

Coronavirus Higher Education Industry Briefing: May 19

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 362,000 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:
May 11–17 (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).

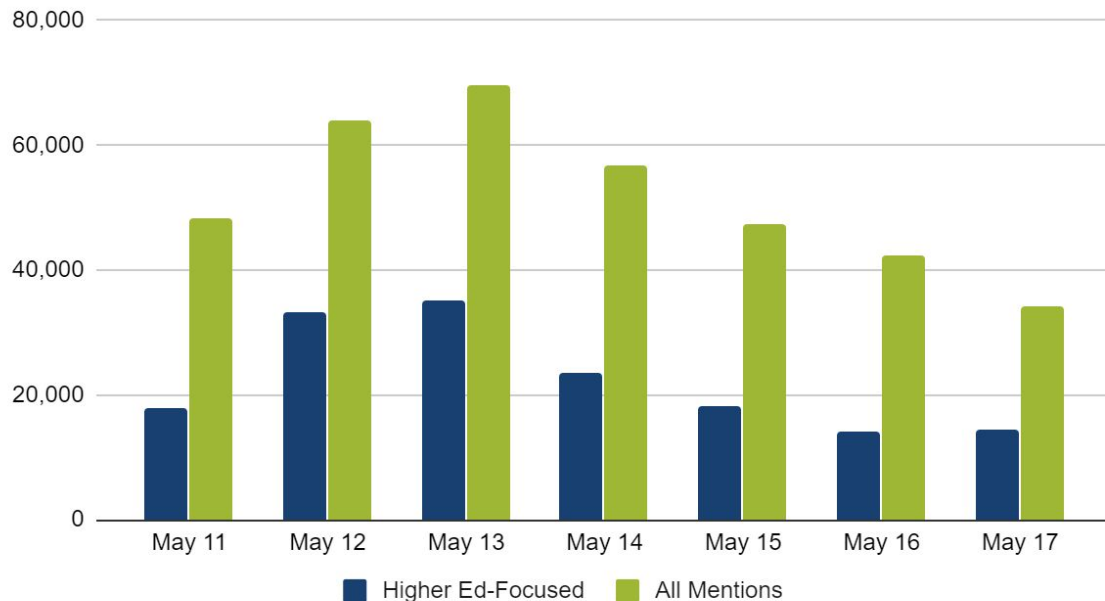
Conversation Volume Decreased Slightly

There were ~362,000 mentions during the seven-day period of May 11–17.

Volume was about 11% lower than one week earlier (May 4–10).

43% of all mentions were higher ed-focused. Of those, 20% referenced the fall semester or later.

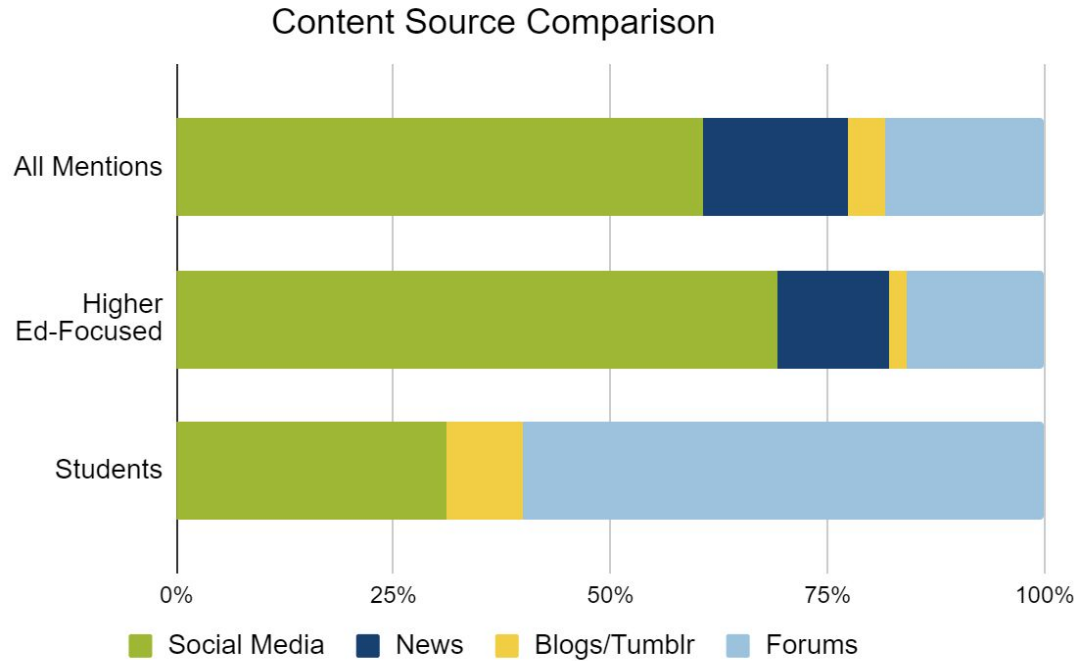
Conversation By Higher Ed Focus



Content Source Patterns Continued

As in prior weeks, social media dominated the sources for all mentions (61%) and higher ed-focused mentions (70%) followed by forums and news.

Student conversation was identified most frequently on forums (60%) followed by social media and blogs/Tumblr.

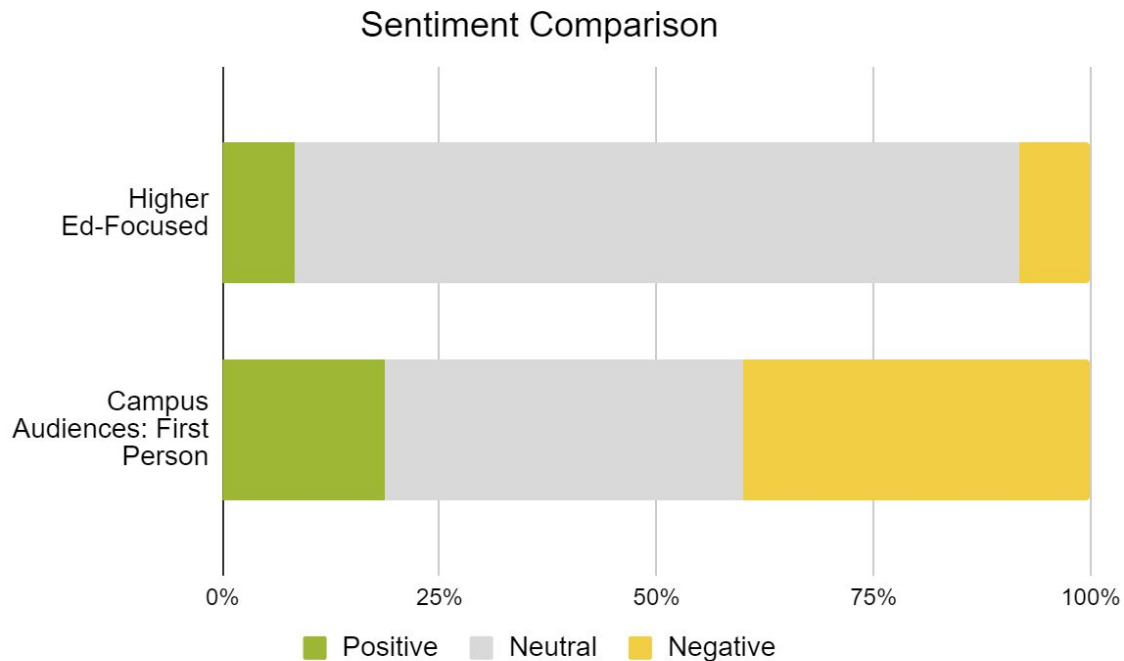


*Due to data access restrictions in this analysis, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok aren't included. Your campus social media manager is the best source of information regarding conversation on those networks.



Top Topic Insights

- Community college was a top topic for the third week in a row, represented by the phrase “incoming college” from a viral tweet.
- “In-person classes” was the sixth most popular topic. This is the first time it’s been mentioned distinctly from “online classes” and “remote learning.”
- Four of the top 20 topics related to California State University’s May 12 announcement that the fall semester would be mainly online.
- “Black” was often mentioned in relation to an online HBCU graduation ceremony and commentary on a tweet from Diamond and Silk.
- “Abbott” referred both to the governor of Texas and a COVID-19 test from Abbott Laboratories that NYU found missed 48% of positive cases.
- “College football” was mentioned by a variety of people and news sources.



Higher Ed-Focused Sentiment Shifted More Neutral

Higher Ed-Focused

- 8% Positive
- 83% Neutral
- 8% Negative

Campus Audiences

- 19% Positive
- 41% Neutral
- 40% Negative

Community College Student Content Begins to Mirror Four-Year Student Trends

- 69% of high school seniors and 72% of juniors use YouTube daily (RNL: 2019 E-Expectations Trend Report).
- 44% of high school seniors and 37% of juniors say YouTube is best for researching colleges (RNL: 2019 E-Expectations Trend Report).
- This week's analysis uncovered a popular YouTube channel from Michelle, a former community college student now graduating from the University of San Francisco.
- Videos about her major, what to expect on the first day of community college, how to pick the right classes, and how she decided where to transfer have tens of thousands of views and hundreds of comments.



Summary from 10 Weeks of Industry Briefings

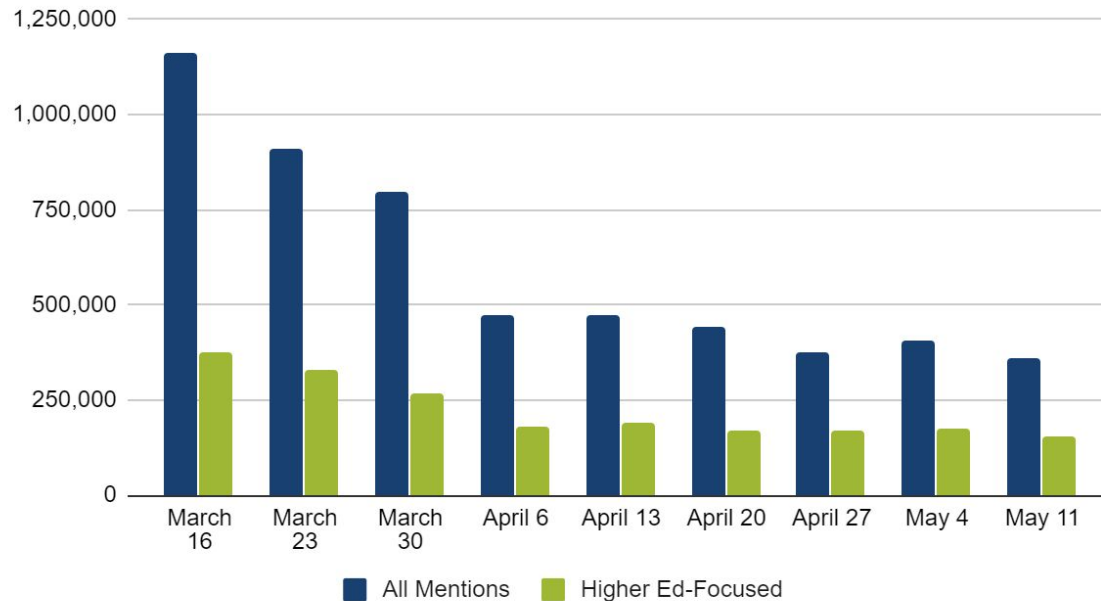
Mentions of Pandemic Settled in April and May

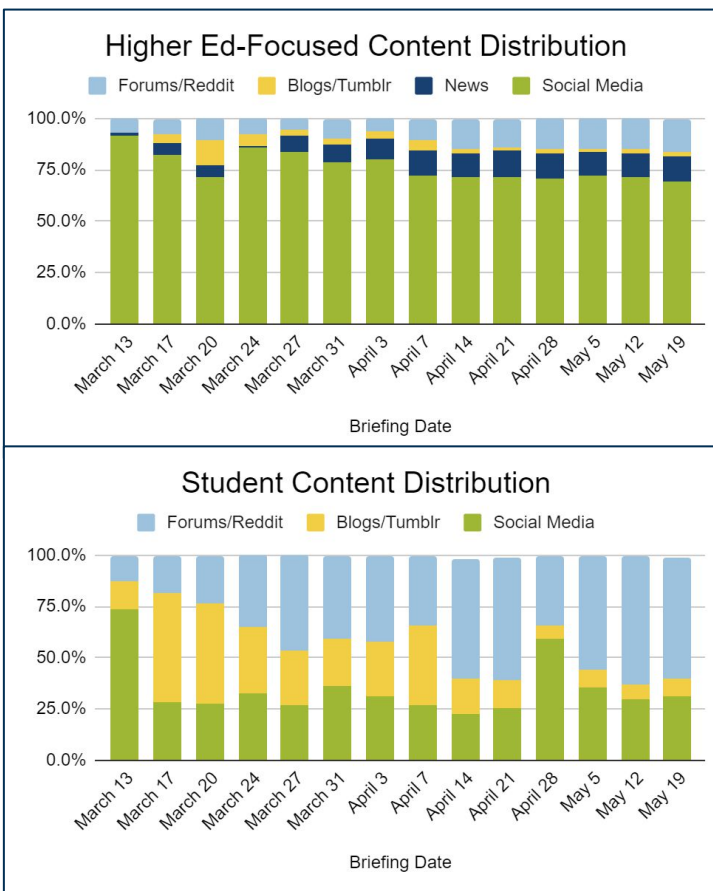
Conversation volume was highest in March, then settled into a fairly consistent pattern in April and May with about half as much conversation as March's peak.

It will be interesting to see if conversations spike in the fall when institutions take varied approaches to the new semester and the virus continues to spread.

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Weekly Conversation By Higher Ed Focus





Students More Likely to Converse on Forums

The majority of higher ed-focused conversation occurred on social media (especially Twitter).

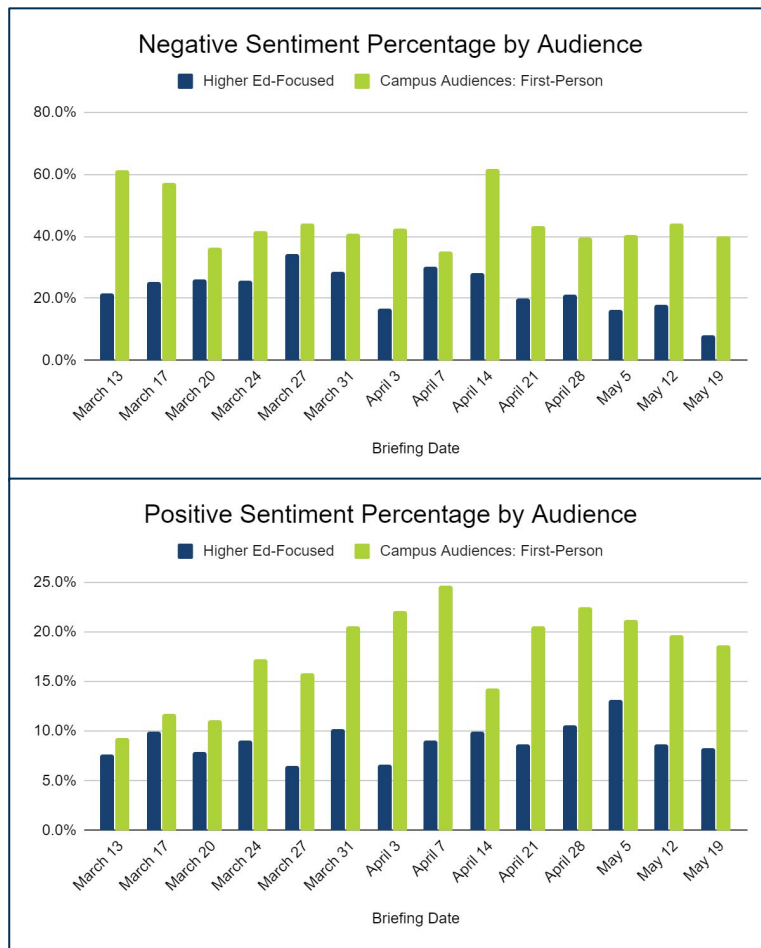
First-person conversation from students was much more likely to occur on forums (especially Reddit). Sometimes, even Tumblr was more popular with students than social media sites like Twitter.

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Negative Sentiment Overshadowed Positive

Conversations were overall more negative, and first-person campus audiences were more likely to display both positive and negative sentiment.

Negative sentiment for higher ed-focused mentions hovered around 20%, and appeared to start a downward trend in May. First-person audiences were about twice as negative as the general public. [@campussonar](https://campussonar.org) • 14



*Note: The Y-axis has been adjusted on these charts to show patterns more clearly

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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