

# Coronavirus Higher Education Industry Briefing: March 27

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 482,000 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 three days of conversation: March 24-26 (based on EDT).

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**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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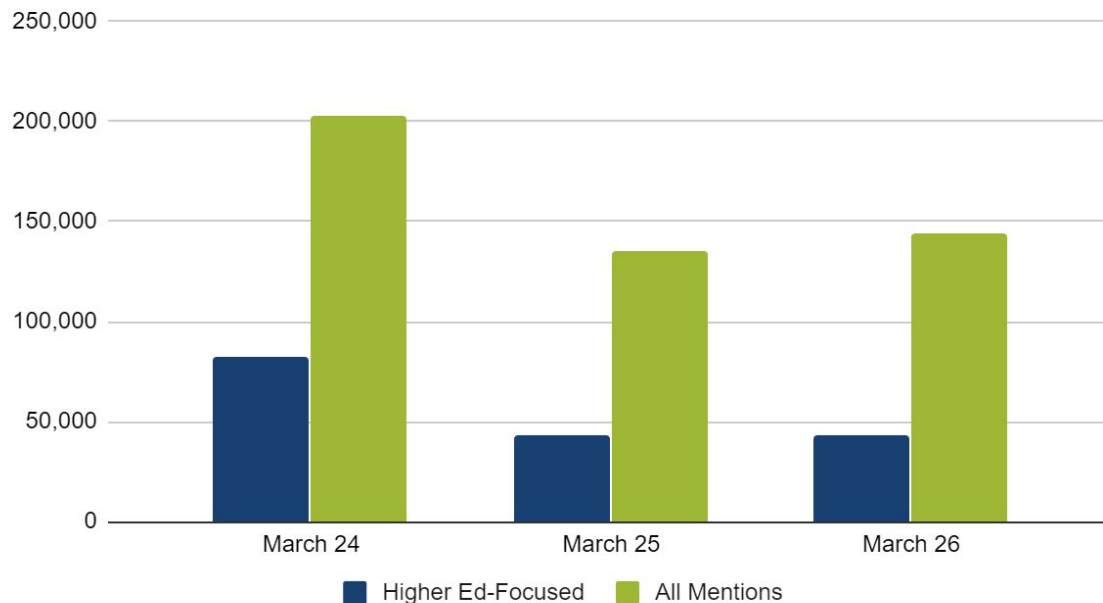
## **All Mentions**

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).

## Conversation By Higher Ed Focus



\*This industry-level analysis only captures general higher education mentions. If someone mentions the name or acronym of an institution without using a higher ed term (e.g., campus, university, college, classes, etc.), it's not included in this analysis. Actual volume of conversation across the industry is likely much higher.

## Conversation Decreased Slightly

There were ~482,000 mentions during the three-day period of March 24–26.

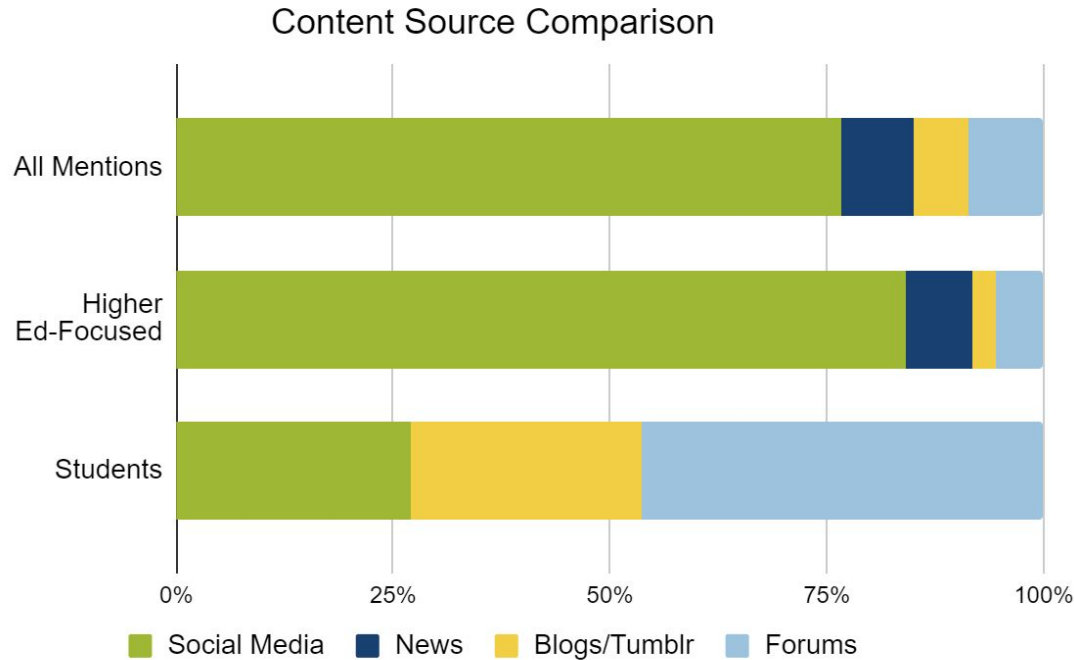
This is fewer than the week prior, but still a significant amount.

35% of all mentions were higher ed-focused.

# Social Media Rules; Students Flocked to Forums

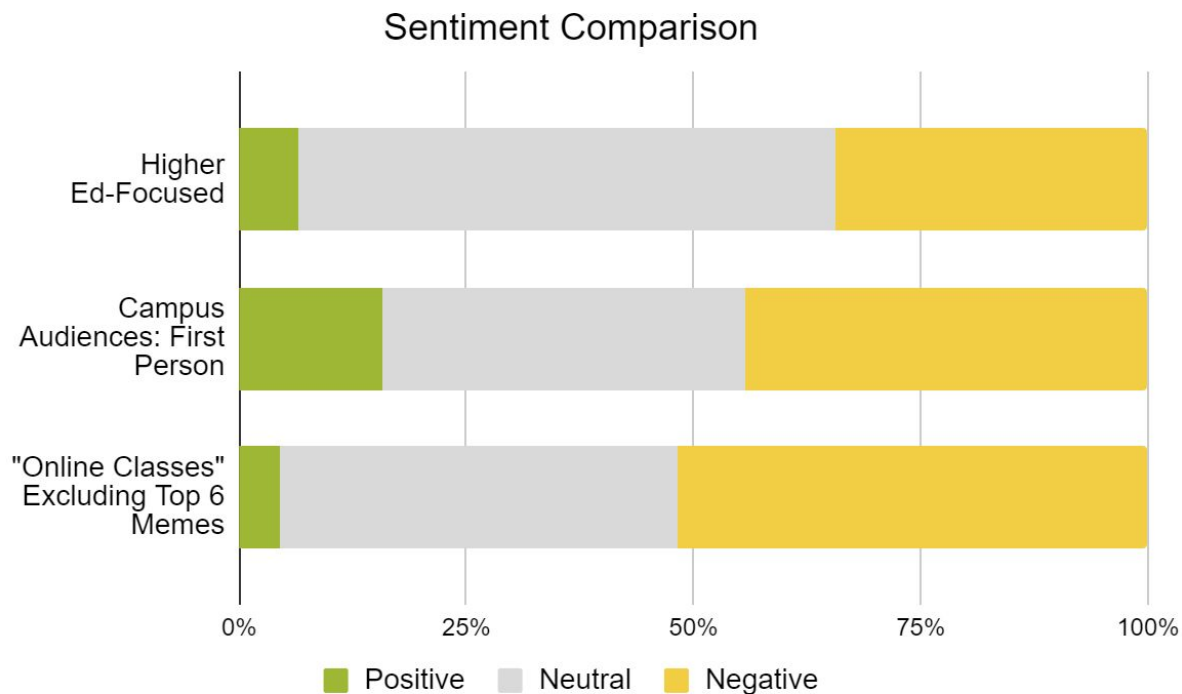
Most conversation is still on social media (77% of all mentions and 84% of higher ed-focused mentions).

Student patterns are different. When speaking in the first-person about their experience, 46% of posts were on forums (mostly Reddit), 27% on Blogs/Tumblr, and 27% on social media.





# Sentiment Moved from Bad to Worse



# Conversation About Online Classes

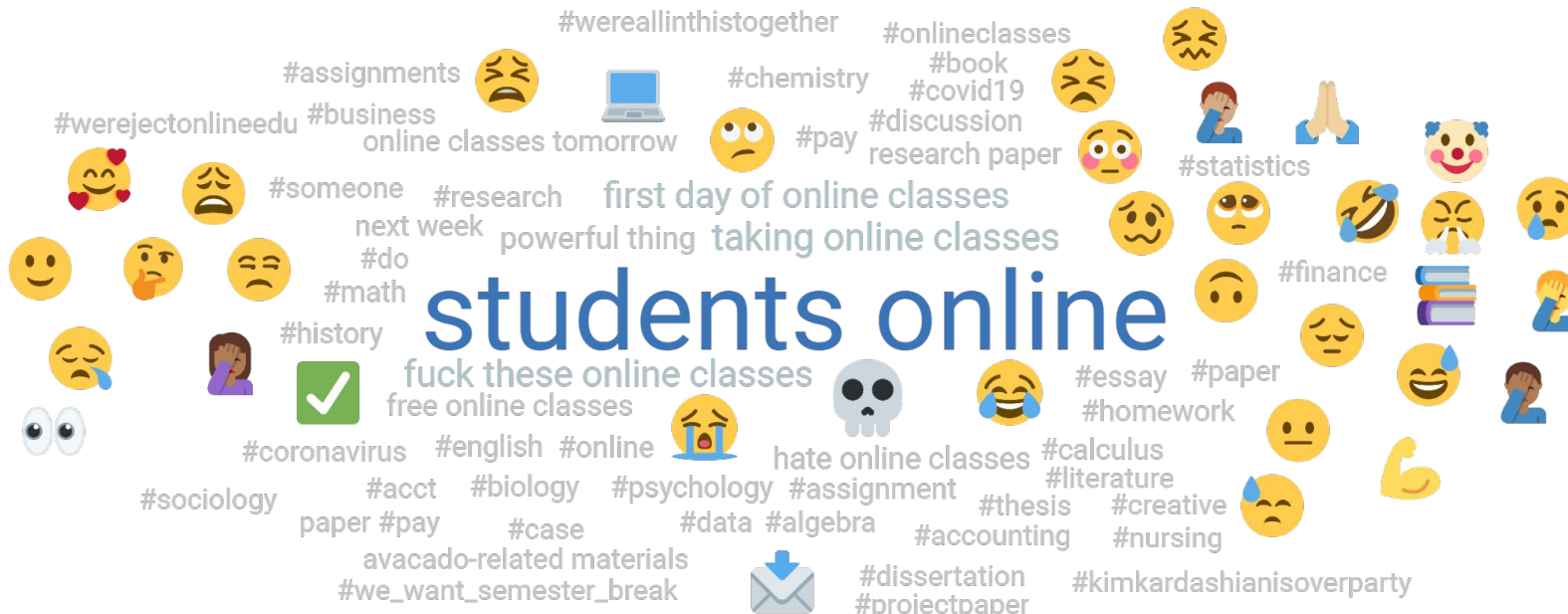
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# The Online Class Memes Matter

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- From March 24–27, 67% of the conversations we identified were about the transition to online learning (n=324,490).
- 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.
- To understand why memes matter, we’ll first look at the topics of the 90,000 remaining conversations about online classes after excluding memes, then explore the top 6 memes.
  - Much more detail about the memes appears in the March 27 companion blog post [info.campussonar.com/covid19](https://info.campussonar.com/covid19).

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# 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

Source: Merriam-Webster

# 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.

NOTE: Some memes include explicit or culturally sensitive language.

# 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



11:07 PM · Mar 22, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

74.8K Retweets 177.9K Likes

# I'd Rather Be In School

I rather be in school than take online classes. You get distracted easily, n [REDACTED] be loud asf in the crib, you get sleepy asf, etc. This shit ain't it



*dane* 🇵🇭 @\_alykadane · Mar 16

bomboclaat

ONLINE CLASS

11:15 AM · Mar 23, 2020 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

31.1K Retweets 100K Likes

# More Confusing than “Actual School”

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

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

**46.4K** Retweets   **210.3K** Likes

# Online Classes Aren't the Same; I'm Trapped in My House

HOW can they even SAY we are getting the SAME LEVEL OF EDUCATION with ONLINE CLASSES??? HOW?? WE SIMPLY ARE NOT!!! I CANNOT FOCUS if I am TRAPPED in my HOUSE all day LOOOOONG!!!! THIS IS BALLS!! BALLS IN MY FACE!! BALLS IN MY FAAAACEEEEE!! LET ME OUUUUUUUUTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT!!!!

8:40 PM · Mar 25, 2020 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

**29.5K** Retweets   **207.6K** Likes

# I'm Confused

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fuck these online classes i'm confused asf

10:48 AM · Mar 24, 2020 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

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**6.2K** Retweets   **18.6K** Likes

# I Didn't Sign Up for This

College students: I didn't sign up for online classes

Universities:

*Video: A young girl in a cowboy hat leans on a shovel in the middle of the desert and says, "I'm tired of this Grandpa!" Grandpa looks up at her from the hole he's digging and yells, "That's too damn bad! You keep digging!"*

College students: I didn't sign up for online classes

Universities:

**Youtube: Taytalktome** @talktometay · Dec 29, 2019

Bomboclaat:

[Show this thread](#)



3:02 PM · Mar 25, 2020 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

12.5K Retweets 40.3K Likes

# Learning From the Top 6 Memes About Online Classes, March 24–26

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- These memes communicate that students are overwhelmed, confused, unhappy, and struggling.
- While this may not be the experience of all students, it resonated with their peers and strangers on the internet.
- The replies to these posts are full of students sharing their experiences and struggles.
- Memes are a window into the student experience. If we take the time to understand them, we'll be better equipped to serve students.

# Summary

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- Conversation is slowly decreasing week-to-week, but remains elevated.
- Social media remains the largest conversation source, although students are more likely to share personal experiences on Reddit and Tumblr.
- Online classes were the most common topic of conversation, followed by politics, misinformation, stories about individuals sickened with the virus, and the controversial decision at Liberty University.
- Negative sentiment increased, particularly when online classes were discussed.
- Memes are a significant part of the conversation and should not be dismissed. Meme themes provide a glimpse into emotions and experiences of students.

# 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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