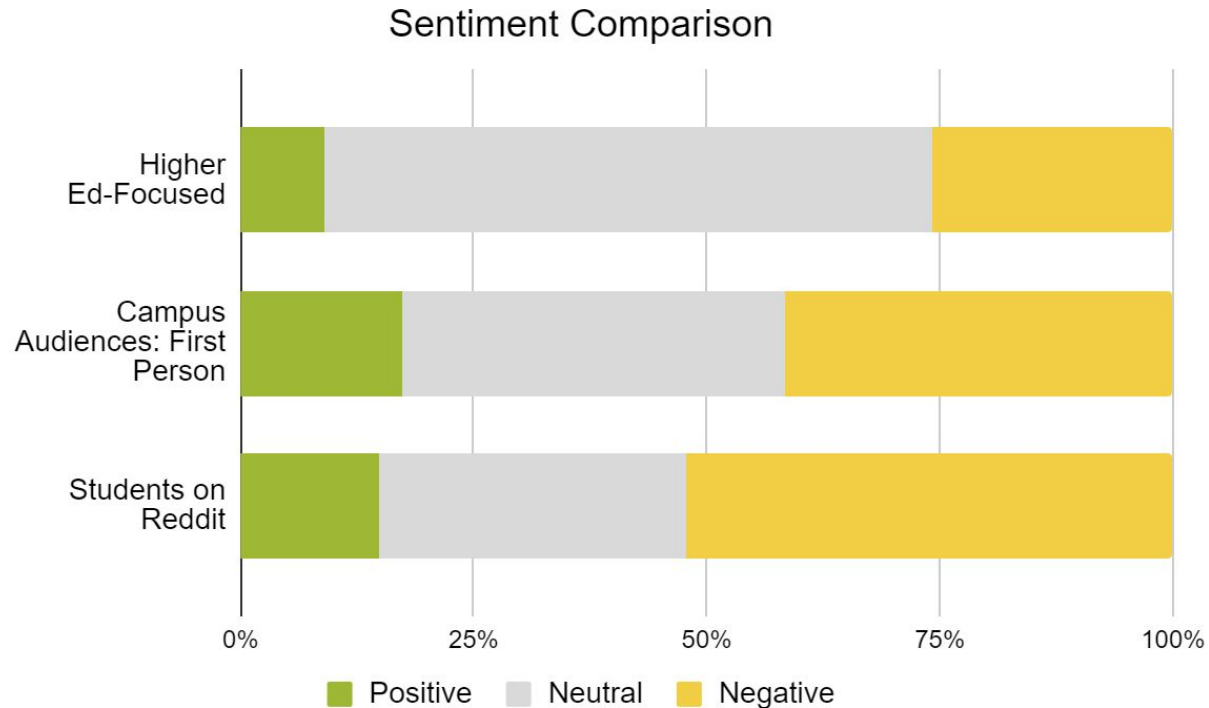
Other topic clusters of hashtags included:

- Learning
- Public Health
- Politics
- Academia
- Campus-Specific

Top 100 Topics & Emoji of Higher Ed-Focused Conversation



Sentiment Remained Negative, Students Moreso



Audience Segmentation

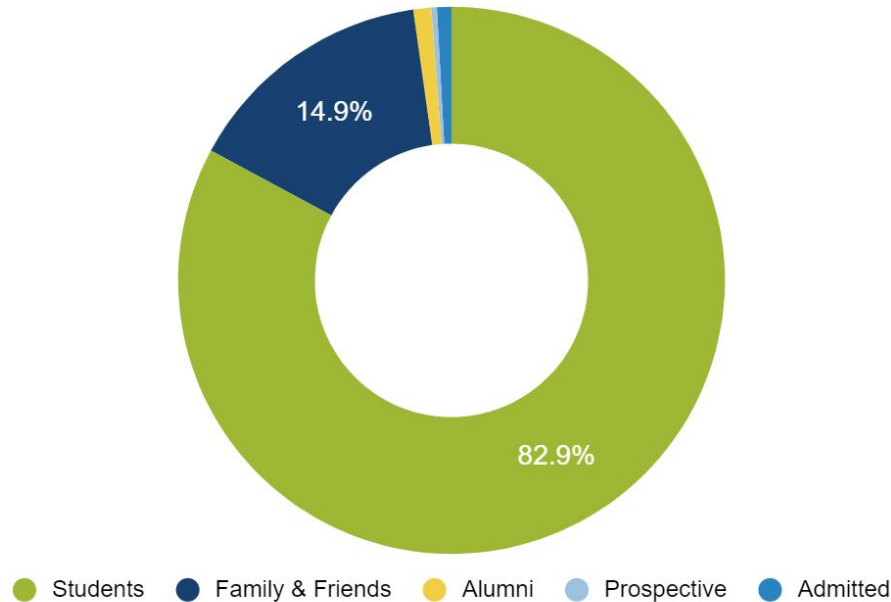
What High-Priority Higher Education Audiences Are Saying

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/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 (6% of higher ed-focused conversation March 20–23) 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.

Students Share; So Do Family & Friends

First-Person Conversation By Audience



Students shared equally as often on Twitter, Reddit, and Tumblr.

- Twitter: memes, updates, life musings, commentary on class
- Tumblr: viral posts, day in the life
- Reddit: Unfiltered conversation

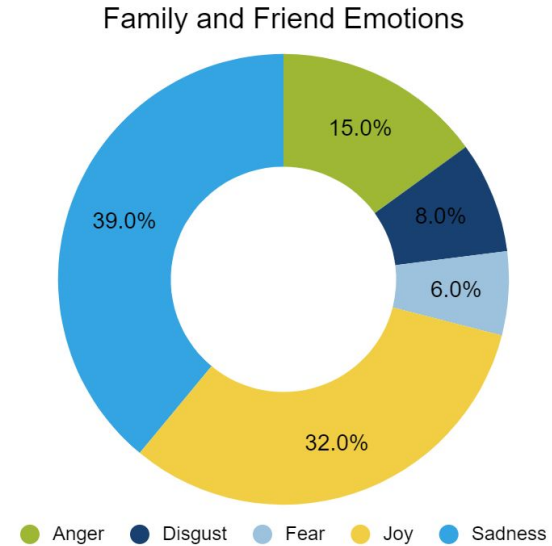
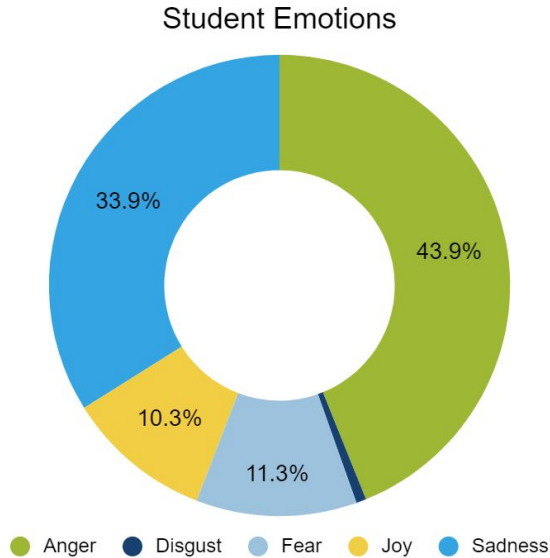
Parents shared most often on Twitter.

*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.

n = 9,340

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Students Are More Angry and Sad Than Family and Friends



What Students Were Saying

When They're Sad

They express general feelings of loneliness, but are also grieving the loss of:

- Graduation
- Time with friends
- Romantic relationships

When They're Angry

They say they're feeling uncared for by their campus or realizing the gravity of COVID-19.

In relation to online courses:

- Don't know what to expect
- Don't have appropriate technology
- General technology issues
- Disdain for online courses

Why Parents Were Joyful 32% of the Time

- Chance to connect with family over the weekend now that students are home
- Proud of how their students (medical or nursing students, university hospital staff) are helping during the pandemic
- Sense of joy or relief after picking up their child from campus
- Great things university staff and faculty have been doing to help students

Summary

- A standard conversation cadence has emerged: higher volume during weekdays and lower volume on weekends. Overall conversation is still elevated because of the pandemic.
- Media coverage decreased and is now focusing on campus expertise.
- Online conversation started to diverge to multiple topic areas that all referenced higher ed and the coronavirus: learning and working online, public health initiatives, politics, and initiatives from specific campus communities.
- Students were angry and sad (grieving). They have mental health concerns as well as issues related to the transition to online courses.
- Parents were also sad but had some moments of joy.

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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