

2021 American College Student Freedom, Progress and Flourishing Survey



Released by the Sheila and Robert Challey Institute for Global Innovation and Growth

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The Sheila and Robert Challey Institute for Global Innovation and Growth aims to advance understanding in the areas of innovation, trade and institutions to identify policies and solutions that enhance economic growth and opportunity.

Introduction

The American College Student Freedom, Progress and Flourishing Survey is an annual survey conducted by the Sheila and Robert Challey Institute for Global Innovation and Growth. The survey assesses student perceptions about viewpoint diversity and campus freedom; human progress and beliefs about the future; and student attitudes toward entrepreneurship, capitalism and socialism, and how college is influencing their views.

American colleges and universities play a vital role in shaping future political, cultural, and business leaders. However, there are growing concerns among the American public regarding the current state and direction of higher education and its influence on society. Recent surveys have begun to identify important challenges on college campuses related to free speech and tolerance of diverse viewpoints. To build on this understanding, we endeavored to explore how students' experiences in higher education influence their thoughts about the current and future state of the world and their place in it.

Survey results are divided into three sections. The first section examines student perceptions of viewpoint diversity in the classroom, as well as student attitudes toward regulating speech in the classroom and on campus. The second section examines student perceptions of how their college education is shaping their views on the world, the United States, their futures, and their ability to contribute to society. The third section examines students' entrepreneurial beliefs and goals, as well as their views on capitalism and socialism and the ways that these views have been shaped by the college experience.

Summaries and results for each section can be found by clicking the links below.

[Section 1: Campus Free Speech and Viewpoint Diversity](#)

[Section 2: Human Progress, Attitudes about the Future, and National Pride](#)

[Section 3: Economics and Entrepreneurship](#)

Methodology

The Sheila and Robert Challey Institute for Global Innovation and Growth, in collaboration with College Pulse, conducted a nationally representative survey of undergraduate students currently attending four-year colleges or universities in the United States. The survey was conducted during the month of April 2021. The sample was drawn from College Pulse's Undergraduate Student Panel, which includes more than 400,000 verified students representing more than 1,000 different colleges and universities in all 50 states. Panel members are recruited by a number of methods to help ensure diversity in the panel population, including web advertising, permission-based email campaigns, and partnerships with university organizations. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.5%.

The sample consists of 1,000 undergraduate students currently enrolled in four-year U.S. colleges and universities. Participants represent 71 colleges/universities across the U.S. The sample is 58 percent female, 36 percent male, and six percent other/non-identified. It is 60 percent white, 17 percent Asian, seven percent Hispanic/Latino, six percent black, seven percent two or more races, less than one percent American Indian, less than one percent Native Hawaiian, and one percent reporting other.

Roughly 62 percent of participants are attending public colleges, and 38 percent are attending private colleges. Concerning political ideology, 49 percent report being slightly, somewhat, or very liberal; 25 percent report being slightly, somewhat, or very conservative; and 26 percent report being neither liberal nor conservative (independent) or not having thought much about politics (apolitical).

Our survey focuses on a range of issues that are potentially influenced by political ideology. Therefore, in addition to reporting results for all students, we report them categorized into three groups: liberal/liberal leaning (students who identify as slightly, somewhat, or very liberal), conservative/conservative leaning (students who identify as slightly, somewhat, or very conservative), and independent/apolitical (students who identify as not liberal or conservative or not having thought much about politics).

Section 1: Campus Free Speech and Viewpoint Diversity

Given growing concerns about free speech and the lack of viewpoint diversity in higher education, we asked students a range of questions regarding their attitudes and experiences with navigating diverse viewpoints and potentially controversial or sensitive topics. These questions assessed student perceptions of the climate surrounding viewpoint diversity, as well as their own attitudes toward preventing speech that could be viewed as controversial or offensive.

As universities aim to enhance students' critical thinking skills and advance scientific knowledge, academic freedom and an ability to engage in a competition of ideas are essential to their missions. Student views of the classroom and university climate regarding viewpoint diversity suggest that higher education may not be as open to unpopular and controversial views as one might expect.

A majority of students perceive a climate that is generally open to sharing of controversial or unpopular ideas in the classroom. However, there are wide disparities in this perception among students with different political ideologies. In general, students with a more conservative political ideology are less likely to perceive a classroom climate that is open to diverse points of view in comparison to students with a more liberal political ideology. Moreover, although a majority of students perceive a climate of open inquiry, there exists large numbers of students who do not.

A majority of students perceive a climate that is open to sharing of controversial or unpopular ideas in the classroom. However, many of those same students are in favor of reporting professors or fellow students who make comments they deem to be offensive.

Student attitudes related to dropping controversial readings and discussions in class or uninviting speakers suggest more openness to a wide range of ideas. A majority of students are not in favor of dropping controversial topics or uninviting speakers, but there are significant differences in views among students with different political ideologies.

Individual questions and responses of students with varying political ideologies are presented below.

A Majority of Students are Comfortable Sharing Opinions on Controversial Topics in Class.

A majority of students (57 percent) in our survey say they feel comfortable sharing their opinions in class on controversial or sensitive topics. However, a large proportion (43 percent) of students are not comfortable sharing such opinions.

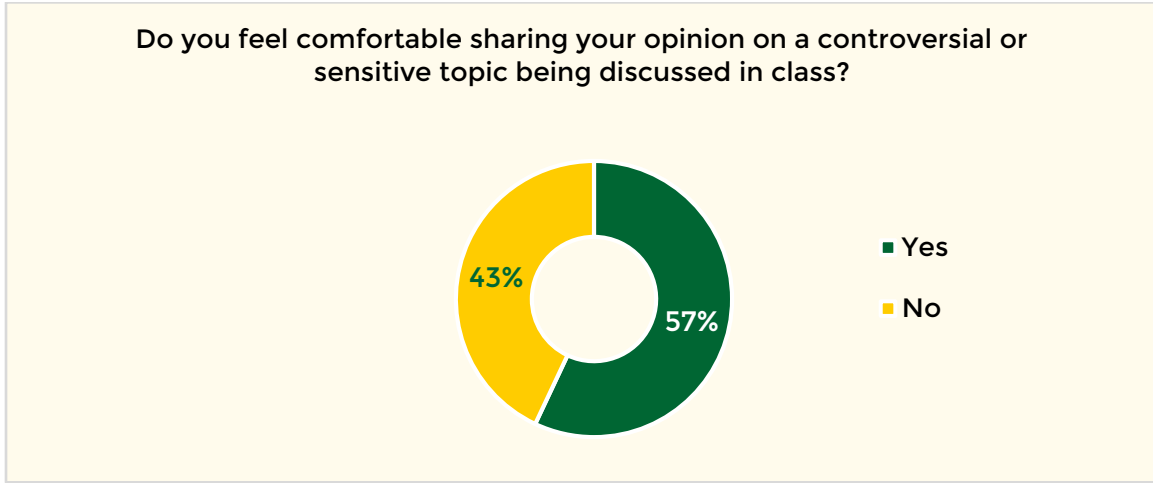


Figure 1: 57 percent of students are comfortable sharing controversial opinions in class.

Although a majority of students feel comfortable sharing their opinions on controversial or sensitive topics in class, there are significant differences between students with different political ideologies. In particular, a majority of conservative students do not feel comfortable sharing their opinions on controversial or sensitive topics in class.

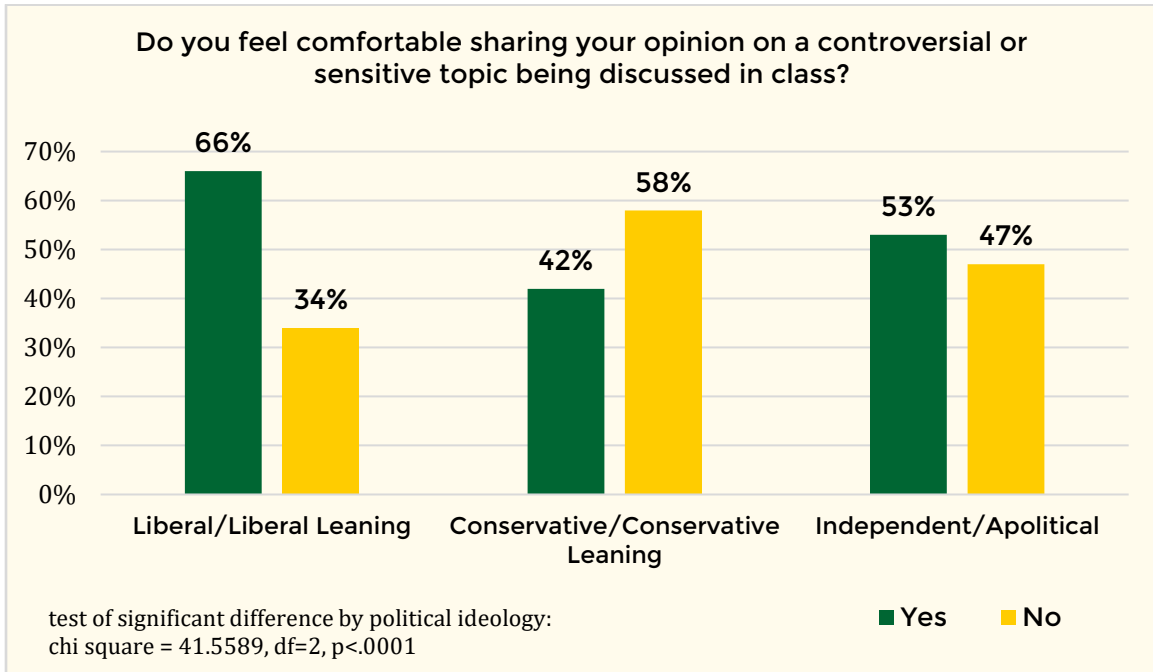


Figure 2: Significant differences between liberal, conservative, and independent students exist on feeling comfortable sharing controversial opinions in class.

A Majority of Students Say Professors Create a Class Climate that Allows Diverse Views.

Most students (76 percent) believe that professors create a classroom climate where people with diverse views feel comfortable sharing their opinions.

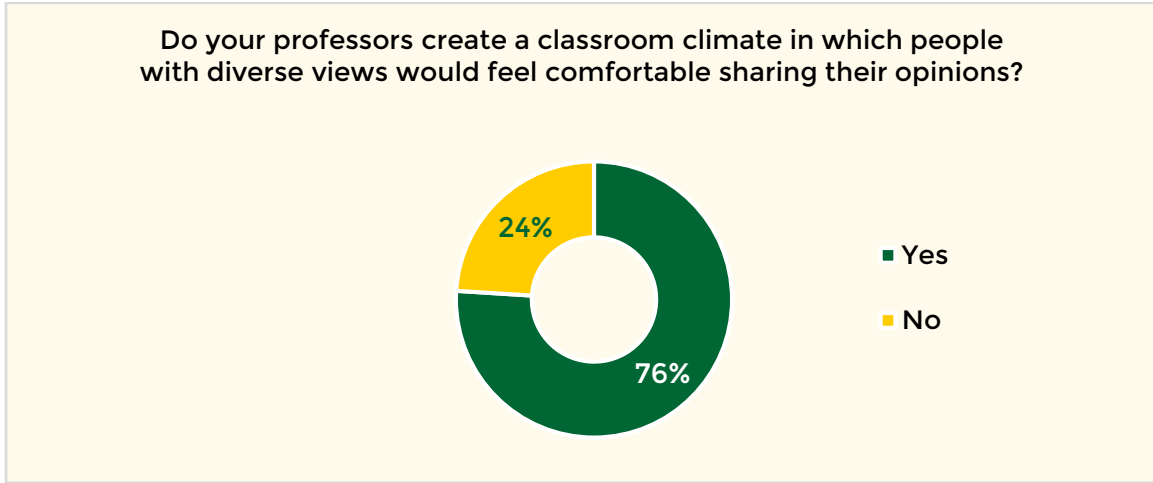


Figure 3: 76 percent of students believe professors create a climate that allows diverse views.

Although more than 75 percent of students believe this is the case, there are sharp differences in the way classroom climate is viewed by students with differing political ideologies. A large majority (86 percent) of students with liberal political views believe the classroom climate encourages diverse views, while just over half of students with conservative views believe this is the case.

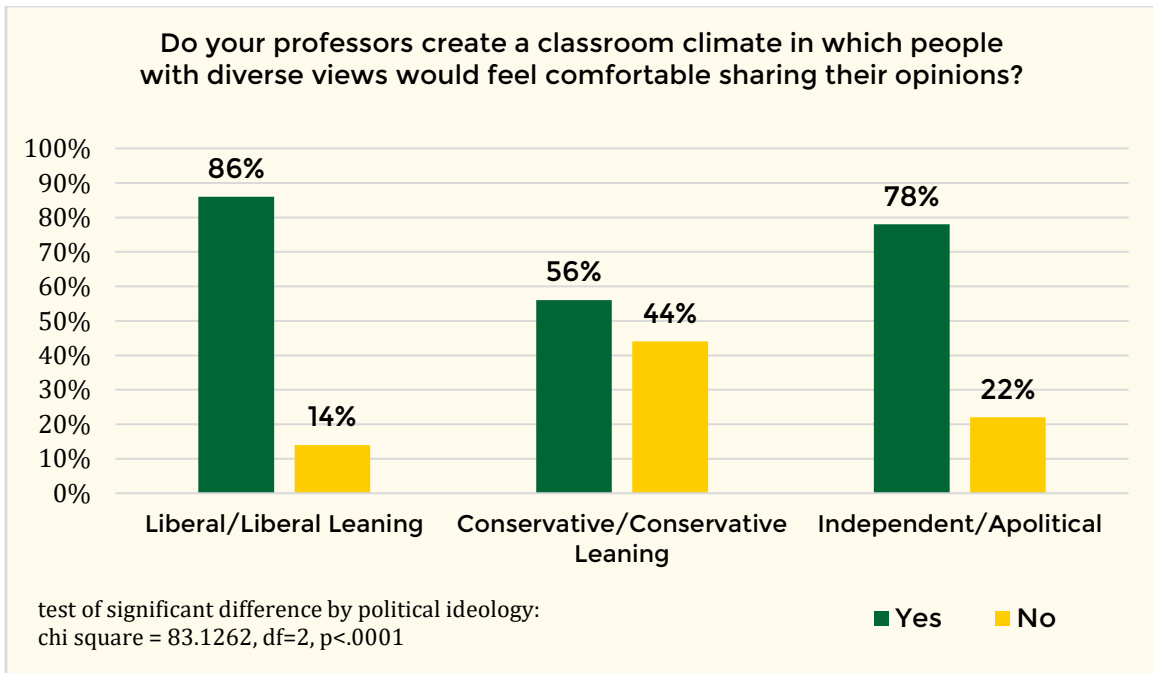


Figure 4: Liberal, conservative, and independent students have significantly different perceptions of classroom climate.

A Majority of Students Say Professors Encourage Diverse Viewpoints and Perspectives.

Nearly 80 percent of students think that professors encourage students to explore a wide variety of viewpoints and perspectives.

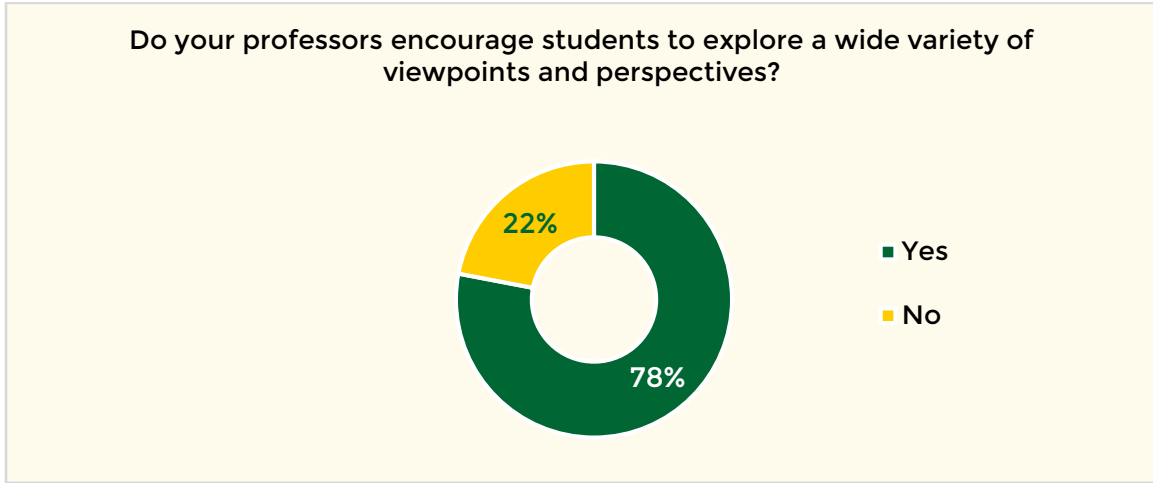


Figure 5: 78 percent of students believe professors encourage a wide variety of viewpoints and perspectives.

About 85 percent of liberal students believe professors encourage exploration of a wide variety of viewpoints and perspectives, but only 58 percent of conservative students think so.

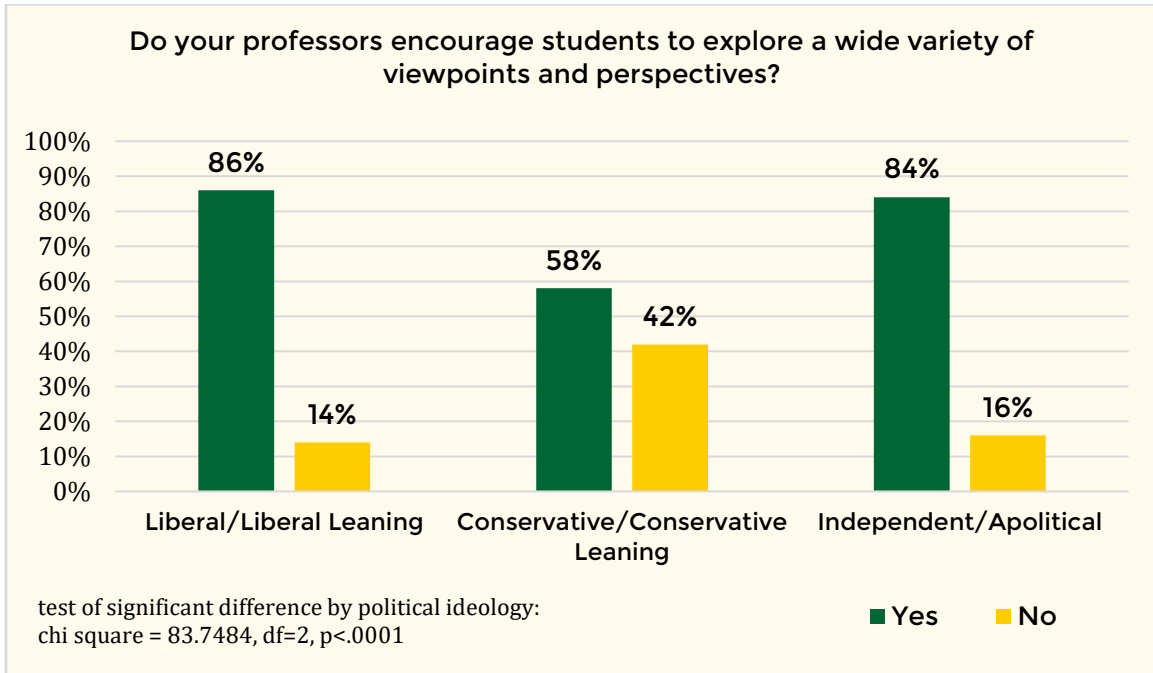


Figure 6: Student perceptions on whether professors encourage exploration of a wide variety of viewpoints and perspectives depend on political ideology.

A Majority of Students Say Unpopular Views are Welcome in the Classroom.

More than 60 percent of students believe that professors create a classroom climate where people with unpopular views would feel comfortable sharing their opinions.

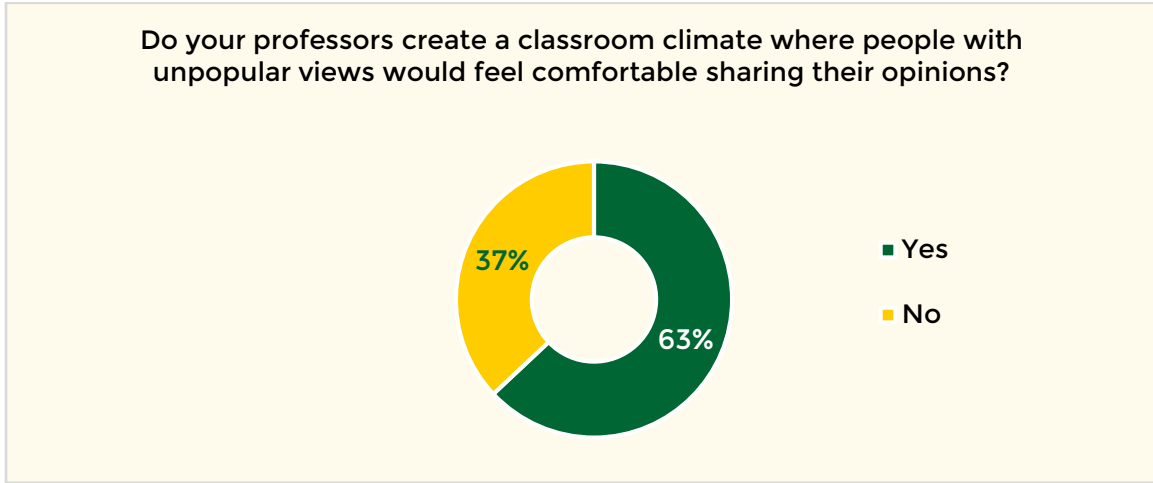


Figure 7: 63 percent of students believe professors create a climate where students are comfortable sharing unpopular views in the classroom.

Although roughly two-thirds of students with liberal or independent political ideologies believe that professors create a classroom climate where people with unpopular views would feel comfortable sharing their opinions, less than half of conservative students think so.

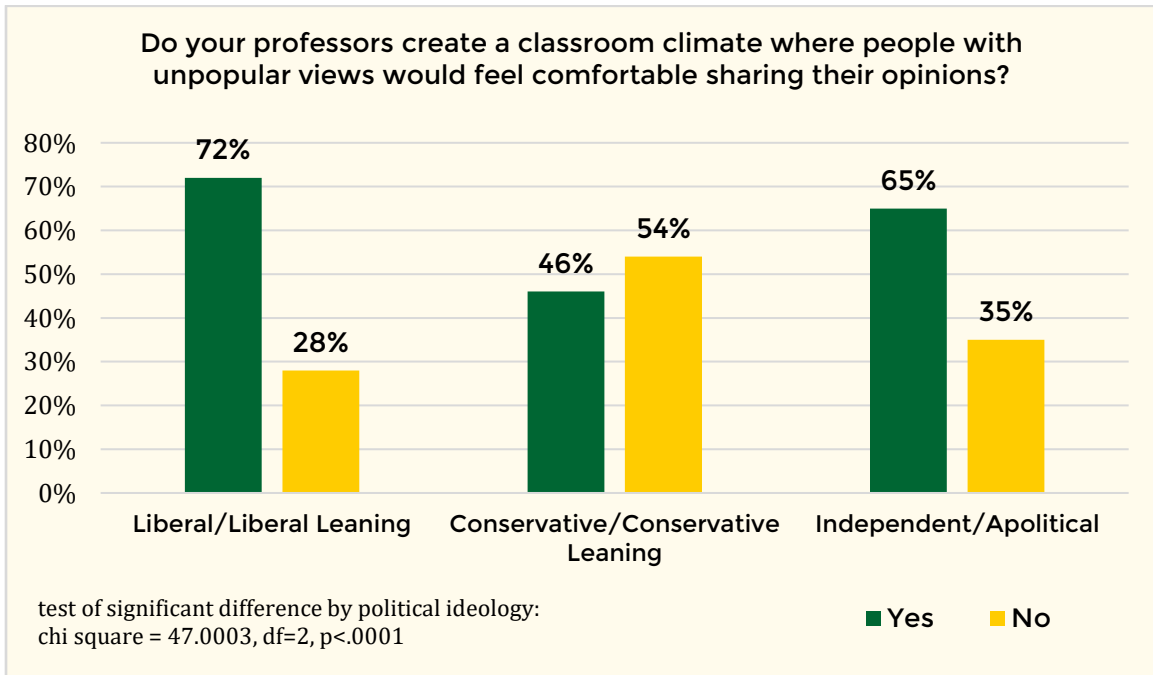


Figure 8: Liberal, conservative, and independent students have significantly different perceptions on whether students feel comfortable sharing unpopular views in the classroom.

Student Views Differ About How Often Professors Promote Political Views in the Classroom.

Only 21 percent of students report that professors promote their own political views very frequently or frequently in the classroom. Another 33 percent say professors promote their own political views occasionally, while 46 percent say they promote them rarely or never.

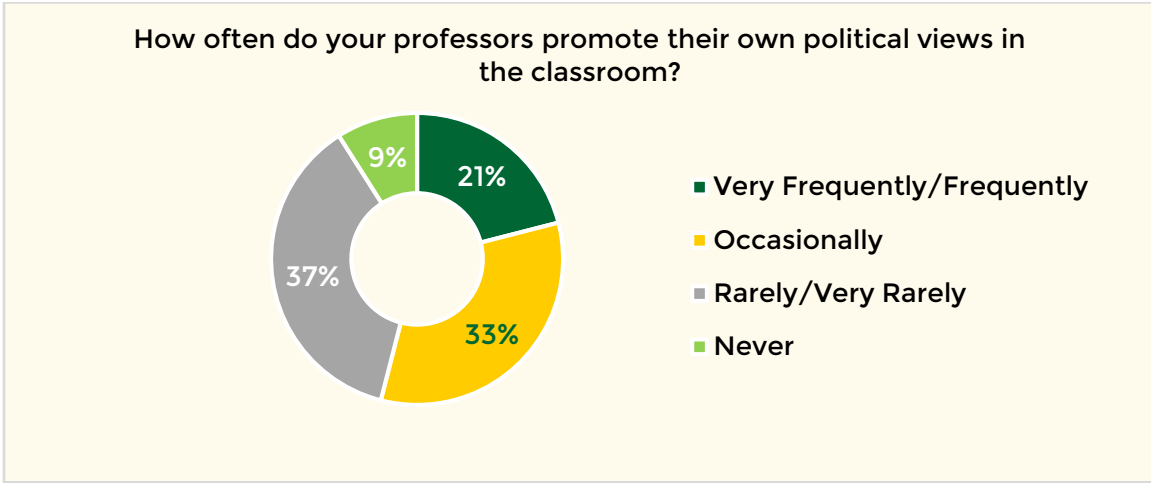


Figure 9: 21 percent of students say professors “frequently” promote their own political views in the classroom. A majority of students say professors “occasionally” or “rarely” do.

Students with conservative political views perceive that their professors promote their own political views more frequently in comparison to students with liberal or independent political views.

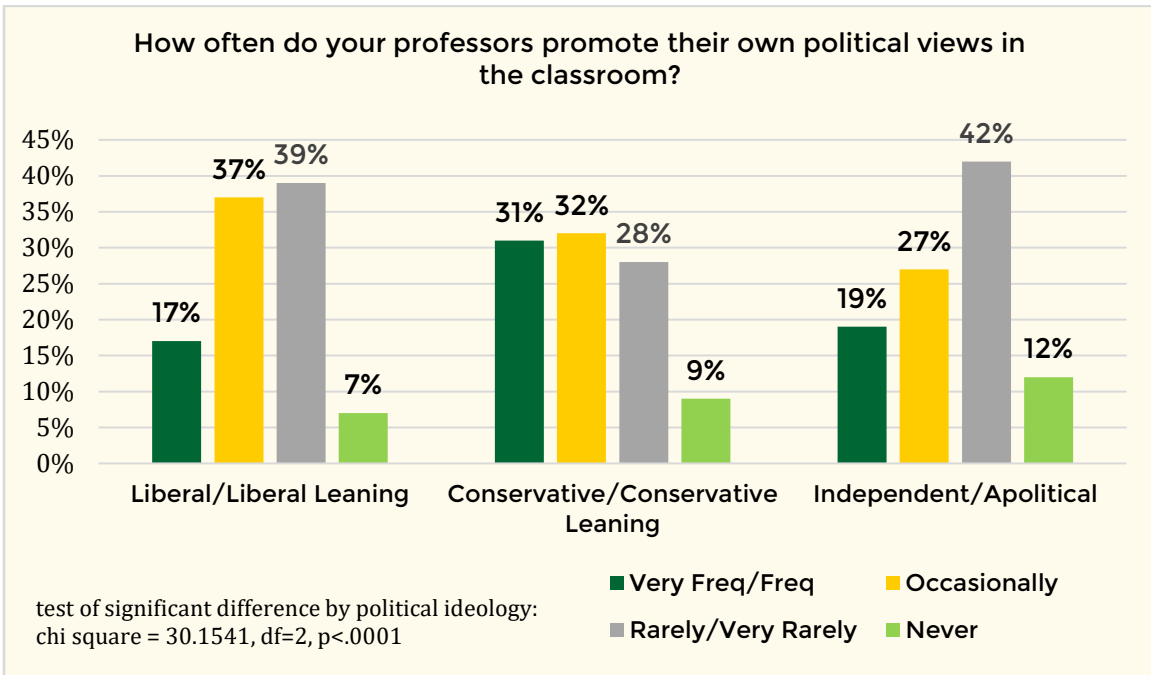


Figure 10: Students with different political ideologies have different perceptions of professors promoting their own political views in the classroom.

A Majority of Students Say Universities Should Not Disinvite Controversial Speakers.

A majority of students (70 percent) believe that universities should not withdraw invitations to speakers when many students disagree with their views.

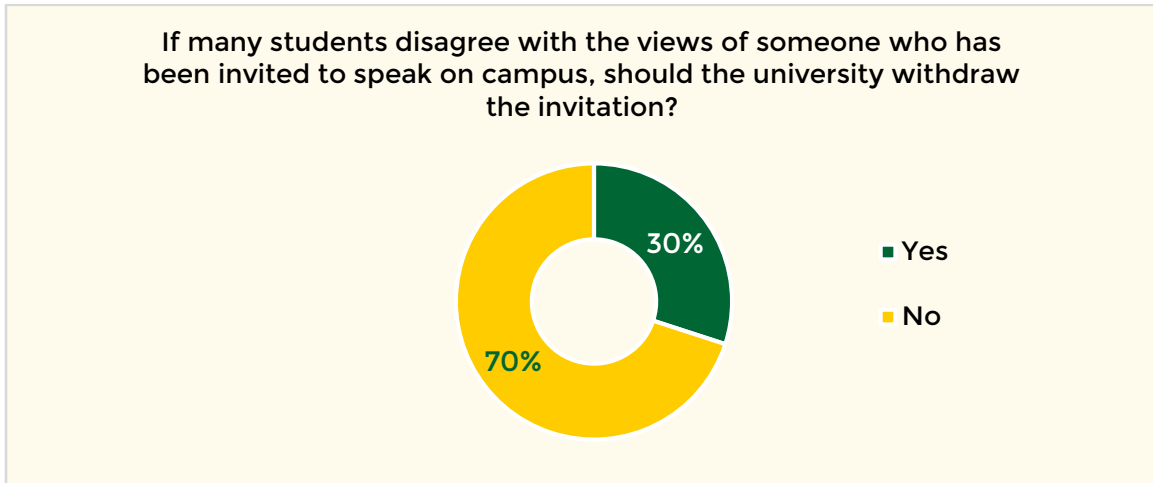


Figure 11: 70 percent of students say universities should not withdraw invitations to controversial speakers.

Although most students are not in favor of withdrawing invitations to controversial speakers, there are significant differences in the attitudes of students with different political ideologies. Liberal students are more likely to be in favor of withdrawing invitations to controversial speakers compared to students with conservative political views.

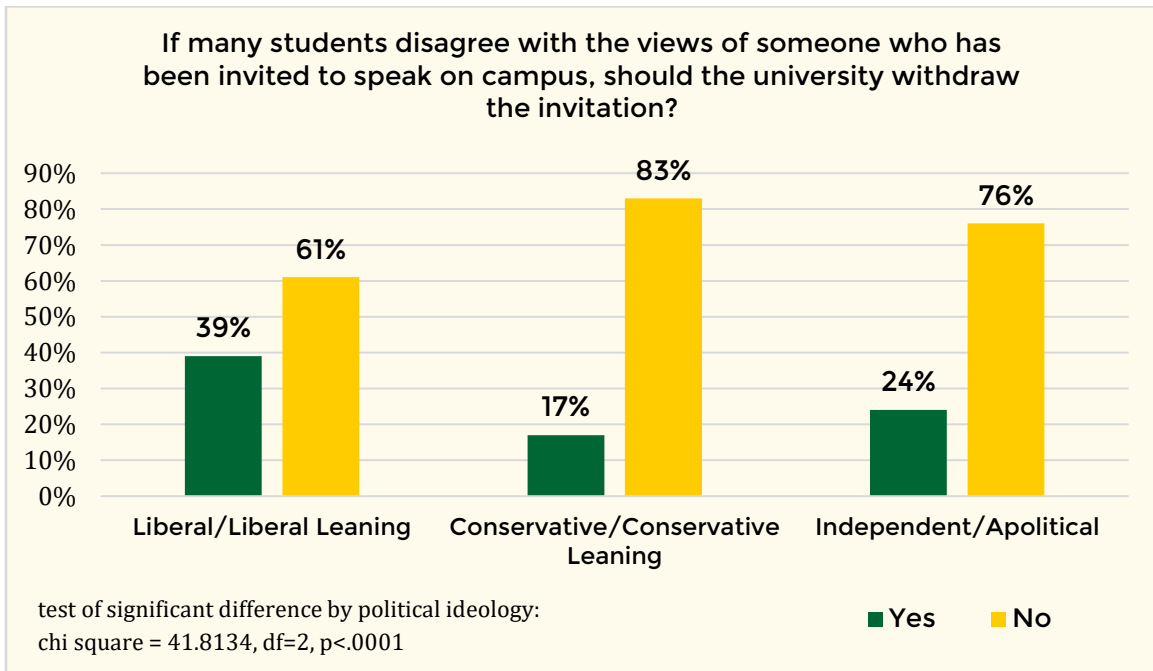


Figure 12: There are significant differences in views on whether controversial speakers should be disinvited among students with different political ideologies.

A Majority of Students Do Not Believe Professors Should Drop Readings that Students Strongly Disagree With.

Most students (76 percent) believe that required course readings should not be dropped when students disagree with the reading’s views.

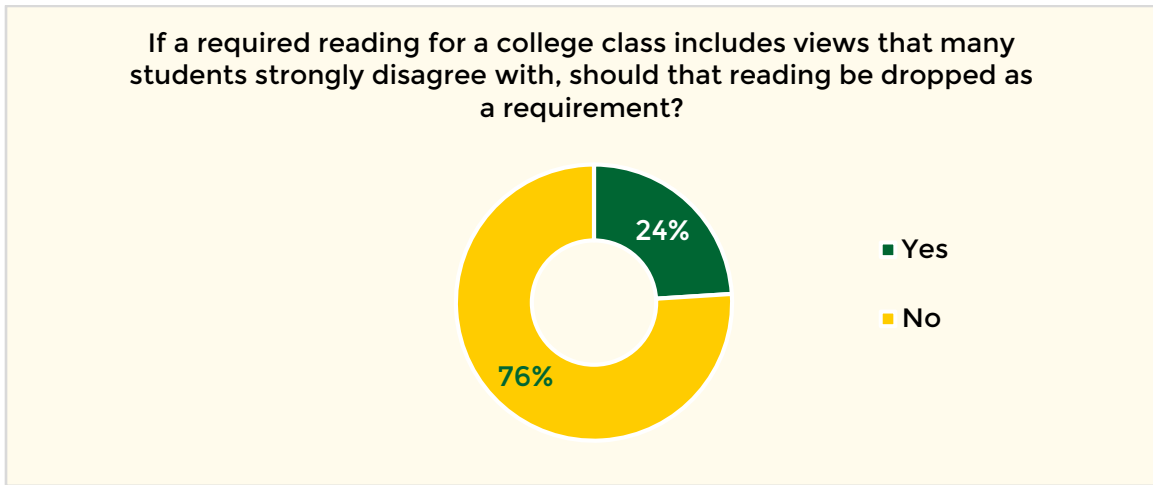


Figure 13: 76 percent of students do not think a college class should drop a required reading that many students strongly disagree with.

The belief that readings should not be dropped based on student disagreement is widely shared among students with different political ideologies.

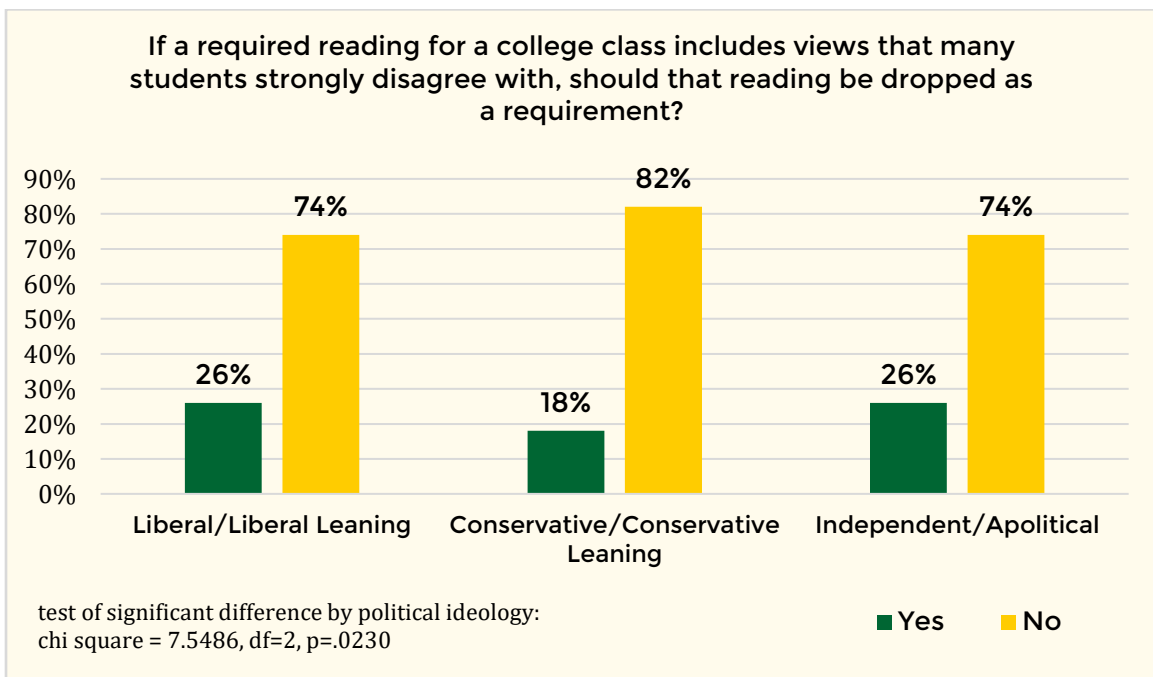


Figure 14: There is widespread agreement that college classes should not drop readings that students disagree with.

A Majority of Students Say Professors Should Not Drop Readings that Make Students Uncomfortable.

Although a majority of students are not in favor of dropping course readings that make students uncomfortable, more students are in favor of dropping those readings than readings that many students disagree with (35 percent versus 24 percent).

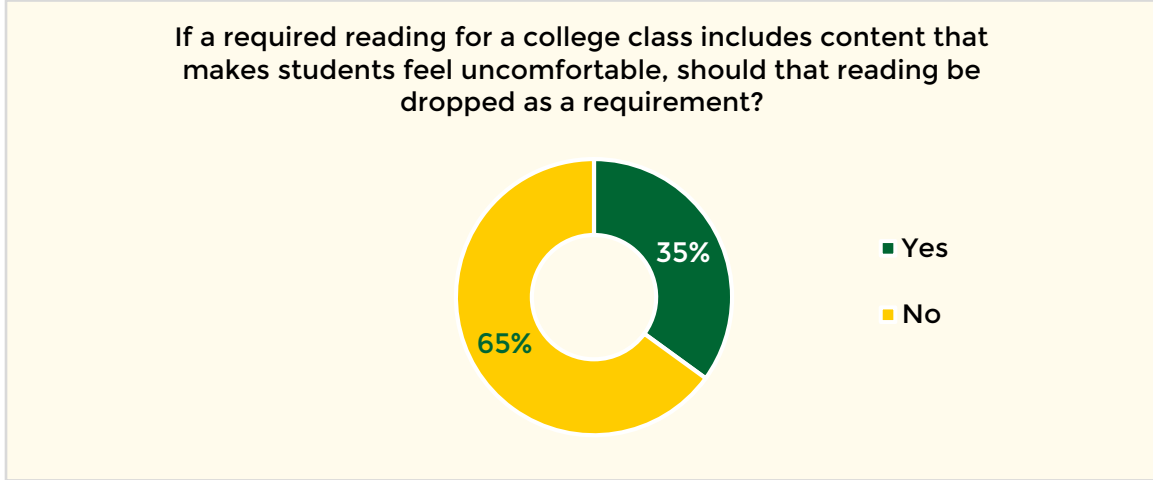


Figure 15: 65 percent of students do not think a college class should drop a required reading that makes students feel uncomfortable.

There are significant differences among students about whether readings that make students feel uncomfortable should be dropped. Among liberal students, 42 percent favor dropping such readings compared to 20 percent of conservative students.

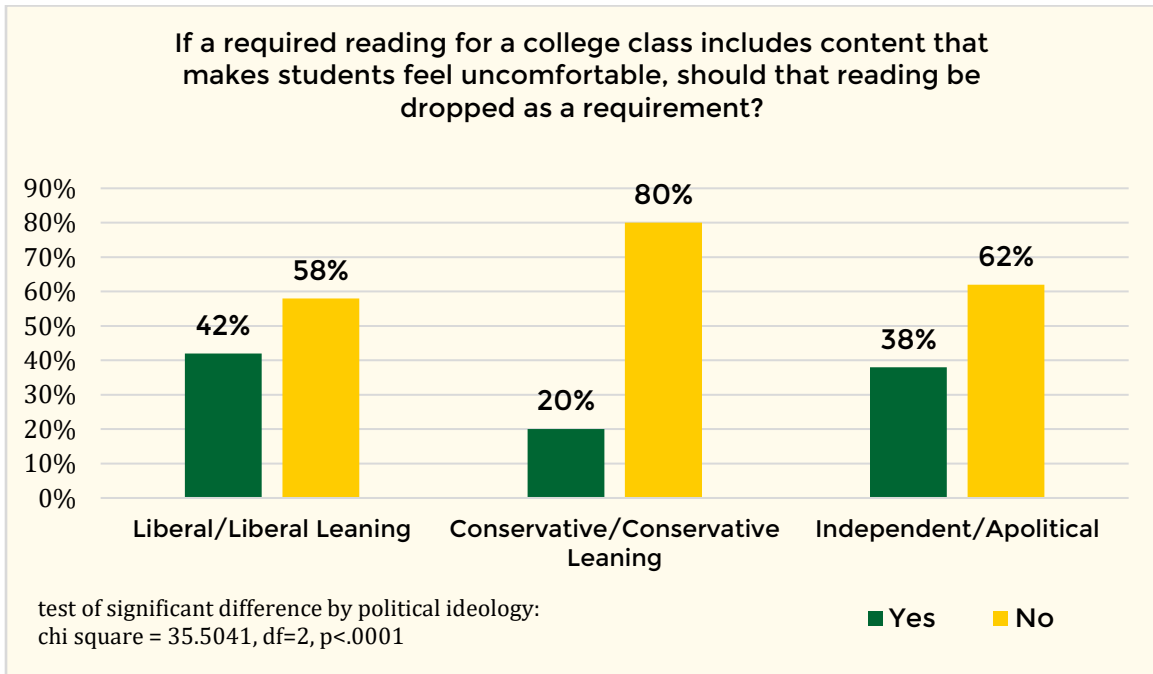


Figure 16: Students with different political ideologies have significantly different views about dropping readings that make students uncomfortable.

A Majority of Students Do Not Support Dropping Discussion Topics that Make Students Uncomfortable.

Most students (76 percent) are not in favor of dropping class discussion topics that make students feel uncomfortable.

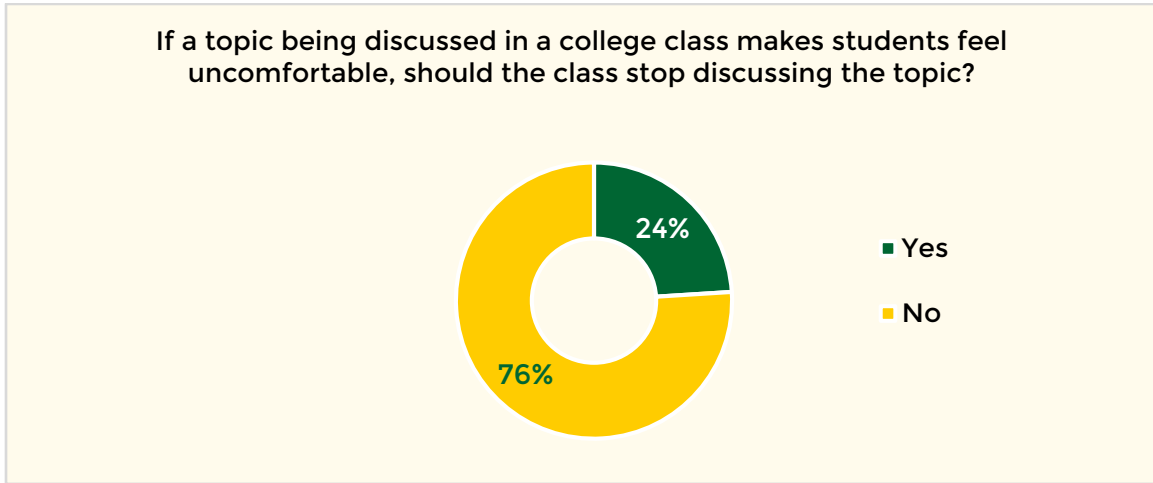


Figure 17: 76 percent of students say a class should not stop discussing a topic that makes students uncomfortable.

Although there are statistically significant differences along ideological lines, a large majority of students in every political group are not in favor of dropping uncomfortable discussion topics.

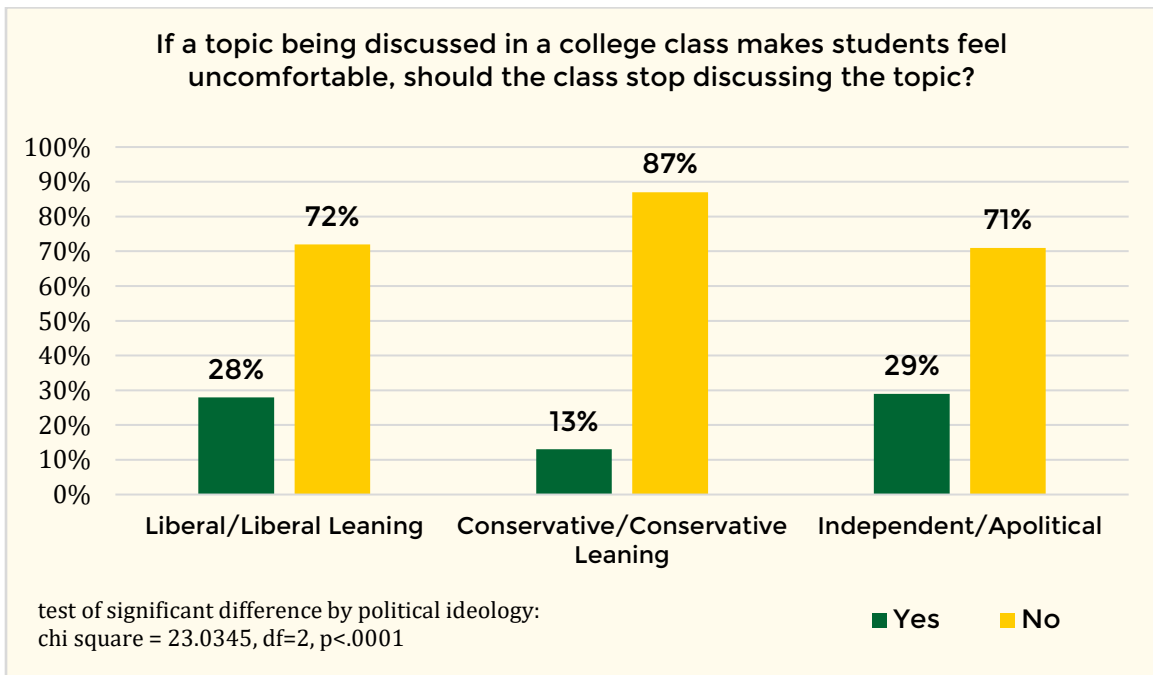


Figure 18: Most students are not in favor of dropping class discussion topics that make students uncomfortable.

A Majority of Students Say Professors Should Be Reported for Making Comments that Students Find Offensive.

Nearly 70 percent of students are in favor of reporting professors to the university if the professor says something that students find offensive.

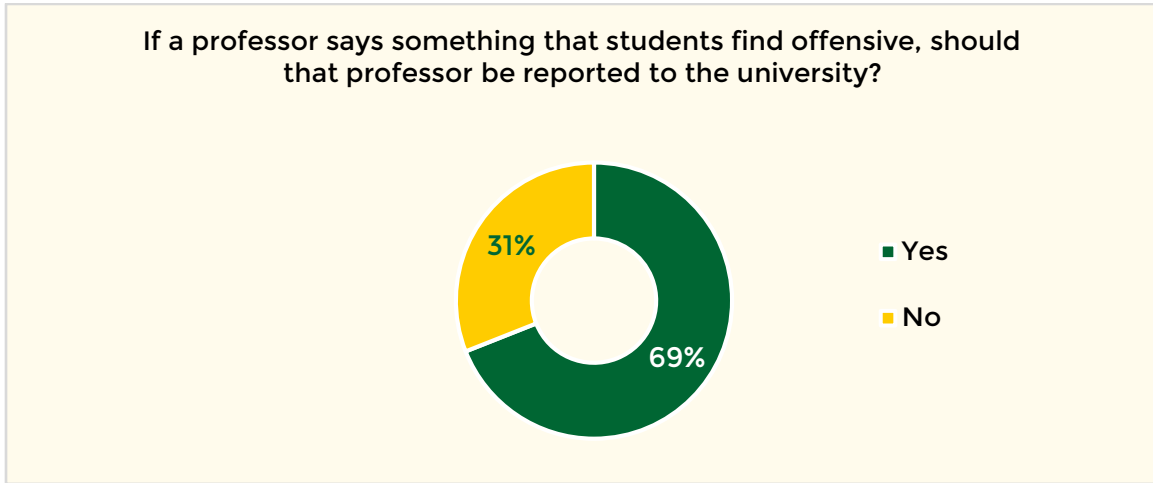


Figure 19: 69 percent of students believe a professor should be reported to the university for making an offensive comment.

There are large and statistically significant differences among students with different political ideologies on whether professors should be reported for making comments that students find offensive. Most liberal students (85 percent) are in favor of reporting professors compared to less than half of conservative students.

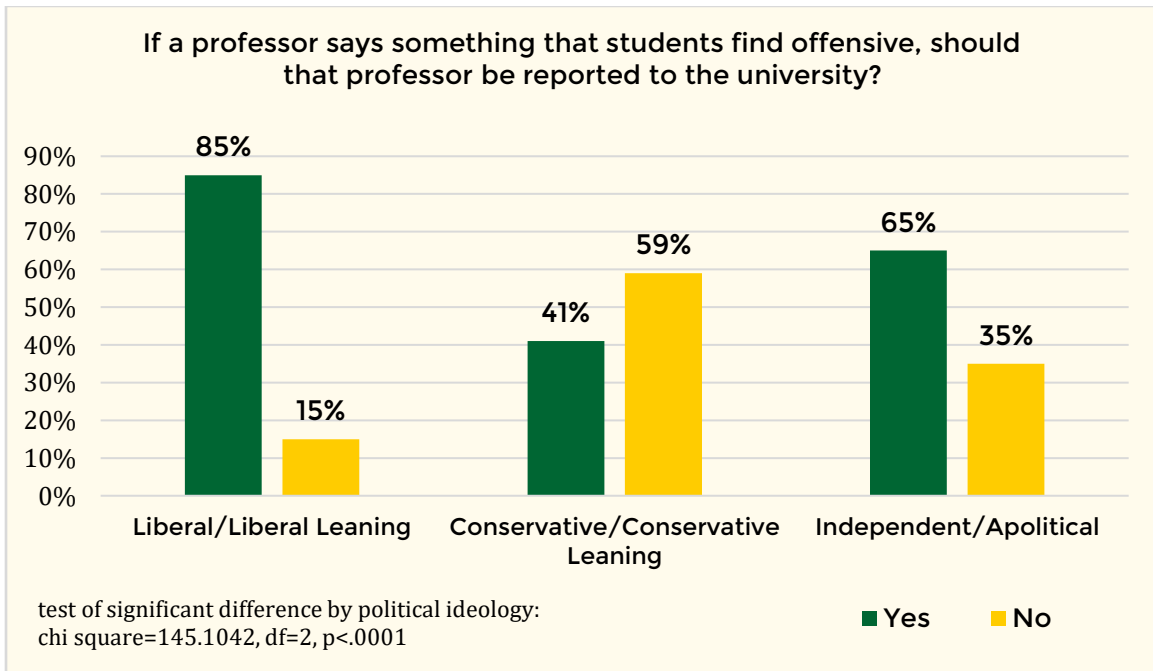


Figure 20: Significant differences in whether professors should be reported for making offensive comments exist among students with different political ideologies.

A Majority of Students Say a Student Should Be Reported for Making Comments that Other Students Find Offensive.

A majority of students (60%) are in favor of reporting students who make comments that other students find offensive.

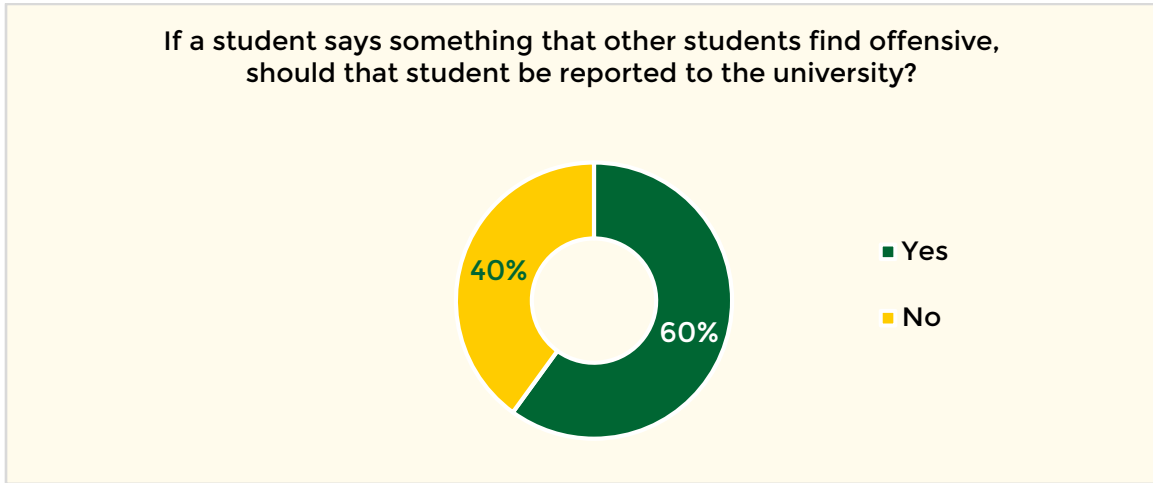


Figure 21: 60 percent of students believe a student should be reported to the university for making an offensive comment.

As with attitudes toward reporting professors, there are significant differences among students with different political ideologies in their attitudes toward reporting students who make offensive comments. About three-fourths of liberal students are in favor of reporting students compared to less than one-third of conservative students.

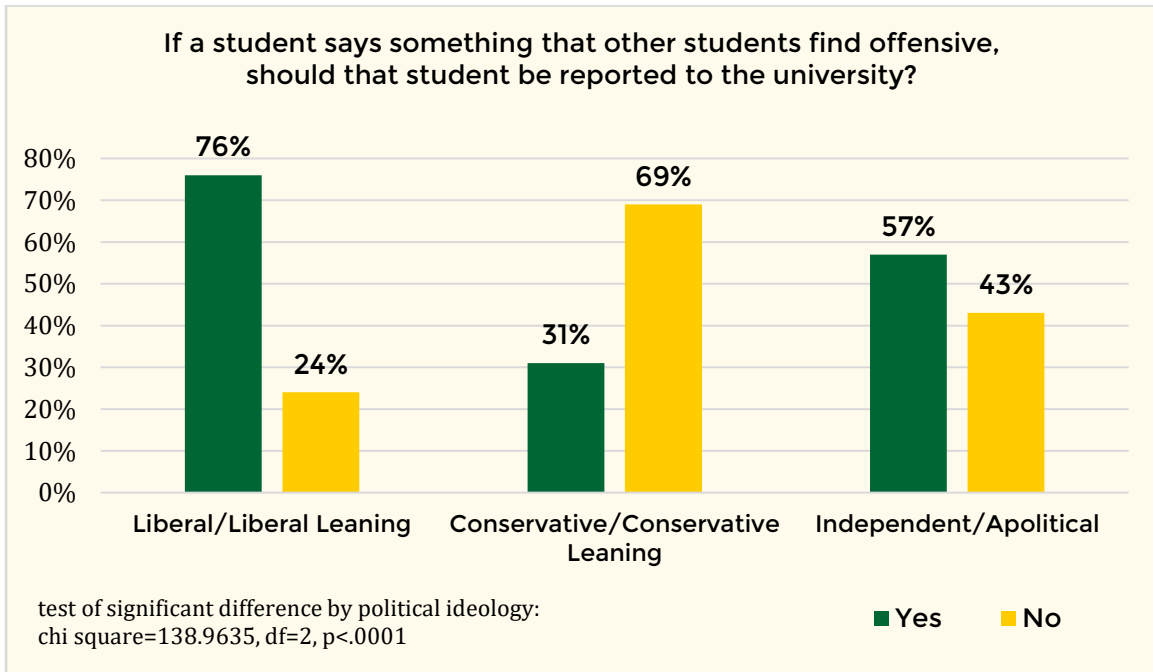


Figure 22: Students with different political ideologies have different views about reporting students who make offensive comments.

Students who report that they are comfortable sharing their opinions on controversial or sensitive topics in class are significantly more likely to be in favor of reporting other students for making comments deemed to be offensive.

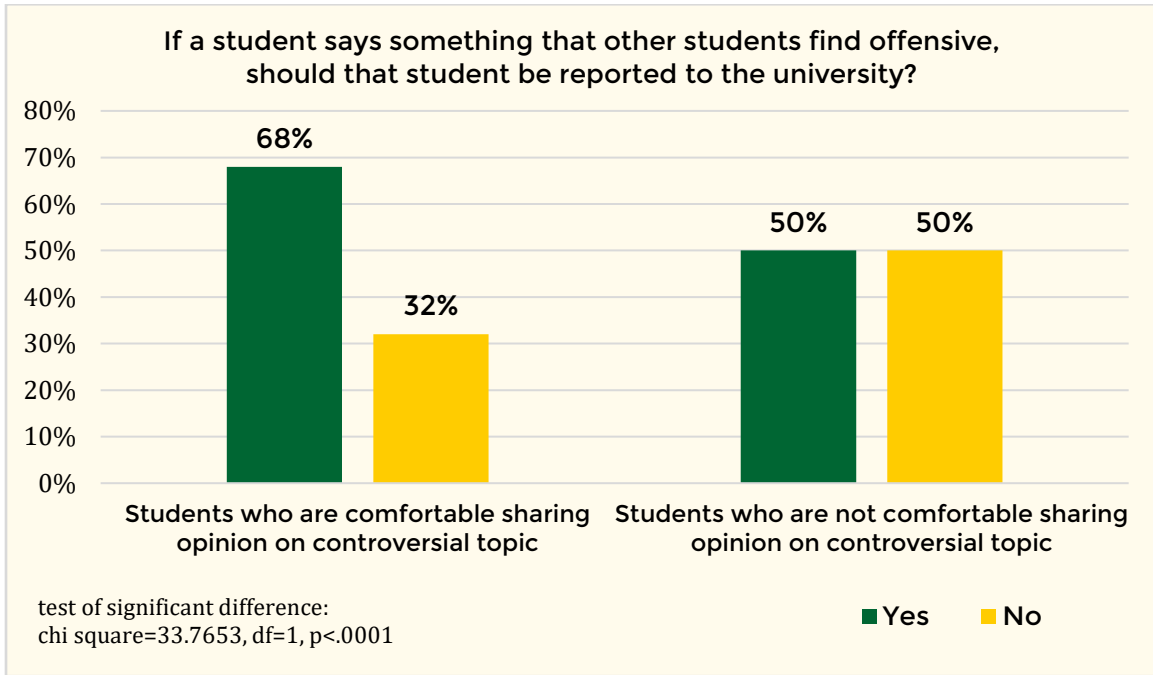


Figure 23: Significant differences on whether to report other students exist among students with varying comfort levels about sharing their own opinions in class.

Students who view the classroom climate to be receptive to diverse viewpoints are more likely to be in favor of reporting students who make comments considered offensive.

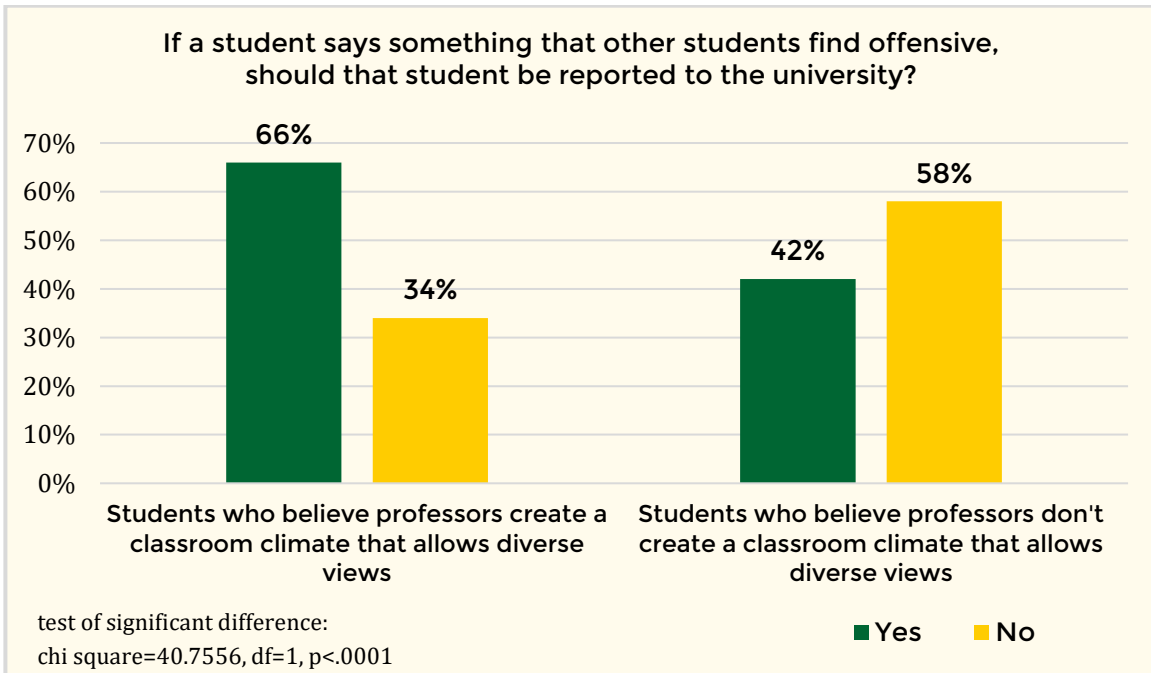


Figure 24: Significant differences on whether to report other students exist among students with different views on classroom openness to diverse viewpoints.

Students who believe that professors create a classroom climate that welcomes unpopular views are more likely to be in favor of reporting students who make comments considered offensive.

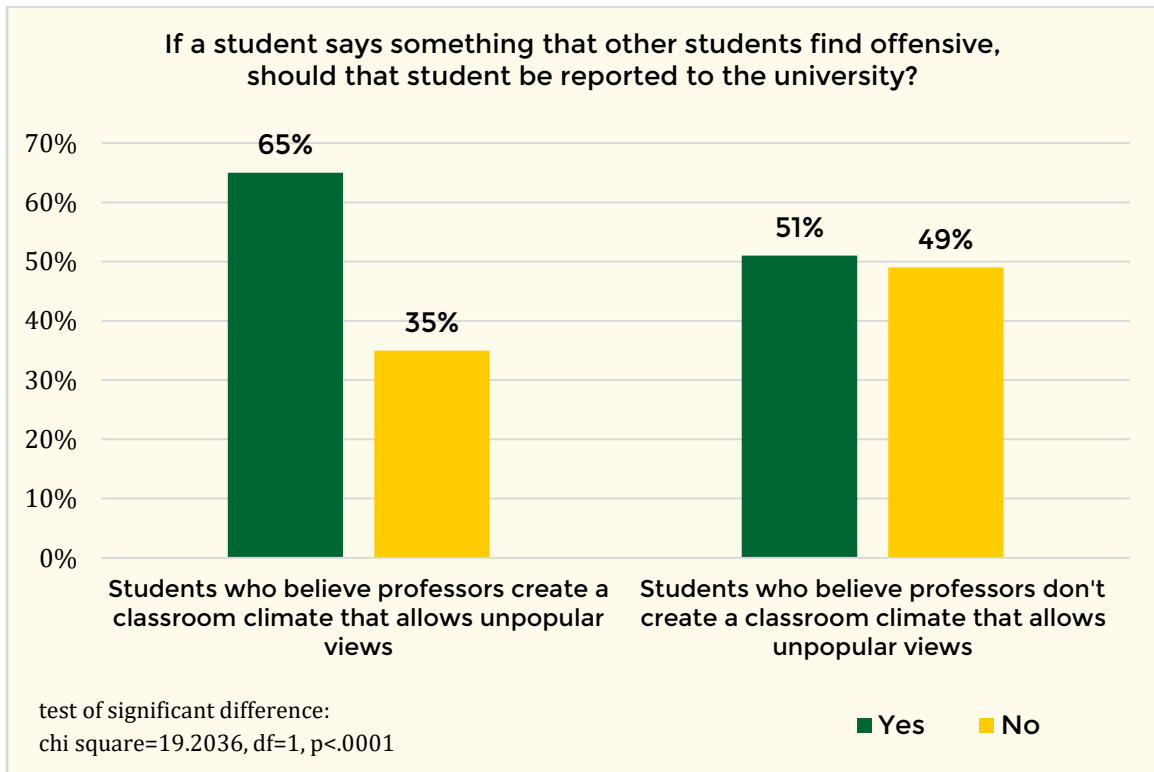


Figure 25: Significant differences on whether students should be reported exist among students with varying beliefs on classroom receptivity to unpopular views.

Section 2: Human Progress, Attitudes about the Future, and National Pride

According to a wide range of indicators (e.g., life expectancy, income, access to food, access to education), life is getting better for people all over the world. Yet, surveys suggest there is growing pessimism in the U.S. about the present and future of our society, and perhaps especially among younger generations. Thus, we asked students a range of questions about how they think their college education is influencing their understanding of the state of the world and the U.S., shaping their attitudes about the future, and preparing them to make a difference in the world. We also asked them whether or not they are proud to be American.

A majority of students believe their college education is helping them develop more accurate views of the world and the U.S., but there are disparities in this perception among students with different political ideologies. In general, students with a more conservative political ideology are less likely to perceive their college education as helping them develop more accurate views.

Liberal and conservative students both gave negative responses concerning human progress in the U.S. and around the world. Only about half of each group believe, based on what they have learned in college, that the world and U.S. have been getting better over the last 50 years; roughly a quarter of liberal and conservative students report that what they have learned in college has made them more optimistic about the future of the world. These groups are similarly pessimistic about the future of the U.S. Over half of liberal students and nearly one-third of conservative students report that college has led them to have a more negative view of the U.S. Similarly, very few students report that their professors inspire them to feel optimistic about the future of the U.S.

These patterns of consensus across political groups extend to more self-focused beliefs. Just over half of conservative and liberal students report that what they have learned in college has made them more optimistic about their own futures. Even fewer are optimistic about their ability to make a difference in the world. Moreover, less than half of students believe that their college education has played an important role in preparing them to solve the problems they believe are most important for our nation at this time, though liberals (53 percent) are more likely than conservatives (35 percent) to view college as playing this important role.

As far as national pride, 56 percent of students who are U.S. citizens are proud to be American. Here we see large differences between political groups, with 86 percent of conservative students and 40 percent of liberal students being proud to be American.

Individual questions and responses of students with varying political ideologies are presented below.

A Majority of Students Say College is Helping Them Develop a More Accurate View of the World.

Most students (70 percent) believe that their college education is helping them to develop a more accurate view of the state of the world.

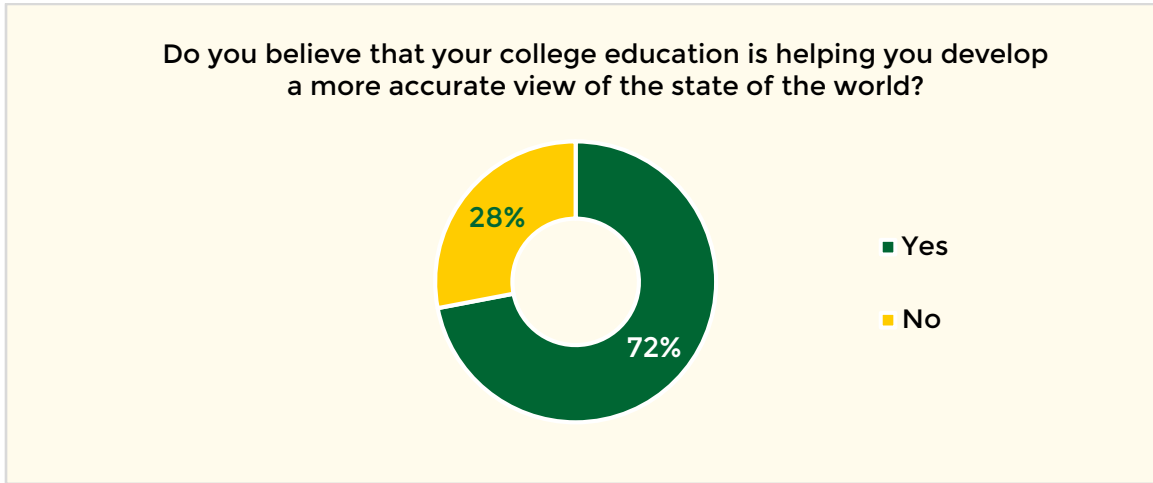


Figure 26: 72 percent of students believe their college education is giving them a more accurate view of the world.

The percentages of students who believe their college education is giving them a more accurate view of the world varies widely across different political groups. Conservative students are much less likely to believe their college education has improved the accuracy of their worldview in comparison to independent or liberal students.

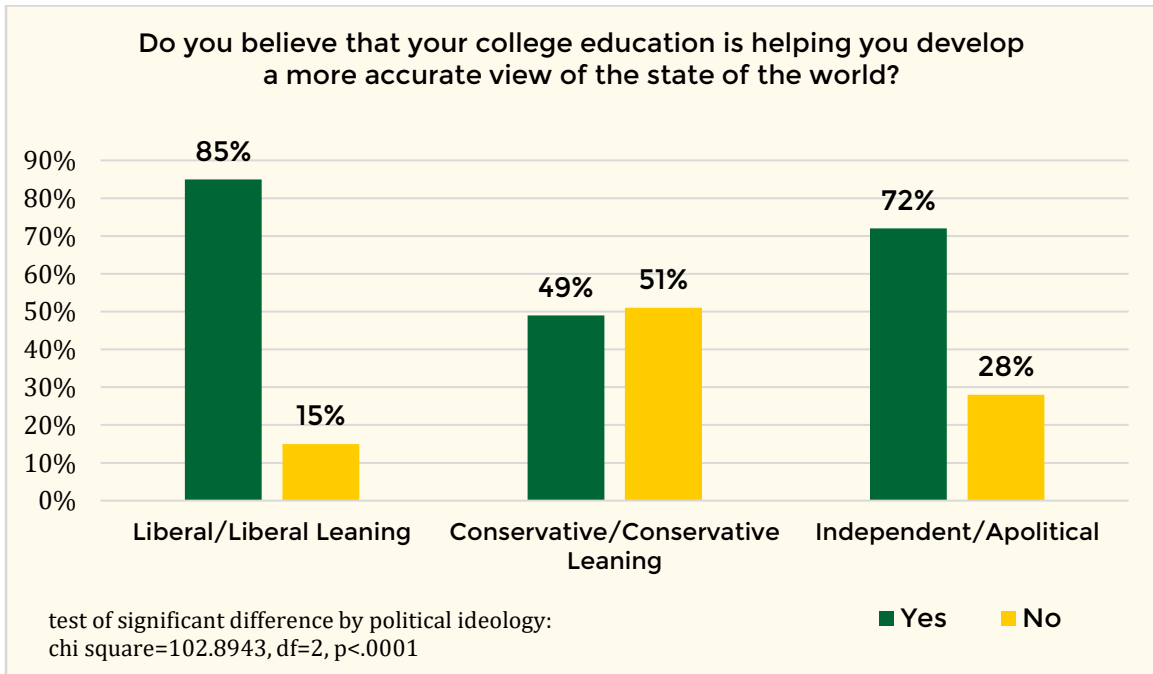


Figure 27: Significant differences exist between students with different political ideologies on whether college education is giving a more accurate worldview.

About Half of Students Say the World Has Gotten Better Over the Last 50 Years.

Based on what they have learned in college, less than half of students believe the world has been getting better in terms of poverty, life expectancy, hunger, and literacy over the past 50 years.

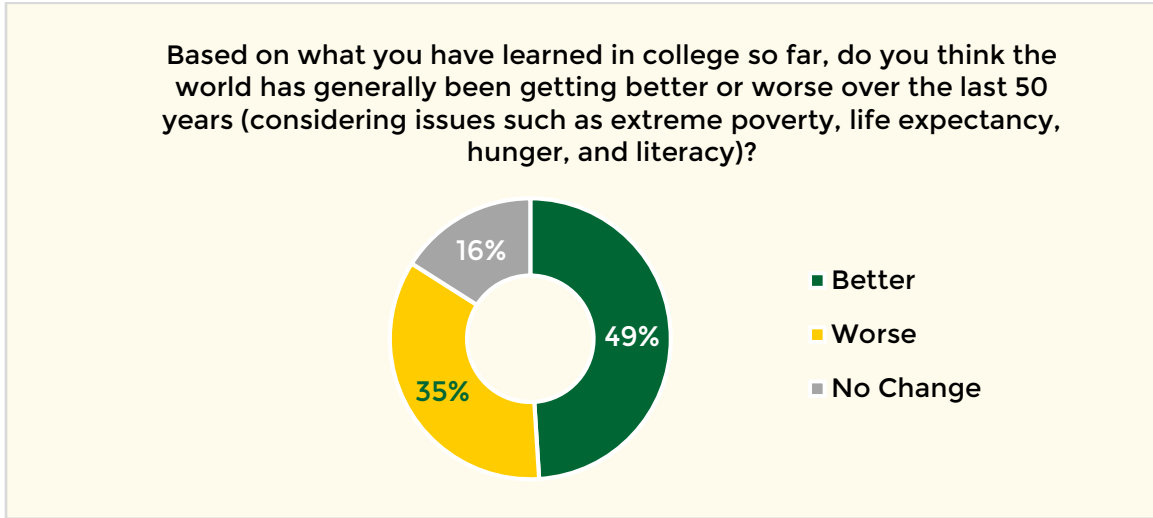


Figure 28: 49 percent of students believe the world has been getting better over the last 50 years.

Based on what they have learned in college, roughly half of liberal and conservative students believe that the world has been getting better, while 44 percent of independent students believe so.

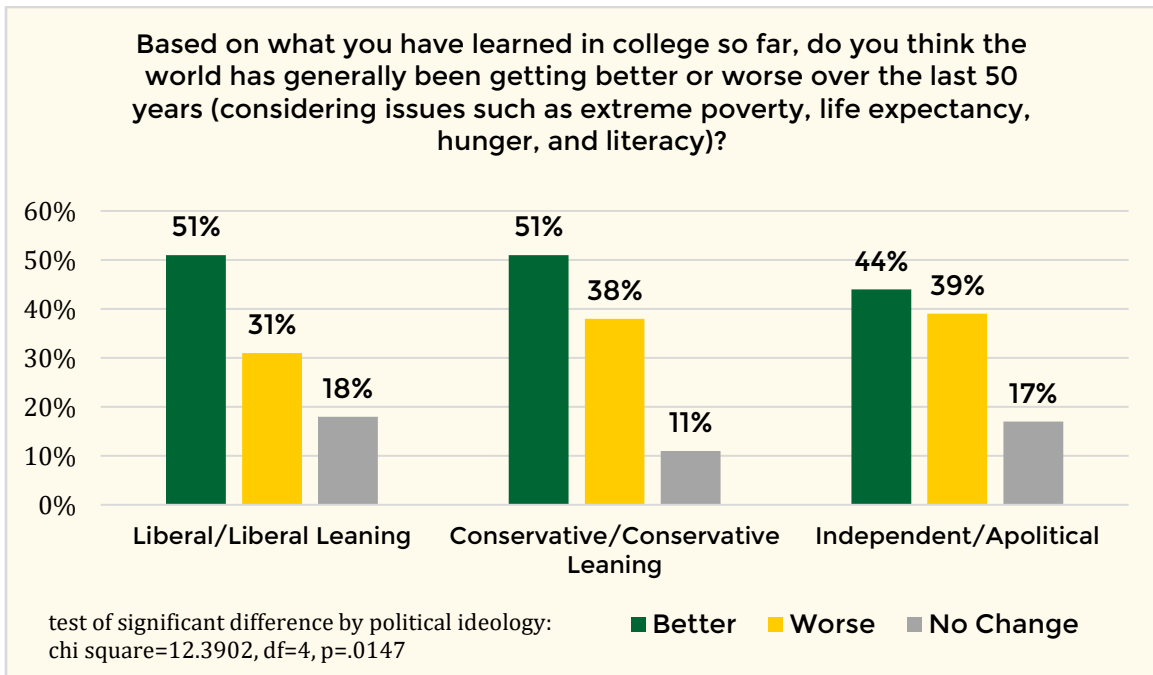


Figure 29: Based on learning in college, roughly half of students of various political ideologies believe the world has improved over the last 50 years.

About a Quarter of Students are Optimistic About the Future of the World.

Based on what they have learned in college, only 26 percent of students are optimistic about the future of the world. Nearly 40 percent are pessimistic about the future of the world.

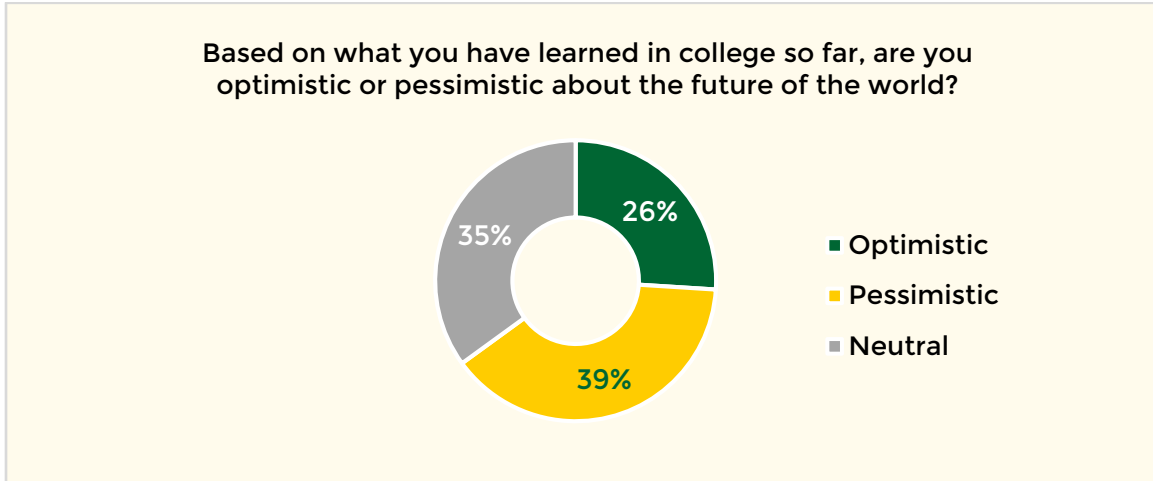


Figure 30: 26 percent of students are optimistic about the future of the world.

The widespread pessimism or neutrality about the future of the world is shared among groups of students with different political ideologies.

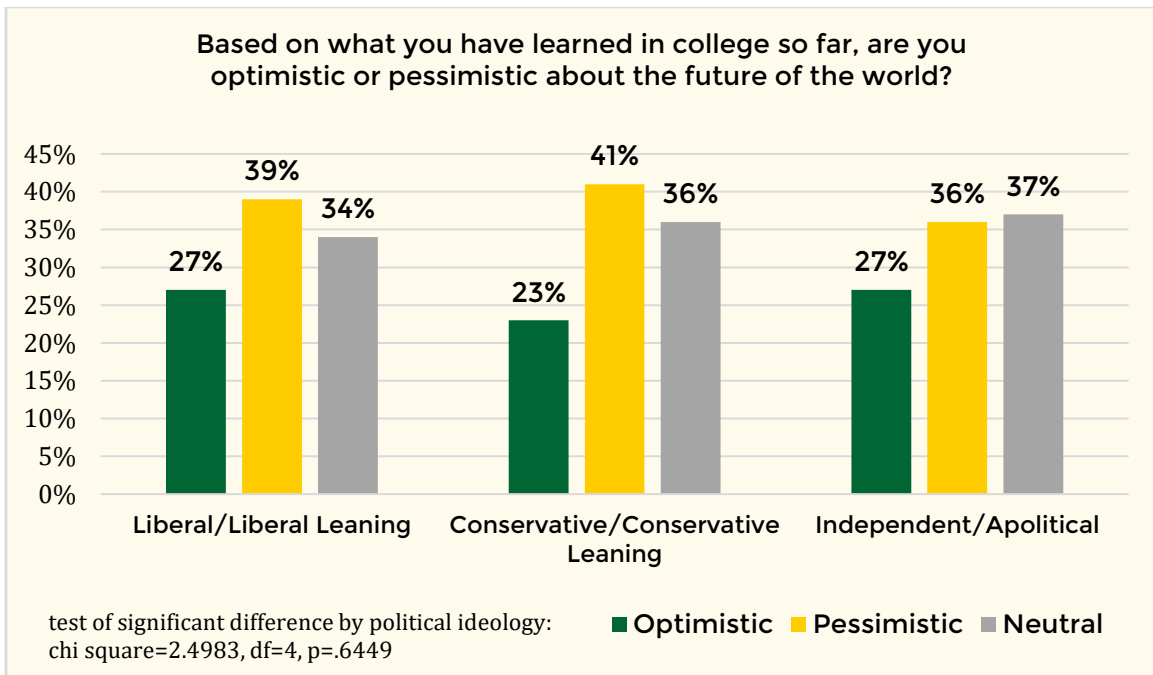


Figure 31: Most students report having pessimistic or neutral views about the world’s future.

A Majority of Students Say Professors Inspire Them to Feel Optimistic About the Future of the World.

Although only 23 percent of students say their professors inspire them to feel optimistic about the future of the world frequently, almost half say their professors do so occasionally.

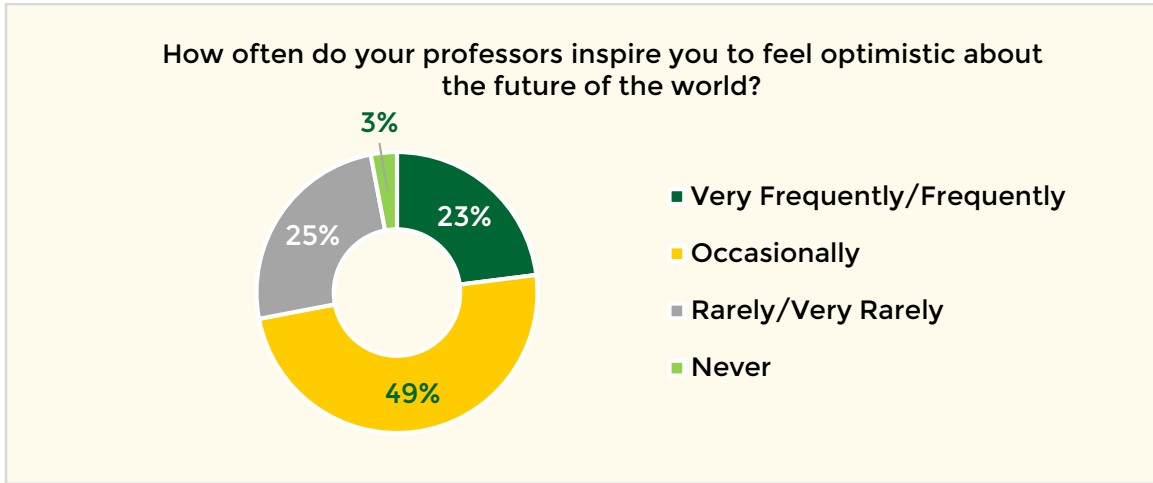


Figure 32: 72 percent of students say their professors inspire them to feel optimistic about the future of the world at least occasionally.

There is broad agreement among students of different political ideologies concerning the frequency in which their professors inspire them to feel optimistic about the future of the world.

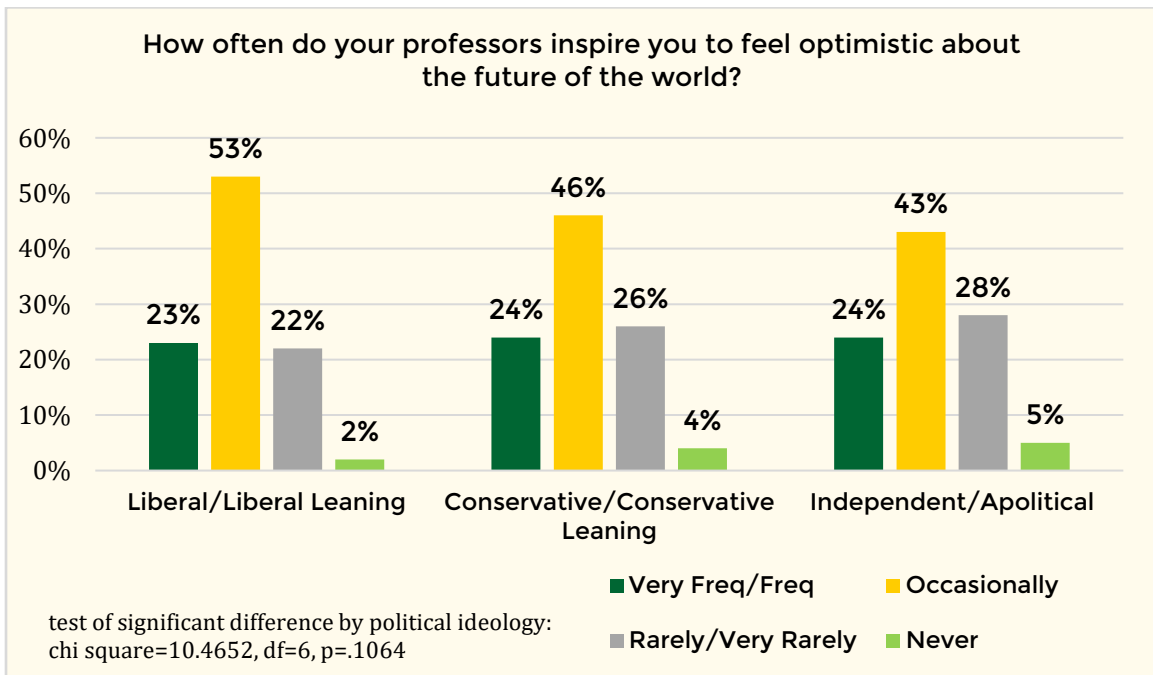


Figure 33: About a quarter of students with varying political ideologies report that their professors inspire them to feel optimistic about the future of the world frequently.

A Majority of Students Say College Has Helped Them Develop a More Accurate View of the U.S.

Just as a majority of students believe their college education is helping them develop a more accurate picture of the world, nearly 70 percent also believe it is helping them develop a more accurate view of the U.S.

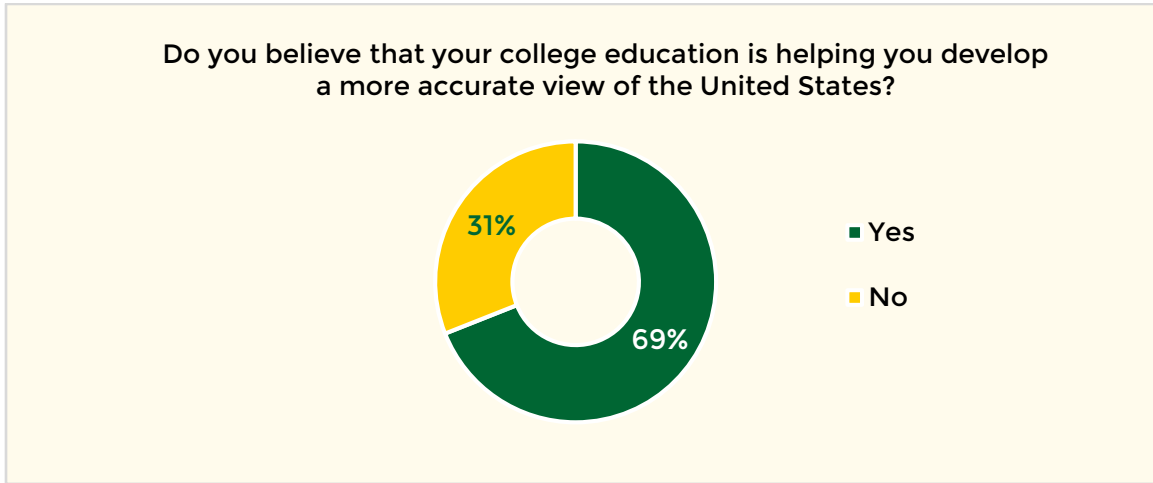


Figure 34: 69 percent of students believe their college education is helping them develop a more accurate view of the U.S.

There are significant differences in this view based on political ideology, with 81 percent of liberal students and 72 percent of independent students believing that college is giving them a more accurate picture of the U.S., while only 44 percent of conservative students report this belief.

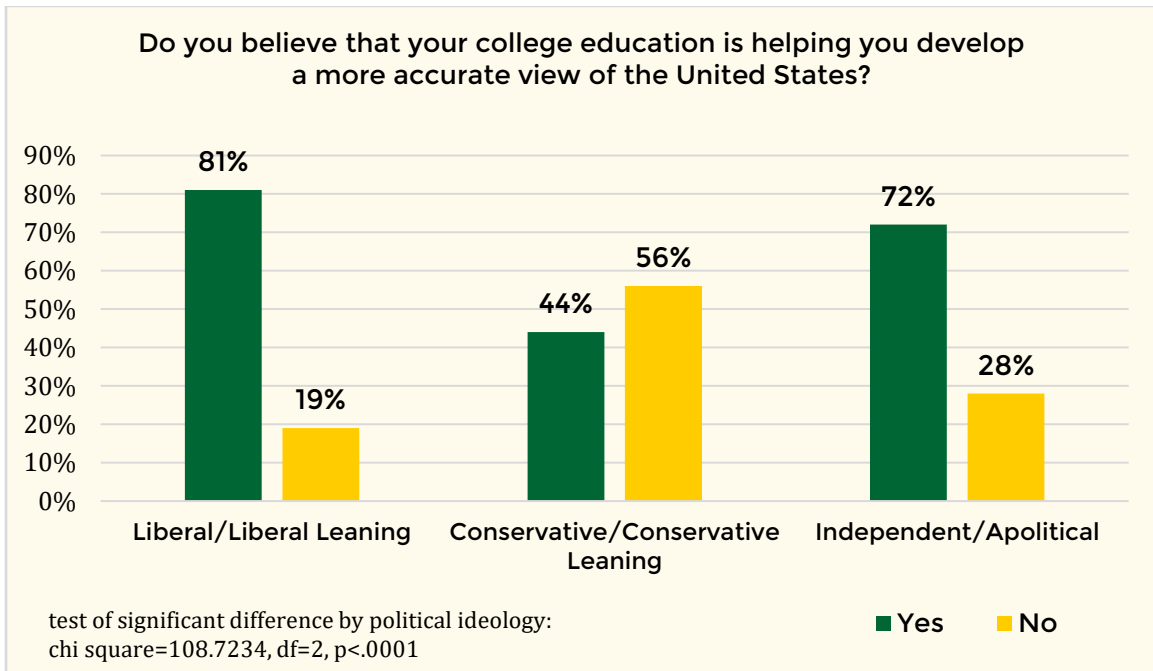


Figure 35: Liberal and independent students are much more likely than conservative students to believe their college education is helping them develop a more accurate view of the U.S.

Few Students Say College Has Given Them a More Positive View of the U.S.

Eleven percent of students say their classes and other academic activities in college have given them a more positive view of the U.S., while 45 percent say they have given them a more negative view of the U.S.

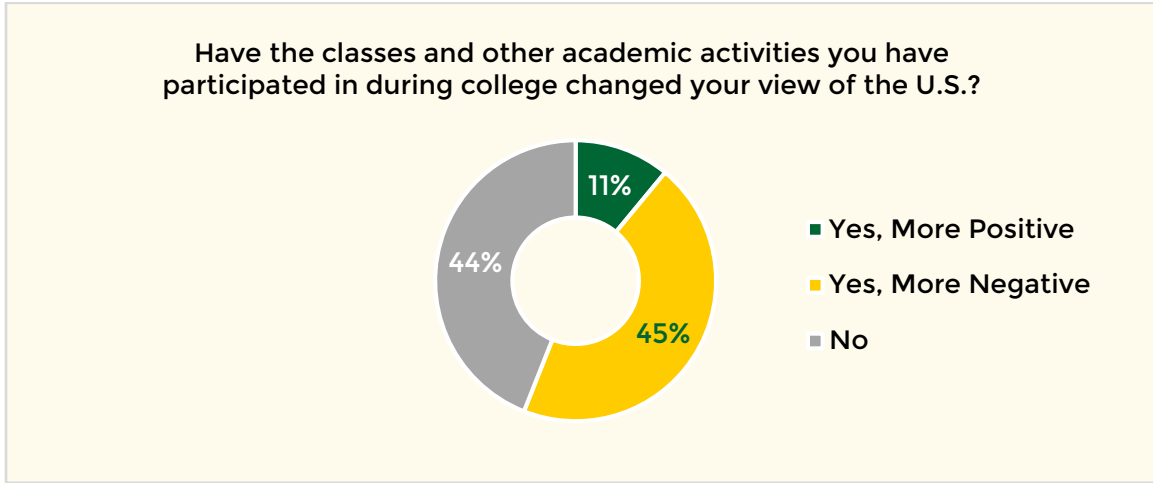


Figure 36: 11 percent of students say college has given them a more positive view of the U.S.

Although more students say that college has given them a more negative view of the U.S. than a more positive view, there are significant differences among students with different political ideologies.

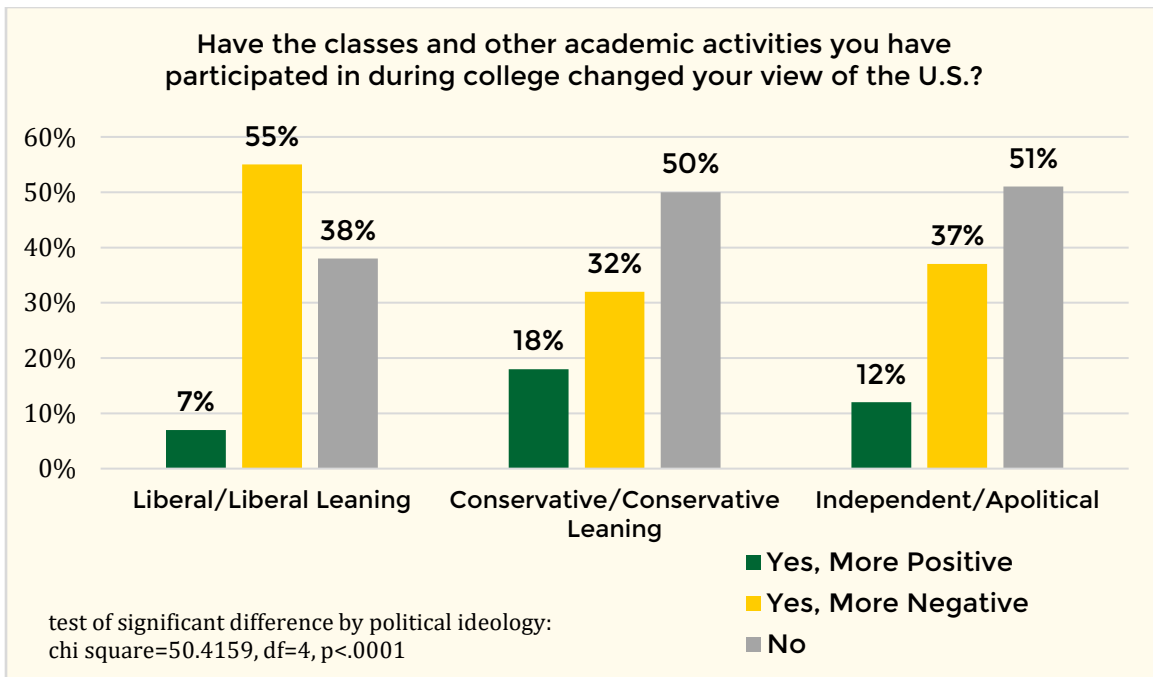


Figure 37: Larger percentages of liberal students report that college has given them a more negative view of the U.S. in comparison to conservative and independent students.

Student Views Differ About Whether Life Has Improved in the U.S. Over the Last 50 Years.

Forty-five percent of students say that based on what they have learned in college, life in the U.S. has been getting better over the past 50 years. Thirty-eight percent say it has been getting worse.

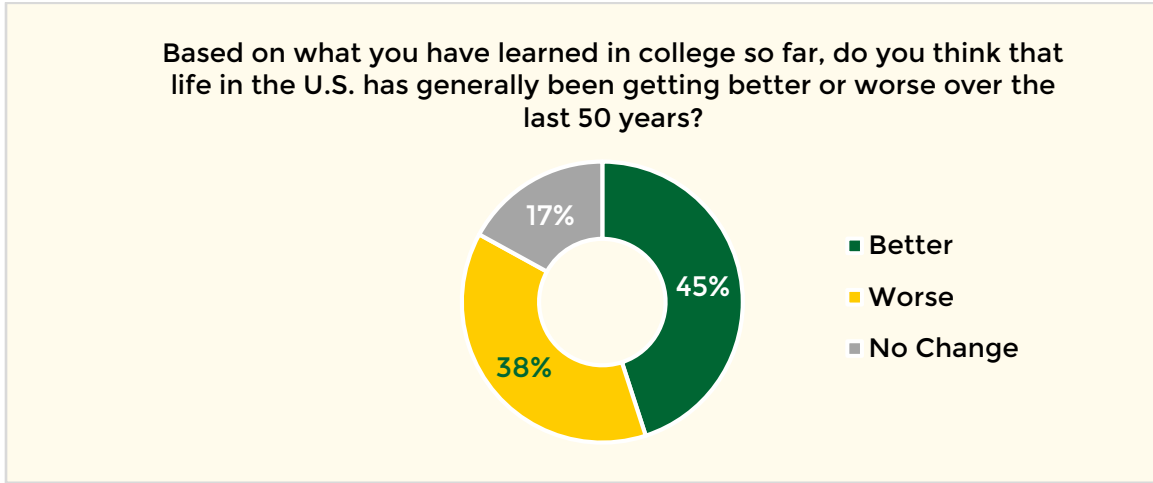


Figure 38: 45 percent of students say that life in the U.S. has been getting better over the last 50 years.

While some significant differences exist among students with different political views, roughly 40 to 50 percent of liberal, conservative, and independent students believe that based on their college learning, life in the U.S. has been getting better over the past 50 years.

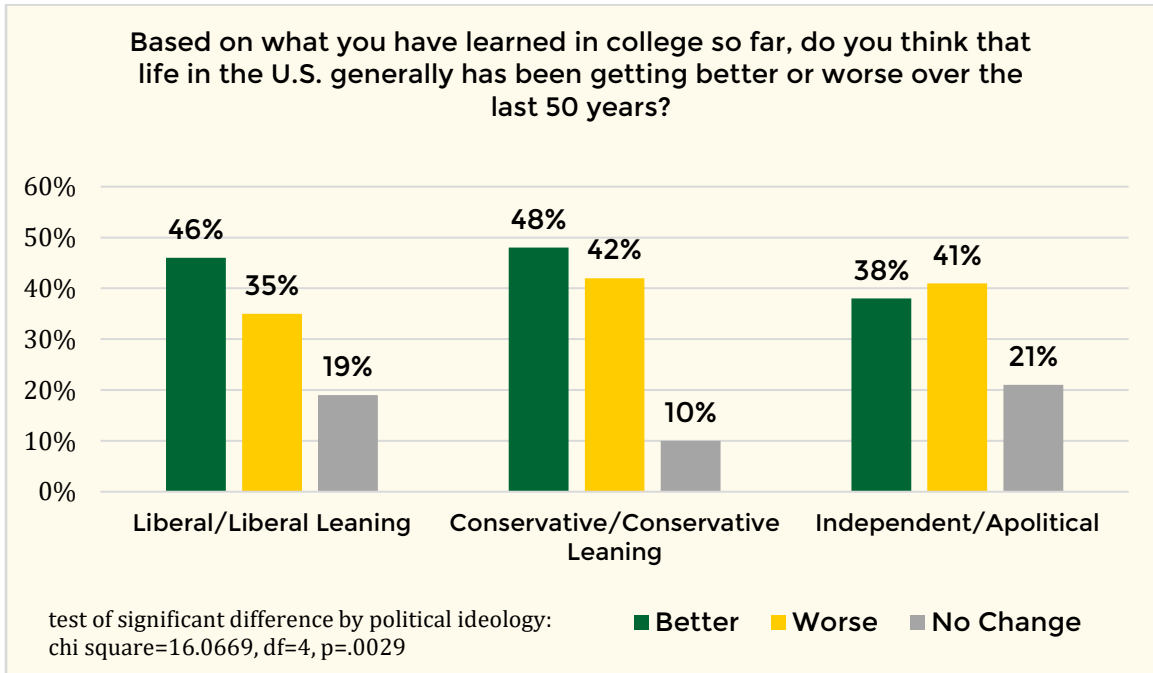


Figure 39: Significant differences exist among students with different political ideologies on whether life has been getting better in the U.S. over the last 50 years.

About a Quarter of Students Are Optimistic About the Future of the U.S.

Based on what students have learned in college so far, 42 percent are pessimistic about the future of the U.S. in comparison to 24 percent that are optimistic.

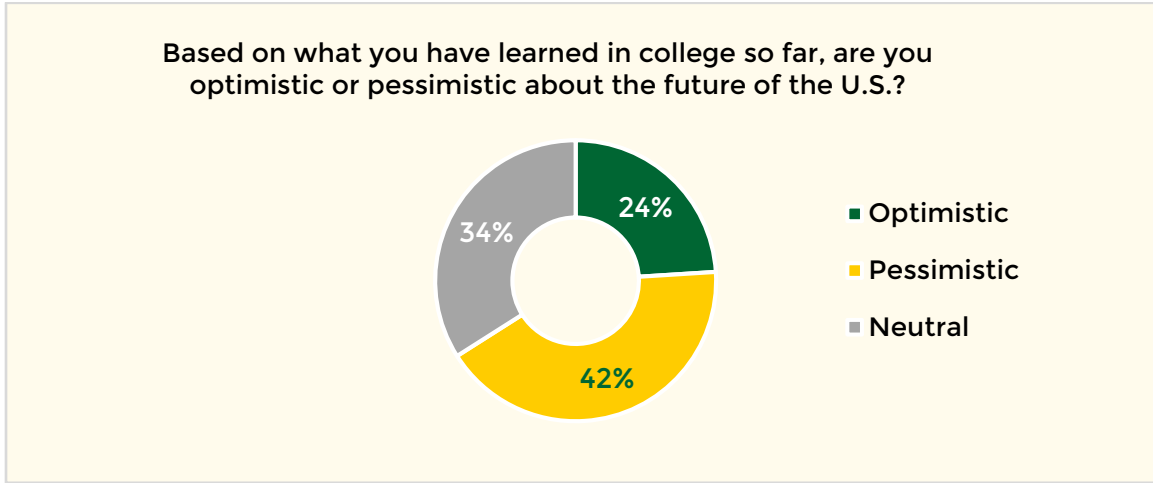


Figure 40: 24 percent of students are optimistic about the future of the U.S.

There are no significant differences among students with varying political ideologies regarding their optimism about the future of the U.S. Most students have a pessimistic or neutral view of the future of the U.S.

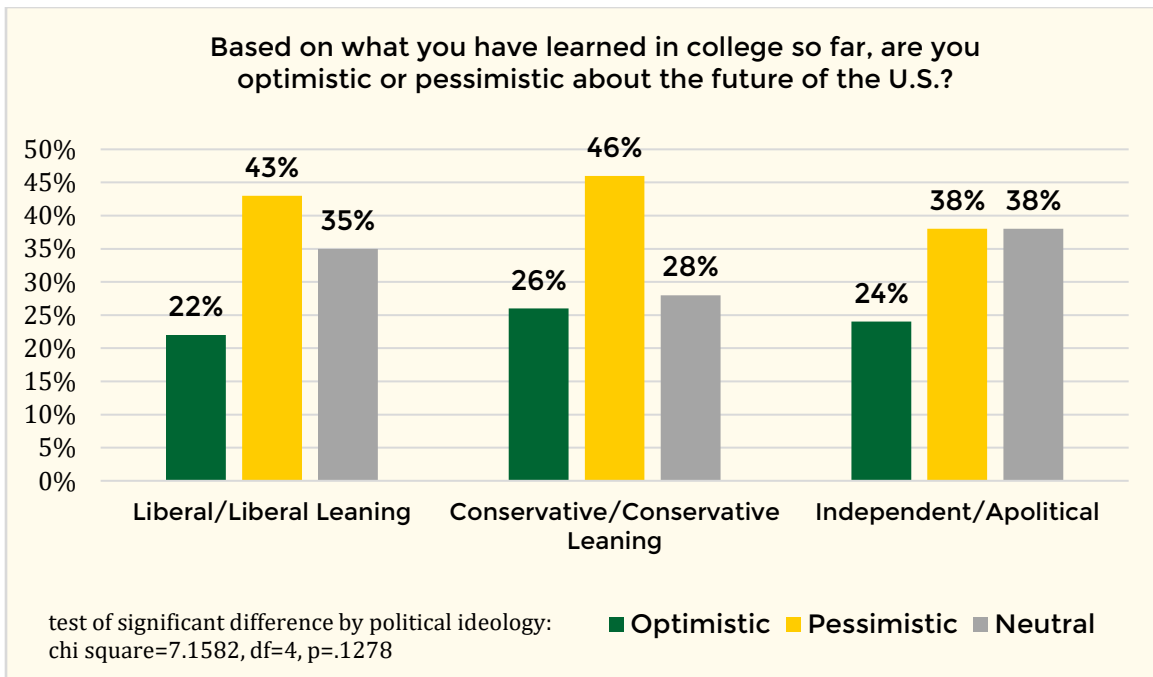


Figure 41: There are no significant differences in optimism about the U.S. among students with different political views.

A Majority of Students Say Professors Inspire Them to Feel Optimistic About the Future of the U.S.

Just over half of students say that their professors inspire them to feel optimistic about the future of the U.S. at least occasionally.

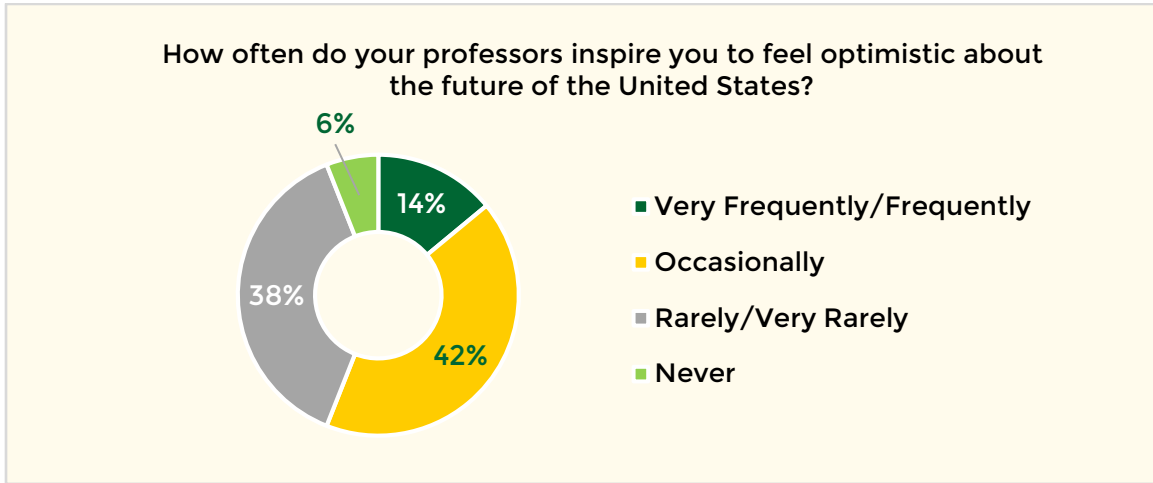


Figure 42: 56 percent of students say their professors inspire them to feel optimistic about the future of the U.S. at least occasionally.

Between 53 and 58 percent of liberal, conservative, and independent students say that professors inspire them to feel optimistic about the future of the U.S. at least occasionally.

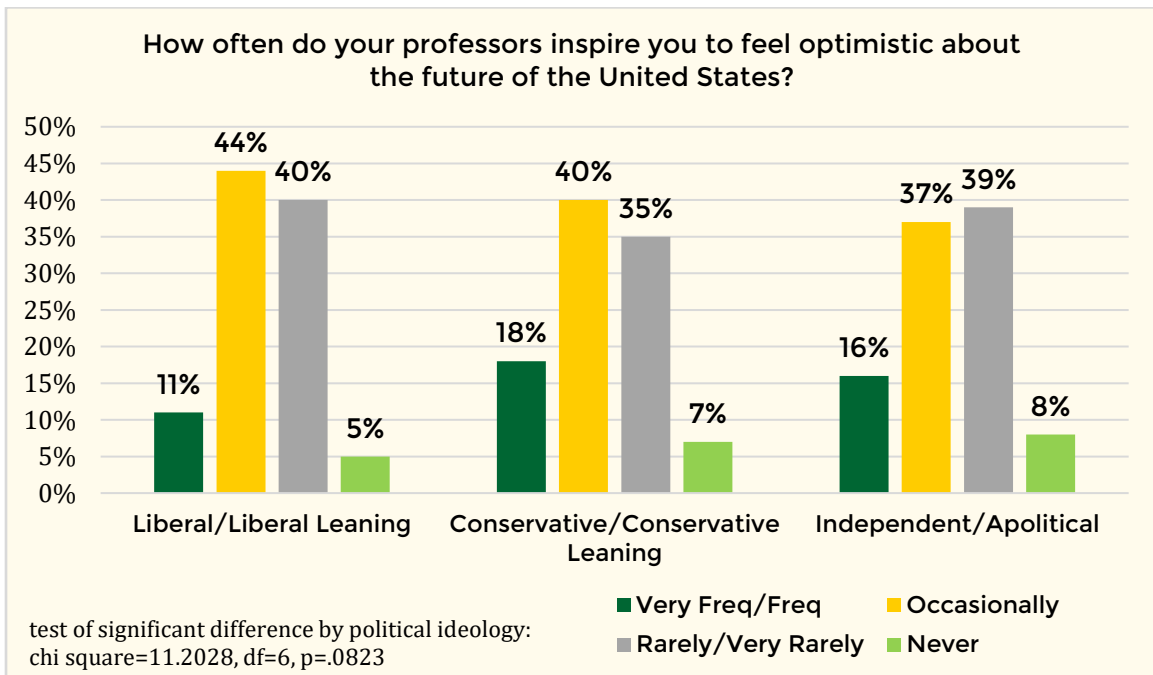


Figure 43: There are no significant differences among students with different political ideologies regarding how often professors inspire them to feel optimistic about the future of the U.S.

About Half of Students Say They are Optimistic About Their Future.

Fifty-two percent of students say that they are optimistic about their own future based on what they have learned in college, while the remaining 48 percent are pessimistic or neutral about their future.

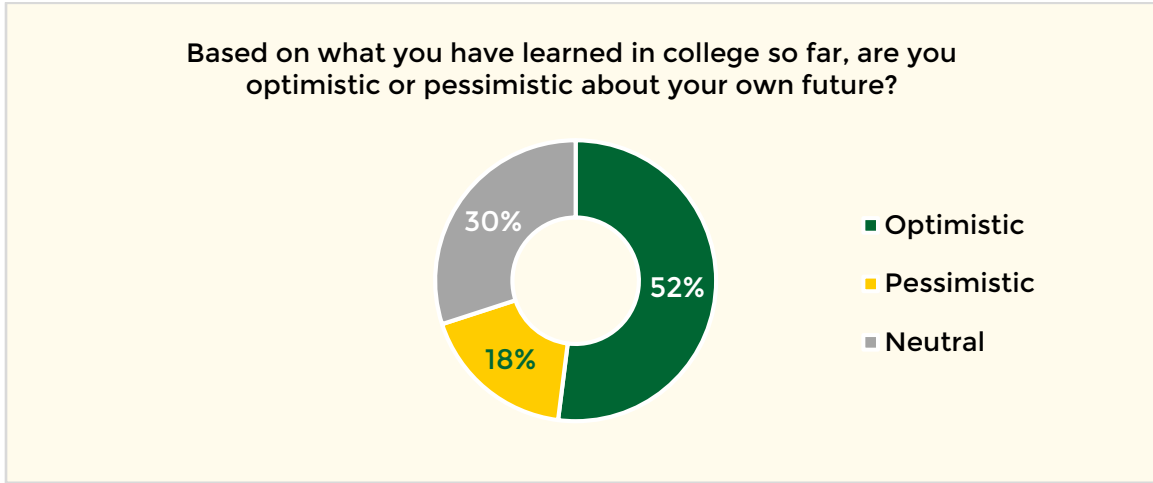


Figure 44: 52 percent of students are optimistic about their future, based on what they have learned in college.

The degree optimism about their own future does not vary significantly among students with different political ideologies.

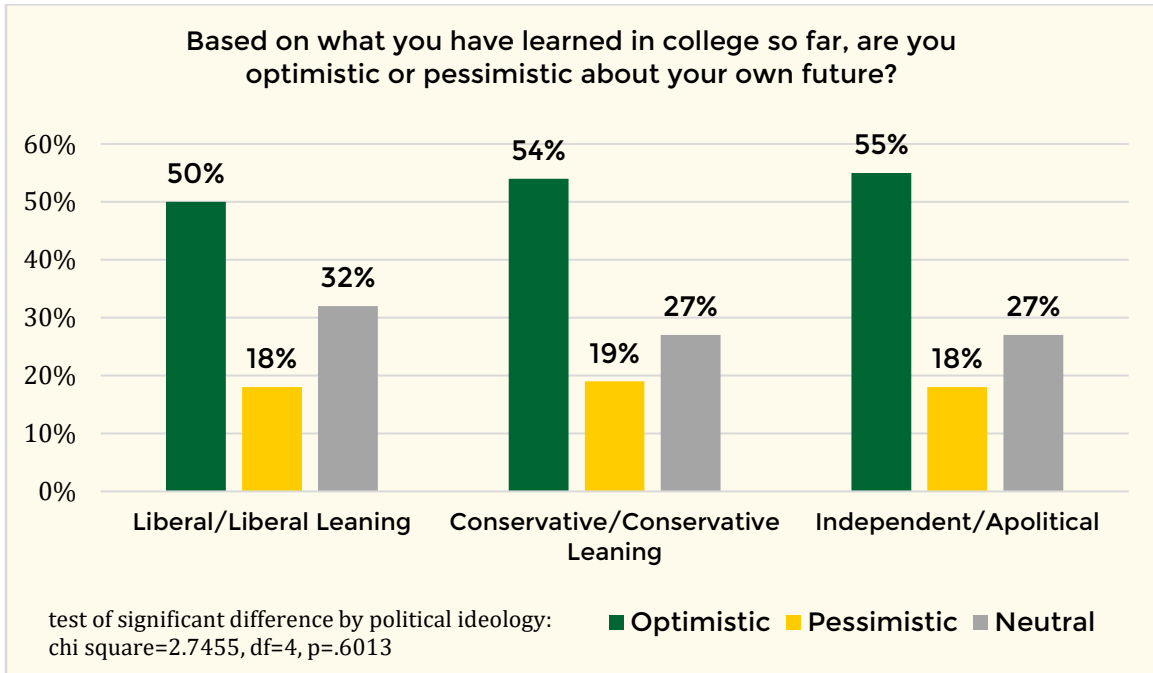


Figure 45: About half of all students with varying political ideologies report feeling optimistic about their future.

About a Quarter of Students Do Not Believe They are Able to Make a Difference in the World.

Based on their college learning experience, 44 percent of students are optimistic about their ability to make a difference in the world, while the remaining 56 percent are pessimistic or neutral.

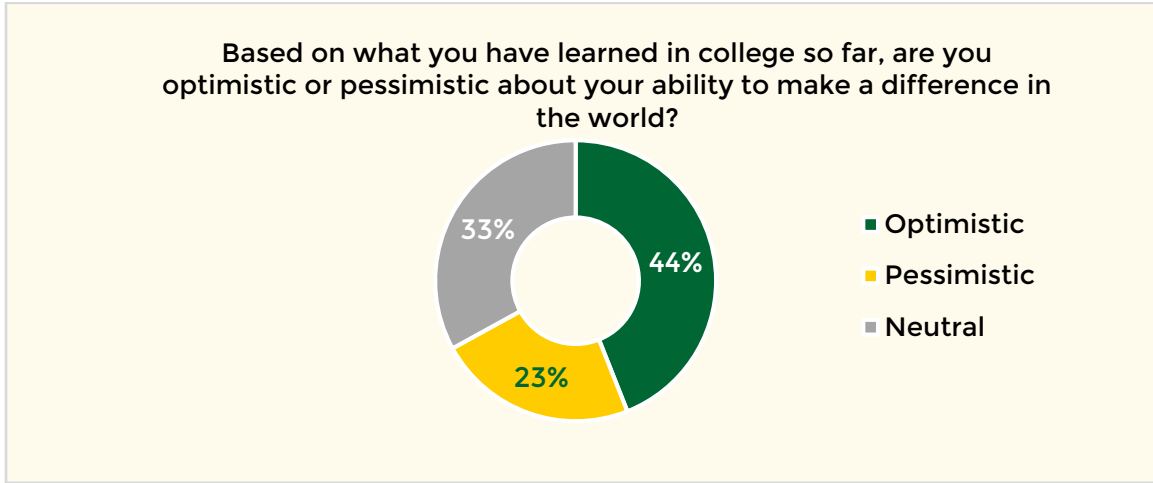


Figure 46: 44 percent of students are optimistic about their ability to make a difference in the world.

The degree of optimism about their ability to make a difference in the world does not vary significantly among students with different political ideologies.

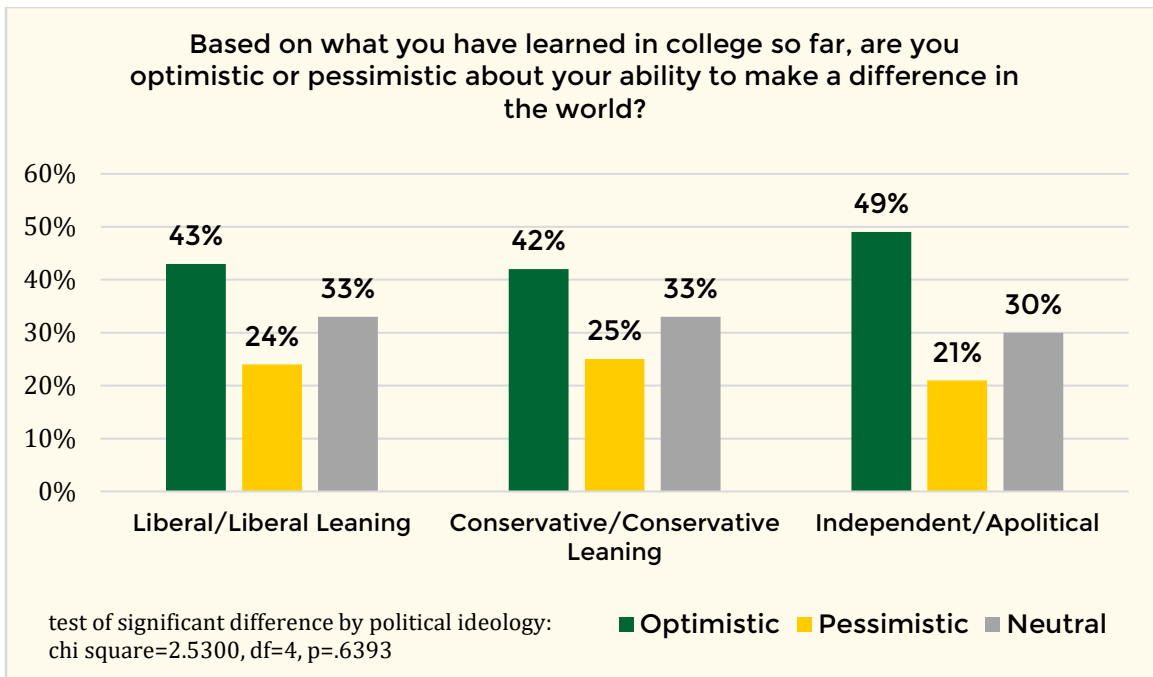


Figure 47: There are no significant differences among students with different political views regarding their ability to make a difference in the world.

Less than Half of Students Say College Has Prepared Them to Solve Important Problems.

Less than half (47 percent) of students believe that their college education has played an important role in preparing them to solve the problem they believe is most important for our nation at this time.

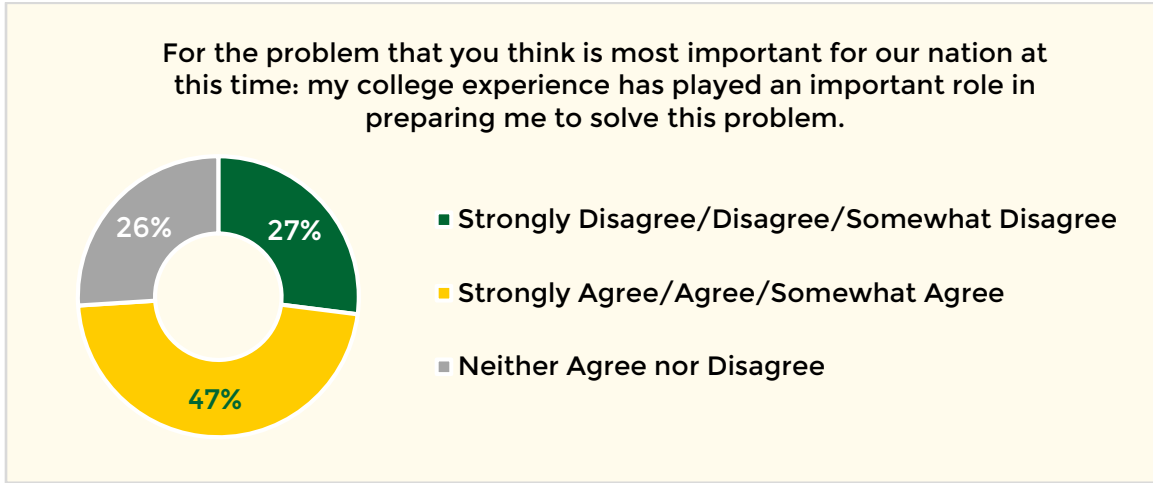


Figure 48: 47 percent of students believe the college experience has played an important role in preparing them to solve our nation's most important problem.

Student beliefs about whether college has prepared them to solve our nation's most important problem vary significantly by political ideology, with 53 percent of liberal students agreeing with this statement, 45 percent of independent students, and 35 percent of conservative students.

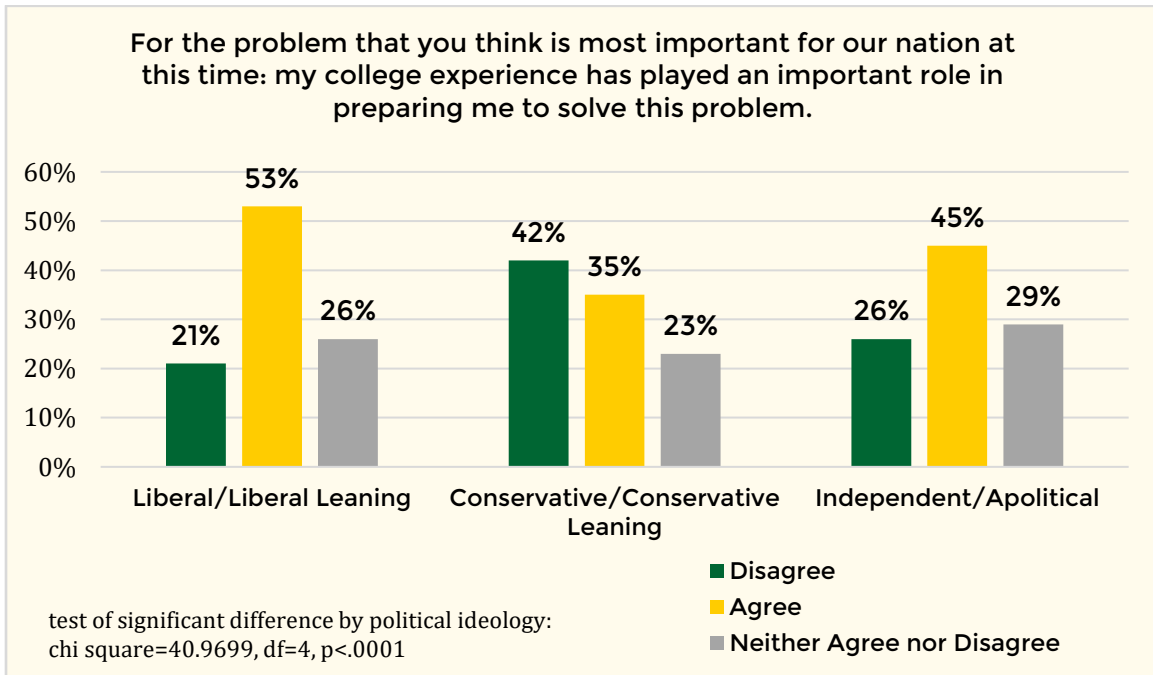


Figure 49: Significant differences exist among students with different political ideologies concerning their views about the role college has played in preparing them to solve our nation's most important problem.

A Slight Majority of Students are Proud to Be American.

Among students who are U.S. citizens, about 56 percent say they are proud to be American, while 44 percent say they are not.

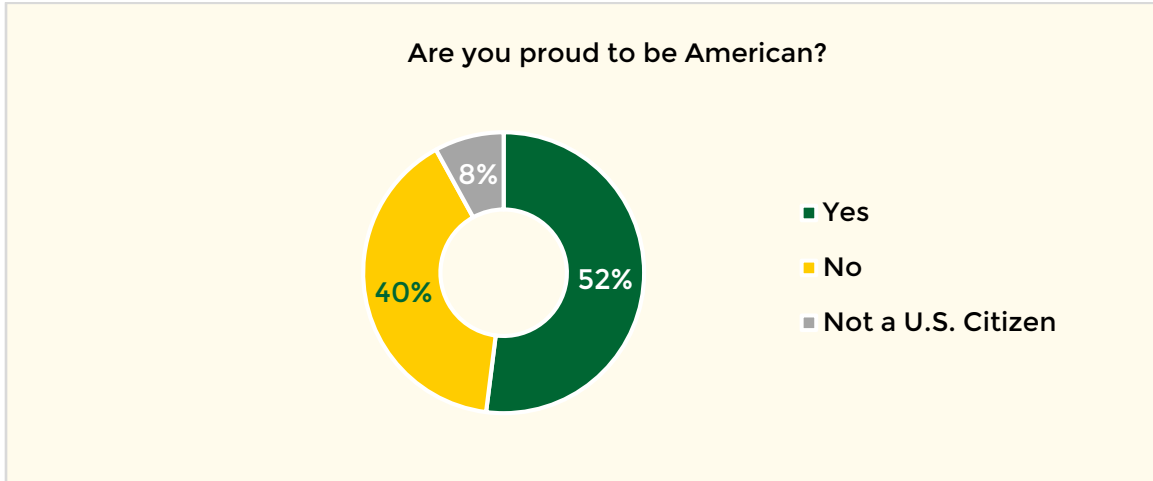


Figure 50: Among U.S. citizens, 56 percent of students say they are proud to be American.

Significant differences in whether students are proud to be American exist among those with different political ideologies. A large majority of conservative students (86 percent) are proud to be American compared to 40 percent of liberal students and 63 percent of independent students.

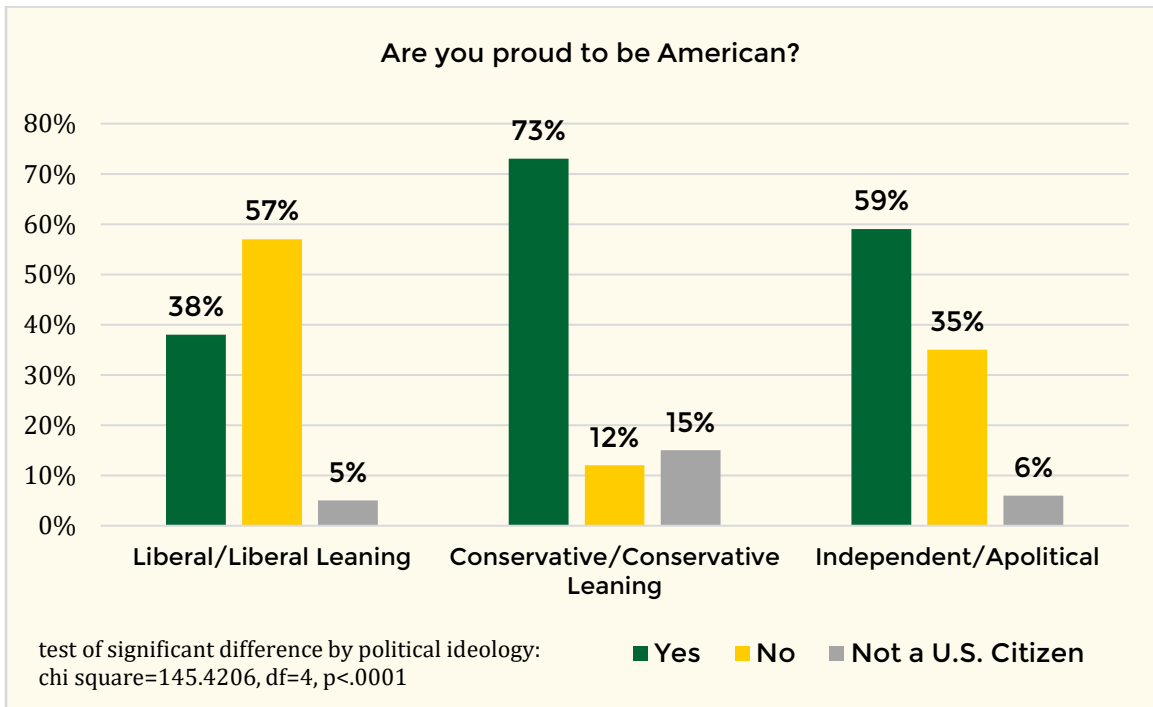


Figure 51: Liberal, conservative, and independent students show significant differences in whether or not they are proud to be American.

Section 3: Economics and Entrepreneurship

Economics and entrepreneurship are important dimensions of individual and societal flourishing, so we asked students a range of questions connecting their college experiences to their broader economic worldviews and entrepreneurial beliefs. Since economic systems play a central role in influencing economic opportunity and overall societal prosperity, we asked students a variety of questions related to their views on capitalism and socialism, including: (1) how they define each system; (2) their attitudes toward capitalism and socialism; (3) how their attitudes have changed; (4) whether each system can solve important societal problems; and (5) the influence of professors on their views.

Most students do not plan to start their own businesses, regardless of political ideology. Most also report that their college classes and other college activities have not inspired them to start a business, though conservatives are more likely than liberals to report being inspired. A majority of students across political groups say their college classes or other college activities have not helped them develop the skills necessary to successfully start a business. Yet, regardless of political differences, students generally agree that entrepreneurs have an important role to play in solving national and global problems. They similarly agree that entrepreneurs can have a powerful positive impact on our lives and that we need more entrepreneurs in order to develop innovative and creative solutions to current and future societal problems.

When presented with two different definitions of capitalism—one reflecting free market, *laissez-faire* policies and one describing cronyism—more than half of students selected the free market definition. However, there were significant differences among different political groups, with a majority of liberal/liberal leaning students selecting the definition related to cronyism. Only around half of conservative students report having a positive view of capitalism, and this number drops below 10 percent for liberals. However, these numbers vary based on a student's definition of capitalism. Among conservatives who use a free market definition, nearly three quarters have a positive view of capitalism. For liberals, the number remains much lower but does increase to almost 20 percent for those who use a free market definition. Very few students in any political group view capitalism positively if they selected the crony-capitalism definition. The only group of students to believe capitalism can help solve big challenges is conservative students who use a free market definition of capitalism.

A majority of students say that their college classes and activities have not changed their view of capitalism. However, among those who reported that college has changed their view, the change was more likely to be an increased negative view of capitalism than an increased positive view of capitalism; nearly half of liberal students and one-fifth of conservative students believe college has made them have a more negative view of capitalism. A majority of students across political groups agree that at least a few of their professors have expressed their views on capitalism and socialism. These students indicate that most of the time these views are unfavorable toward capitalism.

When presented with two definitions of socialism, students were more likely to select the definition focused on redistribution and active government than a definition of central planning and the collective ownership of goods. Once again, however, responses varied between political groups. Liberal students are more likely to define socialism as heavy redistribution and active government, while conservative students are more like to define socialism as central planning and the collective ownership of property. Nearly half of liberal students and only seven percent of conservative students have a positive view of socialism. However, like capitalism, these number vary as a function of how students define socialism. For those who define socialism as heavy redistribution and active government, nearly 60 percent of liberals and nearly 10 percent of conservatives view it positively. But among those who define socialism as central planning and the collective ownership of property, the number of students with positive views drops to 23 percent among liberals and six percent among conservatives. Regardless of which definition they selected, more than half of all liberal students believe socialism can help solve big problems. In contrast, most conservative students do not believe socialism can help solve these problems.

A majority of students report their college classes and activities have not changed their view of socialism. However, among those who reported that college has changed their view, the change was more likely to be an increased positive view among liberal students and increased negative view among conservative students.

Individual questions and responses of students with varying political ideologies are presented below.

Few Students Have Plans to Start Their Own Business.

A majority of students (83 percent) do not currently have plans to start their own business.

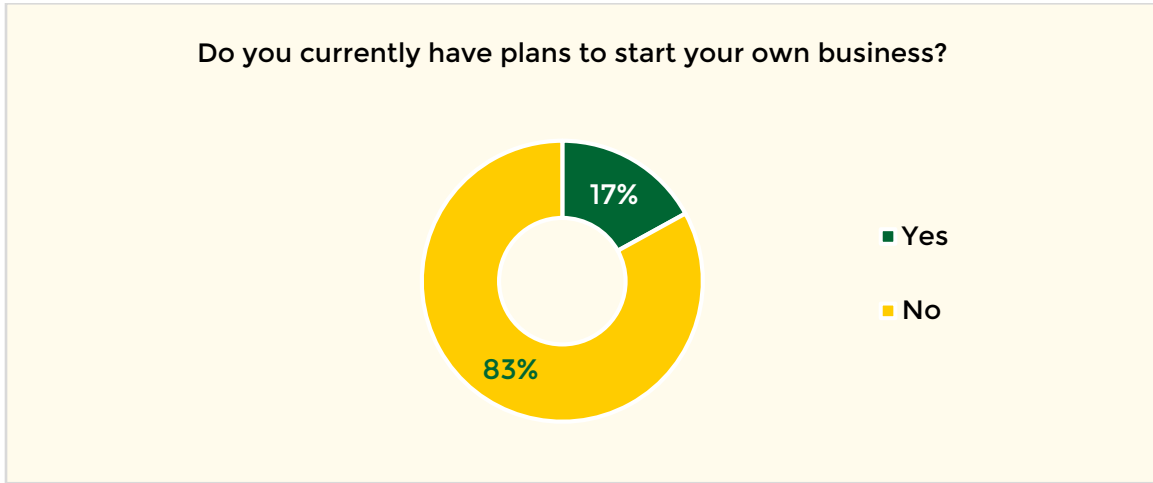


Figure 52: 17 percent of students currently have plans to start their own business.

Most students do not have plans to start their own business, regardless of their political ideology.

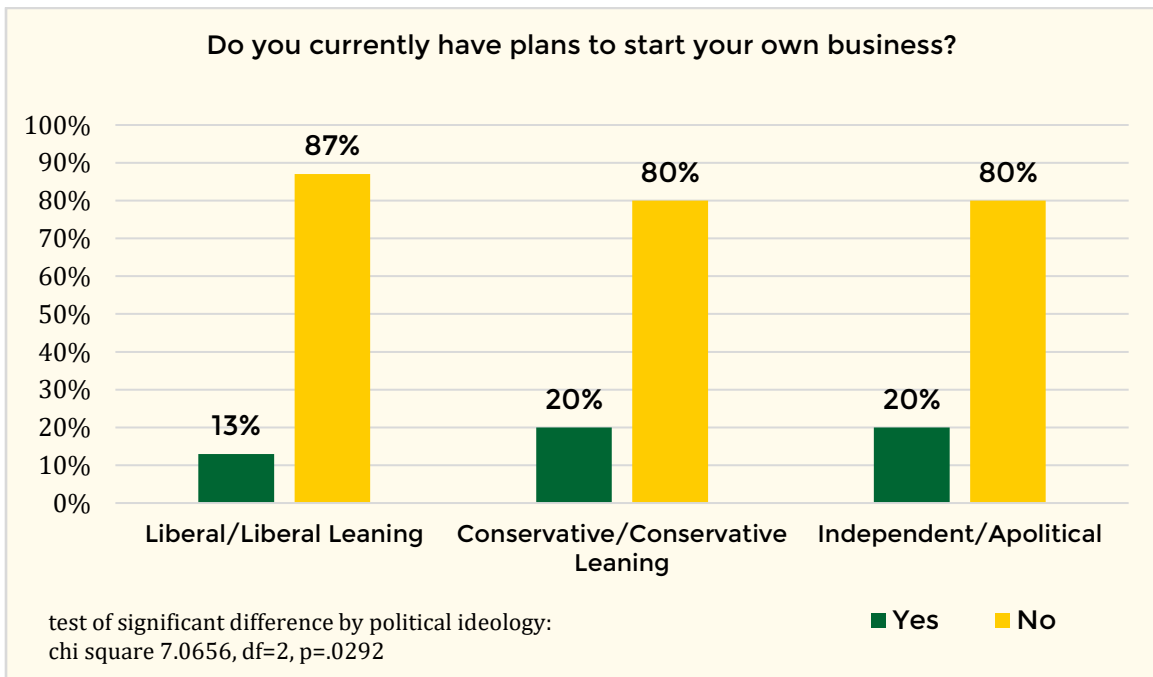


Figure 53: At least 80 percent of liberal, conservative, and politically independent students do not have plans to start their own business.

A Quarter of Students Say College Has Inspired Them to Consider Starting a Business.

Only one-in-four students say that college classes or other college activities have inspired them to consider starting their own business.

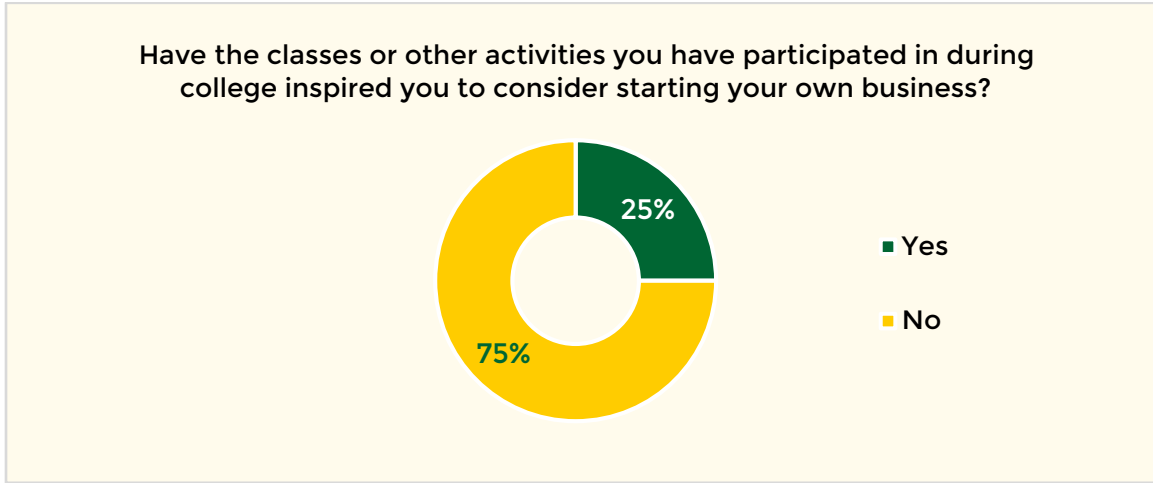


Figure 54: 25 percent of students say that college classes or other activities have inspired them to consider starting their own business.

There are significant differences among students with different political ideologies in terms of whether their college classes or other activities have inspired them to consider starting their own business. Conservative students are more likely than liberal or independent students to report that they have been inspired to consider starting their own business.

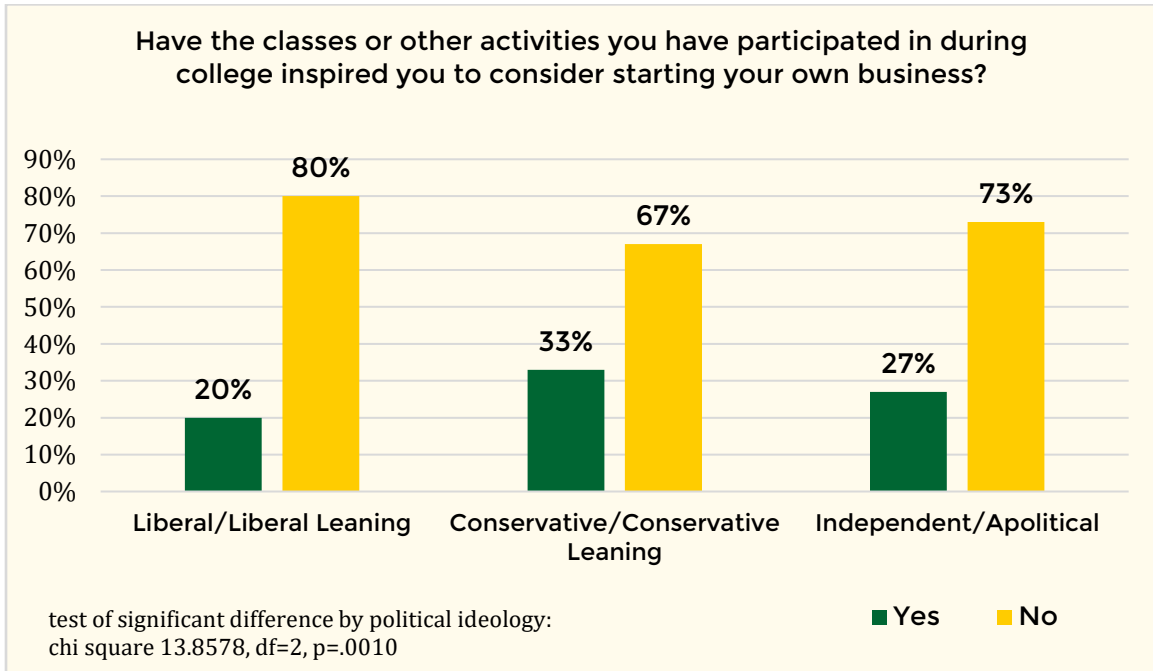


Figure 55: Significant differences exist between students with different political views regarding inspiration to start a business.

A Majority of Students Say College Has Not Helped Them Develop the Necessary Skills to Start a Business.

Sixty-one percent of students say their college classes or other college activities have not helped them develop the skills necessary to successfully start a business.



Figure 56: 39 percent of students say their college classes or other college activities have helped them develop the skills needed to start a successful business.

Regardless of political ideology, most students do not think their college classes or other college activities have helped them develop the skills needed to successfully start a business.

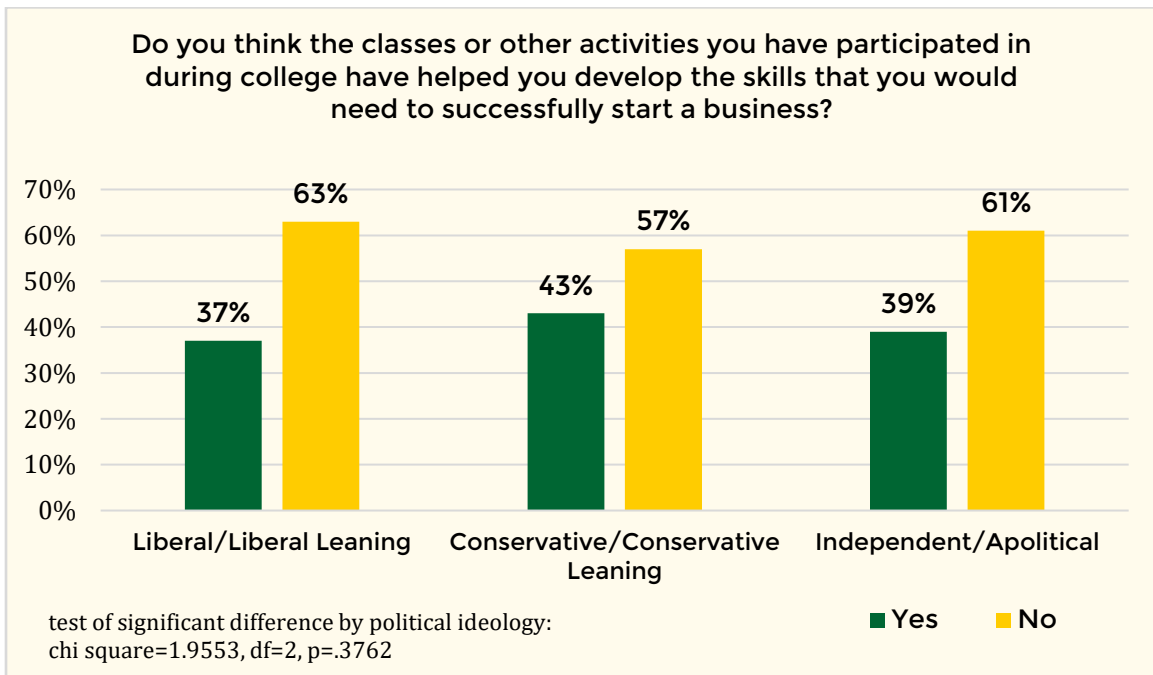


Figure 57: There are no significant differences among students with different political ideologies concerning their beliefs about whether college classes or other activities have helped them develop the necessary skills to start a business.

A Majority of Students Say Entrepreneurs Have an Important Role to Play in Solving National and Global Problems.

Most students (67 percent) agree that entrepreneurs have an important role to play in solving national and global problems.

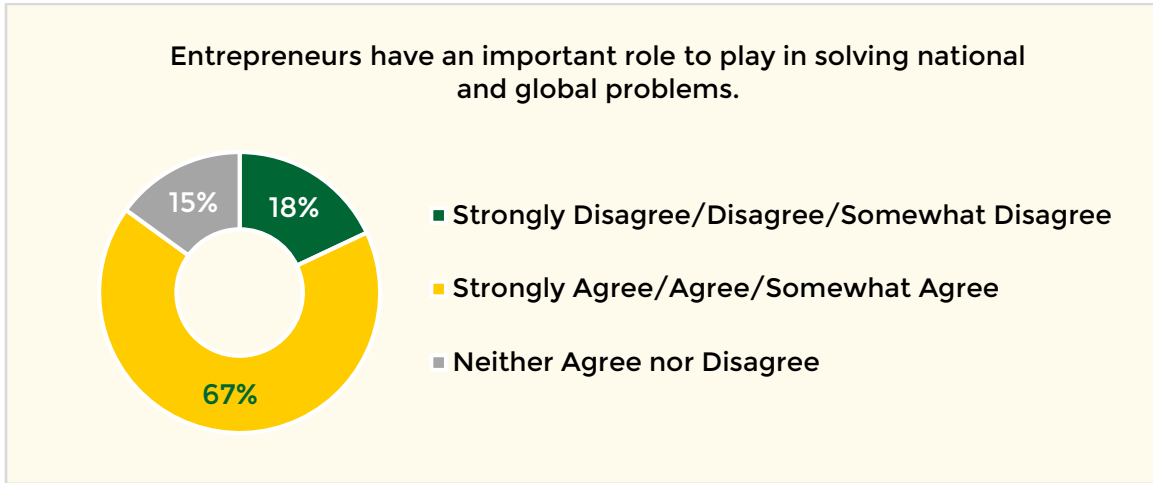


Figure 58: 67 percent of students believe that entrepreneurs can play an important role in solving national and global problems.

Students with different political ideologies generally agree that entrepreneurs have an important role to play in solving national and global problems.

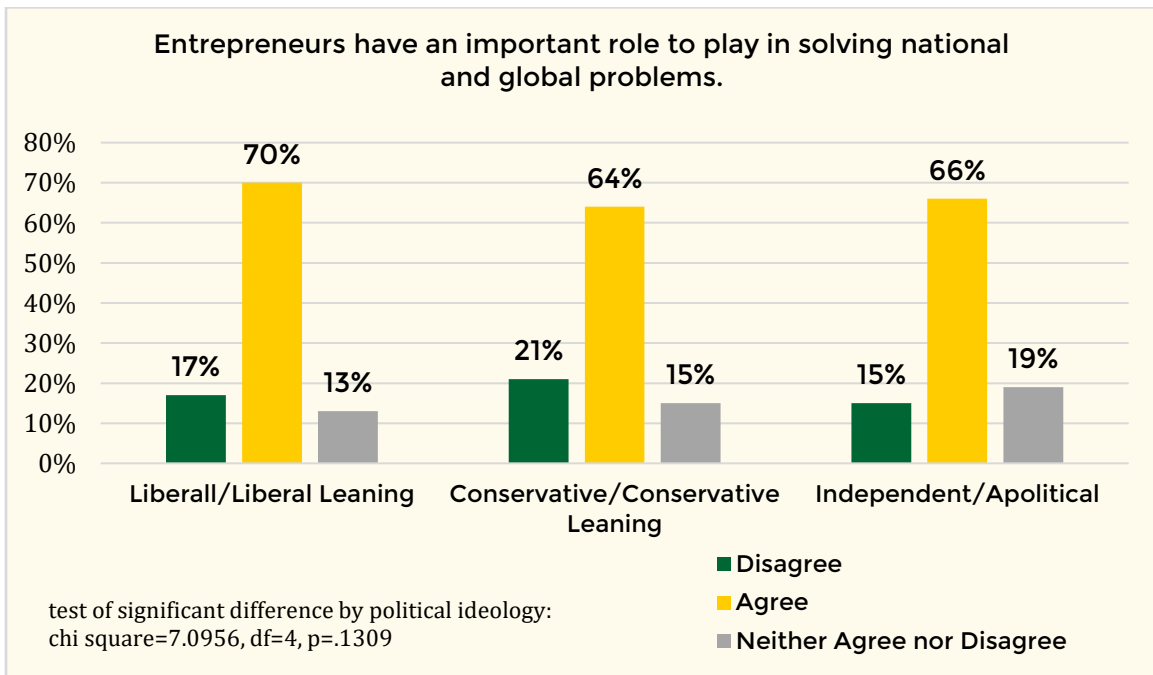


Figure 59: Most students believe entrepreneurs have an important role to play in solving national and global problems.

A Majority of Students Say Entrepreneurs Positively Impact Our Quality of Life.

Most students (77 percent) agree that entrepreneurs can have a powerful positive impact on the quality of our lives.



Figure 60: 77 percent of students believe that entrepreneurs can have a powerful positive impact on the quality of our lives.

There is broad agreement among students with different political views that entrepreneurs can have a powerful positive impact.

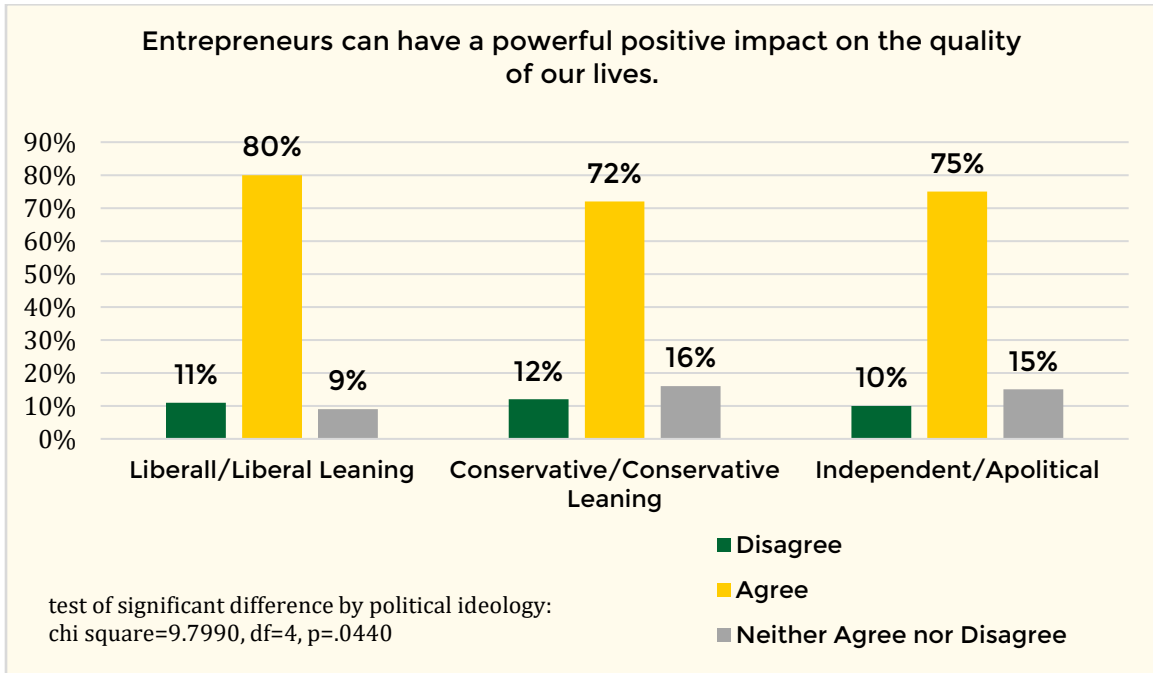


Figure 61: Significant differences exist among students with different political views on whether they believe entrepreneurs can have a powerful, positive impact on our lives.

A Majority of Students Say We Need More Entrepreneurs to Solve Current and Future Problems.

Sixty percent of students agree that we need more entrepreneurs in order to develop innovative and creative solutions to current and future societal problems.



Figure 62: 60 percent of students agree that in order to develop innovative and creative solutions to current and future societal problems, we need more entrepreneurs.

There is broad agreement among students with different political views on the need for more entrepreneurs to develop innovative and creative solutions to solve societal problems.

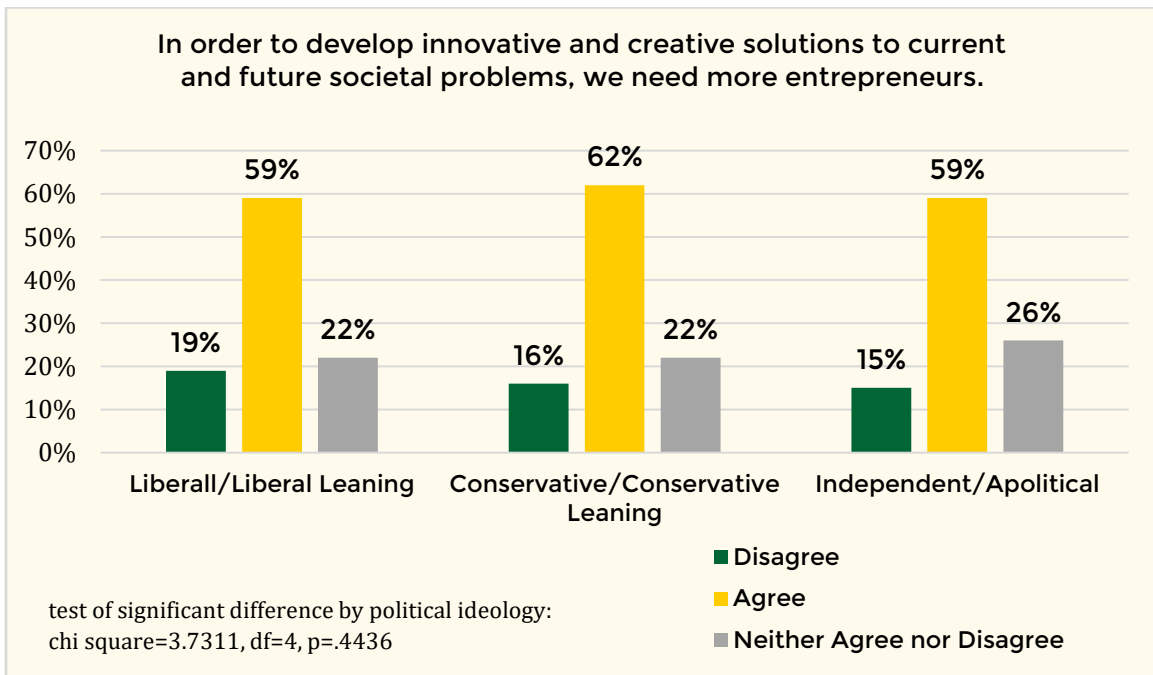


Figure 63: Most students agree that we need more entrepreneurs in order to develop innovative and creative solutions to current and future societal problems.

Student Views Differ on Defining Capitalism.

When presented with two definitions of capitalism, 55 percent of students define capitalism as a system where property is privately owned, exchange is voluntary, and production and pricing of goods/services are determined by market forces (free market). Conversely, 45 percent of students define capitalism as a system where corporations utilize the power of the state and political connections to favor them over competitors (cronyism).

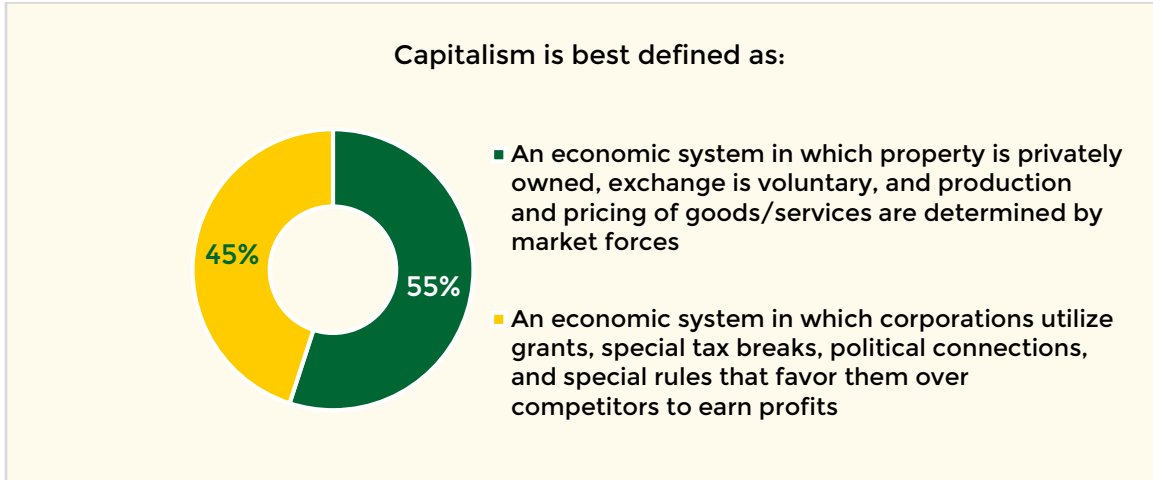


Figure 64: 55 percent of students use a free market definition to describe capitalism.

Significant differences exist among students with different political ideologies in how they define capitalism. Conservative students are much more likely to define capitalism as a free market system, while liberal students are more likely to select the definition aligned with cronyism.

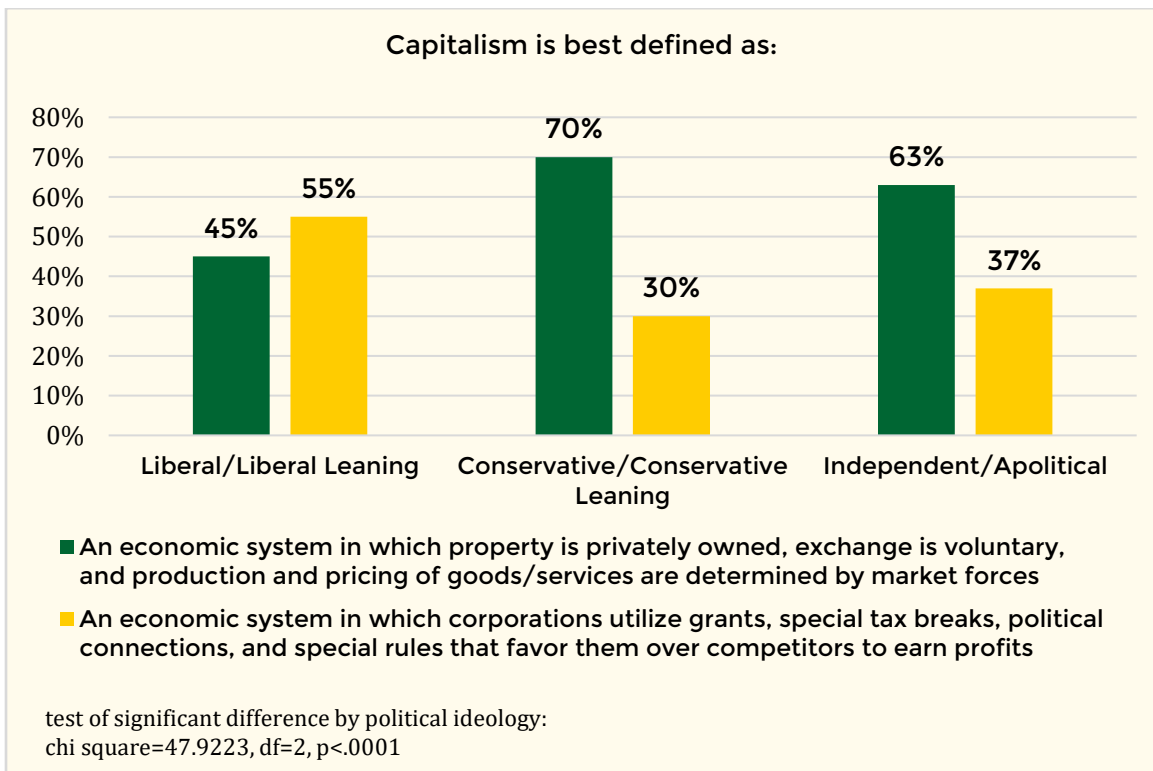


Figure 65: Students with different political ideologies show significant differences in how they define capitalism.

About a Quarter of Students Have a Positive View of Capitalism.

Based on their definition of capitalism, 24 percent of students have a positive view, 44 percent have a negative view, and 32 percent have neutral views of capitalism.

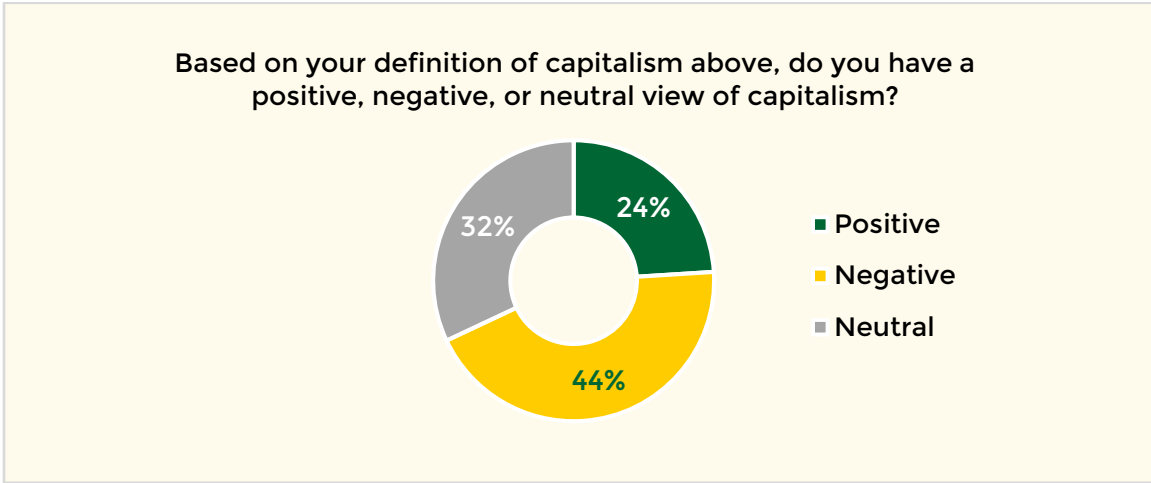


Figure 66: 24 percent of students have a positive view of capitalism as they define it.

Just over half of conservative students (52 percent) have a positive view of capitalism, compared to 26 percent of independent students and 9 percent of liberal students. Differences in views of capitalism among students with different political ideologies are statistically significant.

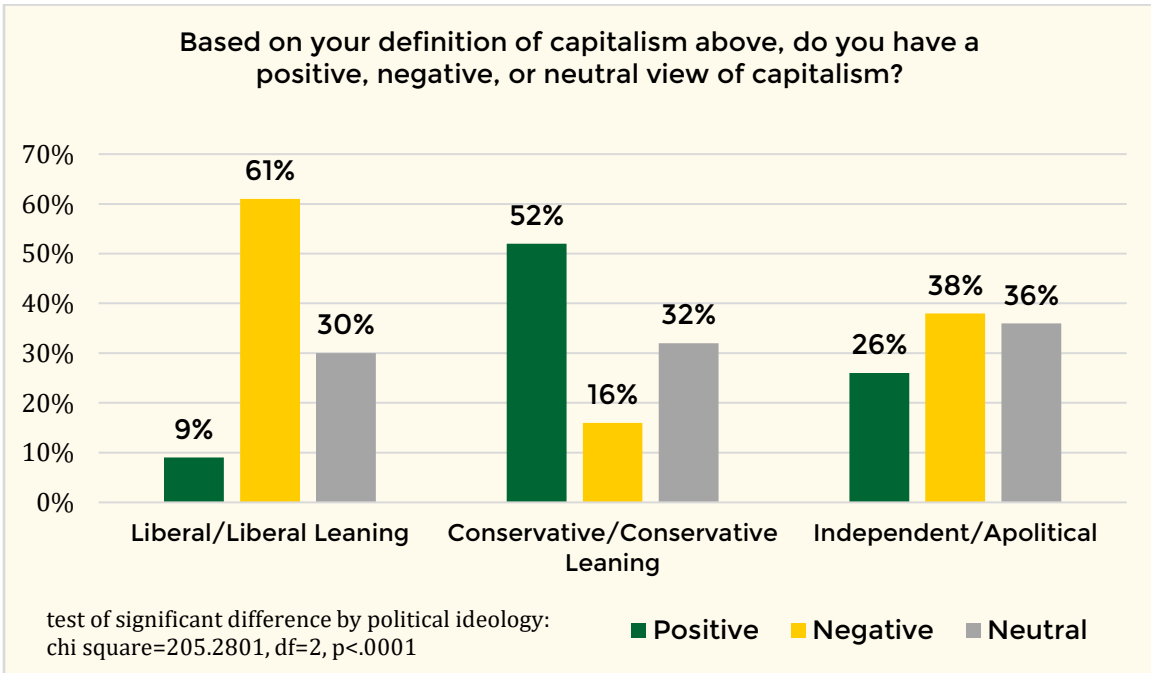


Figure 67: Significant differences exist in views toward capitalism among students with different political ideologies.

Among students who selected the free market definition of capitalism, roughly 40 percent have a favorable view. On the other hand, 21 percent have a negative view and 37 percent have a neutral view.

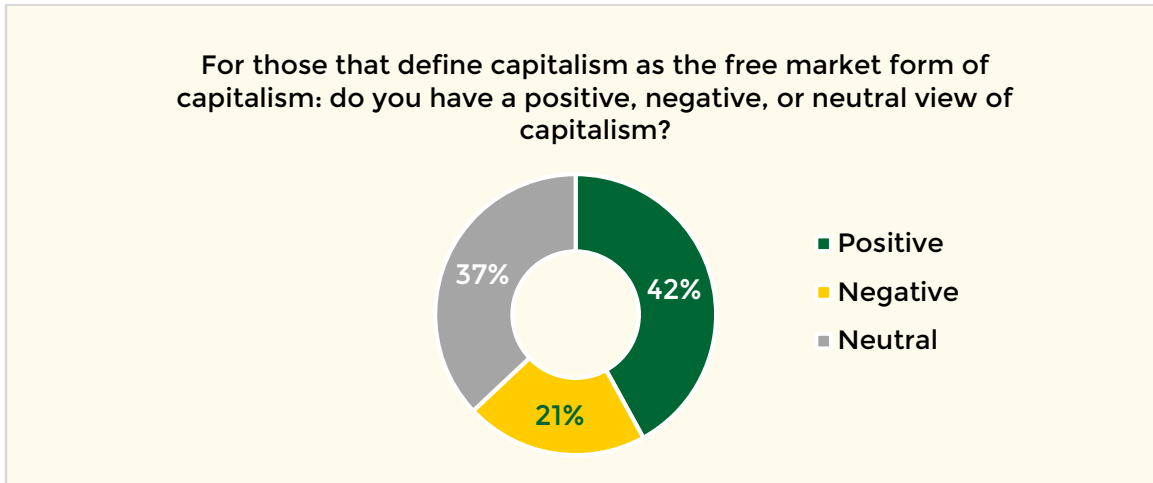


Figure 68: Among students who define capitalism as a free market system, 42 percent have a positive view of capitalism.

There are large and significant differences among students with different political views regarding their views of free market capitalism. For students who defined capitalism as a free market system, 73 percent of conservative students have a positive view of capitalism compared to 40 percent of independent students and 19 percent of liberal students.

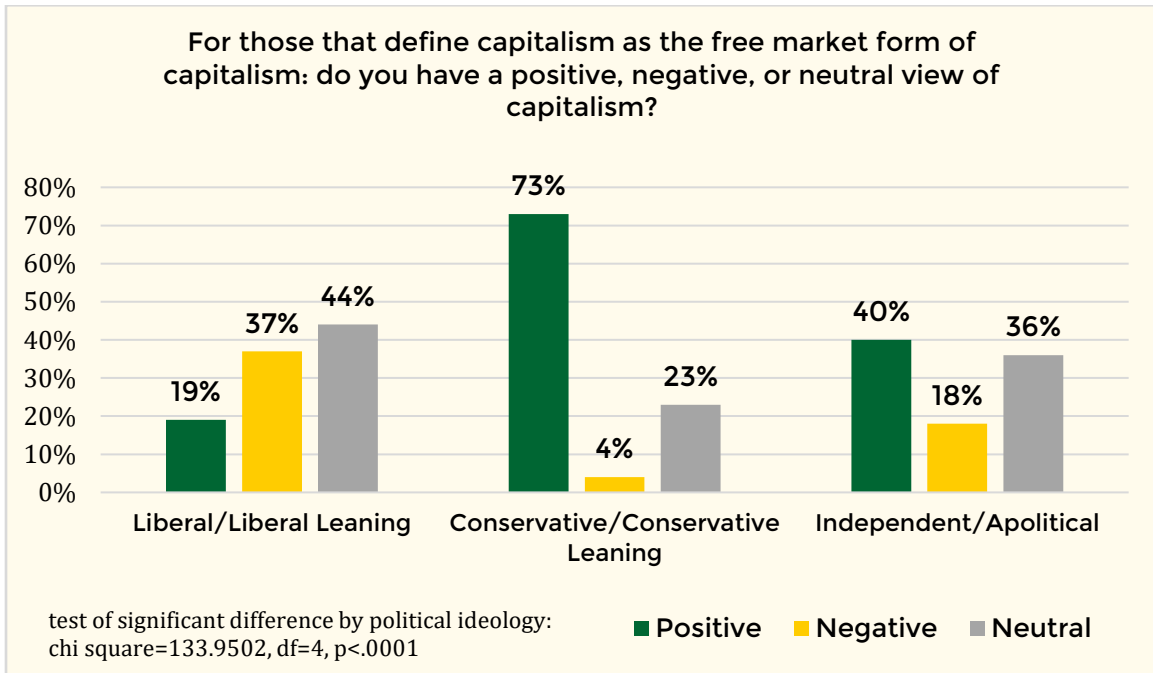


Figure 69: Views toward free market capitalism show significant differences among students with different political ideologies.

Among students who selected the cronyism definition of capitalism, 71 percent have a negative view of capitalism, while 27 percent and two percent have neutral and positive views, respectively.

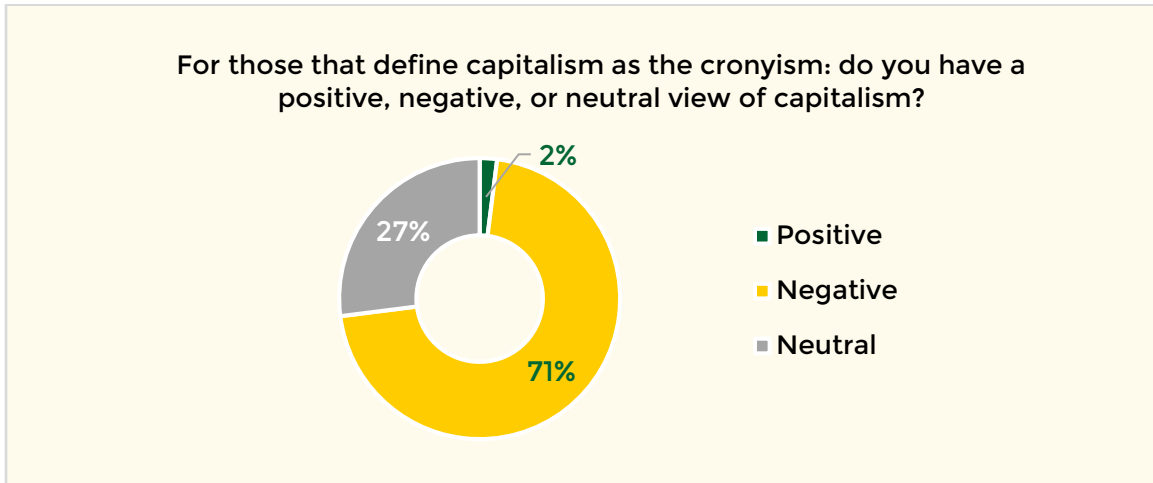


Figure 70: Among students who identify capitalism with cronyism, 71 percent have a negative view of capitalism.

Although there appear to be differences in the way crony capitalism is viewed by students of different political ideologies, a valid test of significant differences cannot be obtained due to small numbers of conservative (74) and independent (78) students defining capitalism this way and a small number of students overall reporting a positive view of this type of capitalism (9).

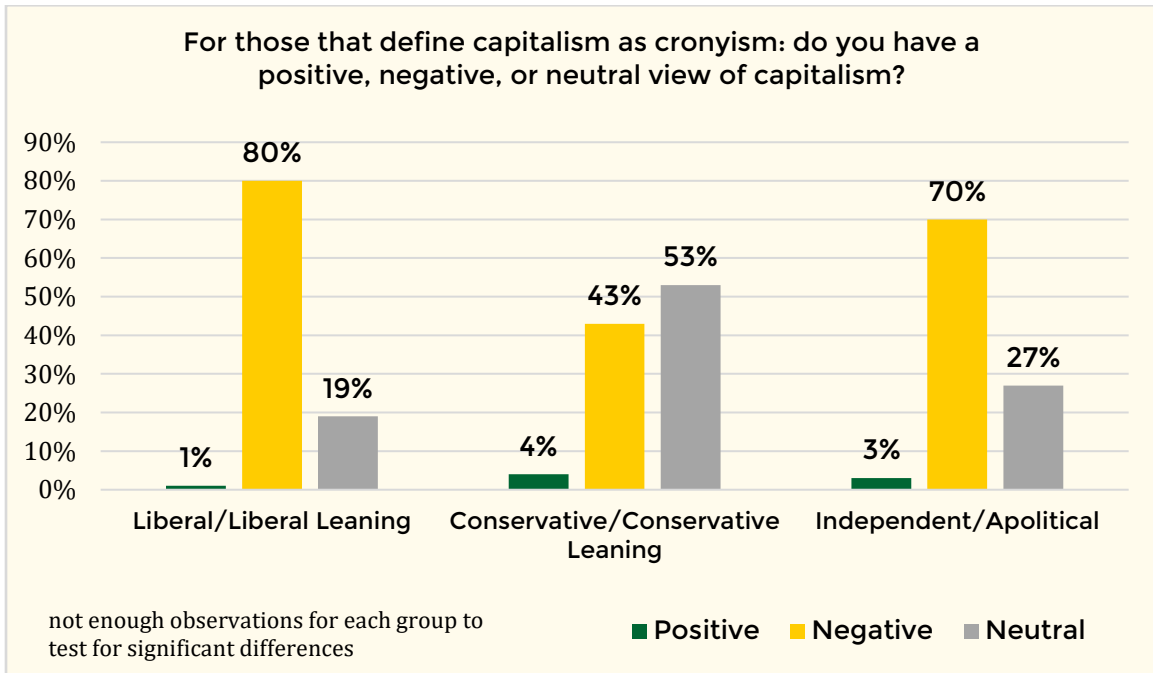


Figure 71: Statistical significance of differences cannot be assessed with our sample.

A Majority of Students Do Not Believe Capitalism Can Solve Major Global Problems.

More than half of students (52 percent) disagree with the idea that capitalism can help solve major challenges such as climate change and poverty, while only 28 percent agree that it can help solve such problems.

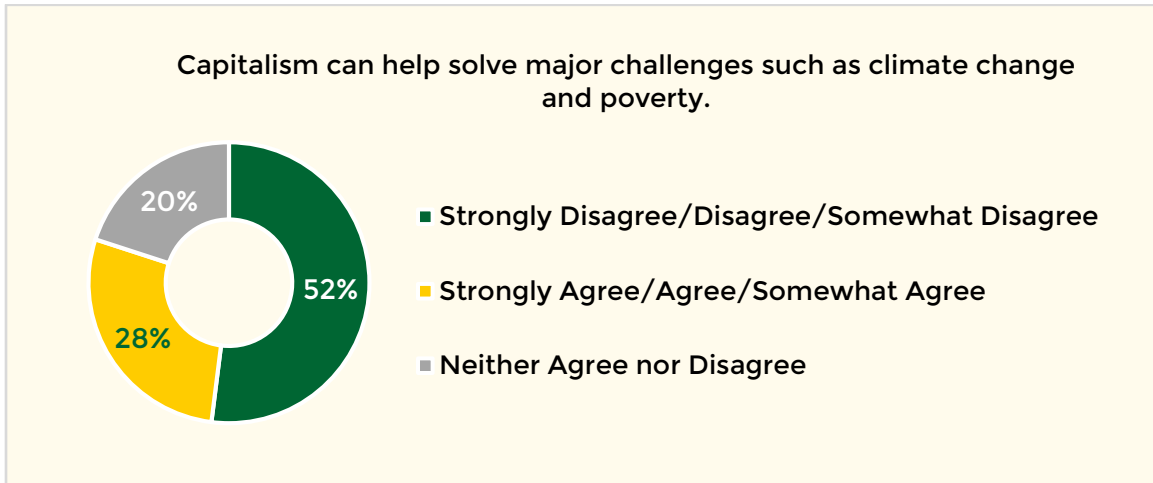


Figure 72: 28 percent of students believe capitalism can help solve major challenges.

Students of different political groups show significant differences in this belief, with 48 percent of conservative students believing capitalism can help solve major challenges and 31 percent of independent and 16 percent of liberal students sharing this belief.

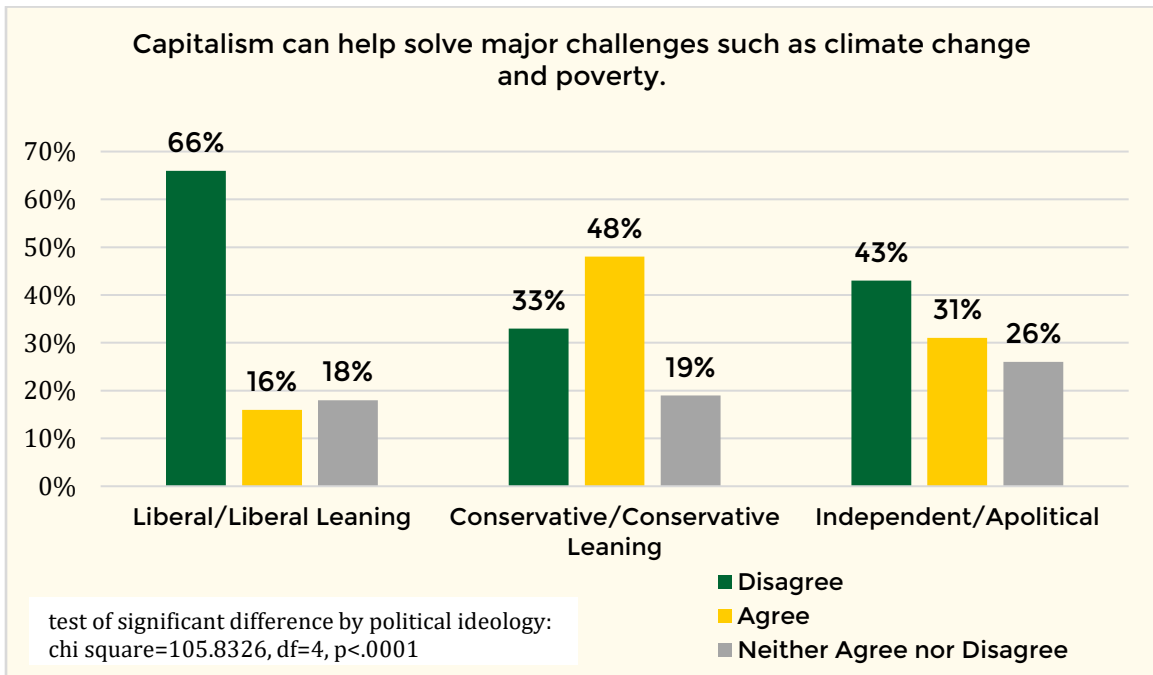


Figure 73: Significant differences exist among students with different political ideologies about capitalism’s ability to solve major challenges.

Among students who selected the free market definition of capitalism, 42 percent believe capitalism can help solve major challenges, while 36 percent believe it cannot and 22 percent are neutral.



Figure 74: Among students who define capitalism as a free market system, 42 percent agree that it can help solve major challenges.

Significant differences exist among students with different political views in whether they think free market capitalism can help solve major challenges. Most conservative students (67 percent) think it can help solve major challenges compared to 42 percent of independent and 22 percent of liberal students.

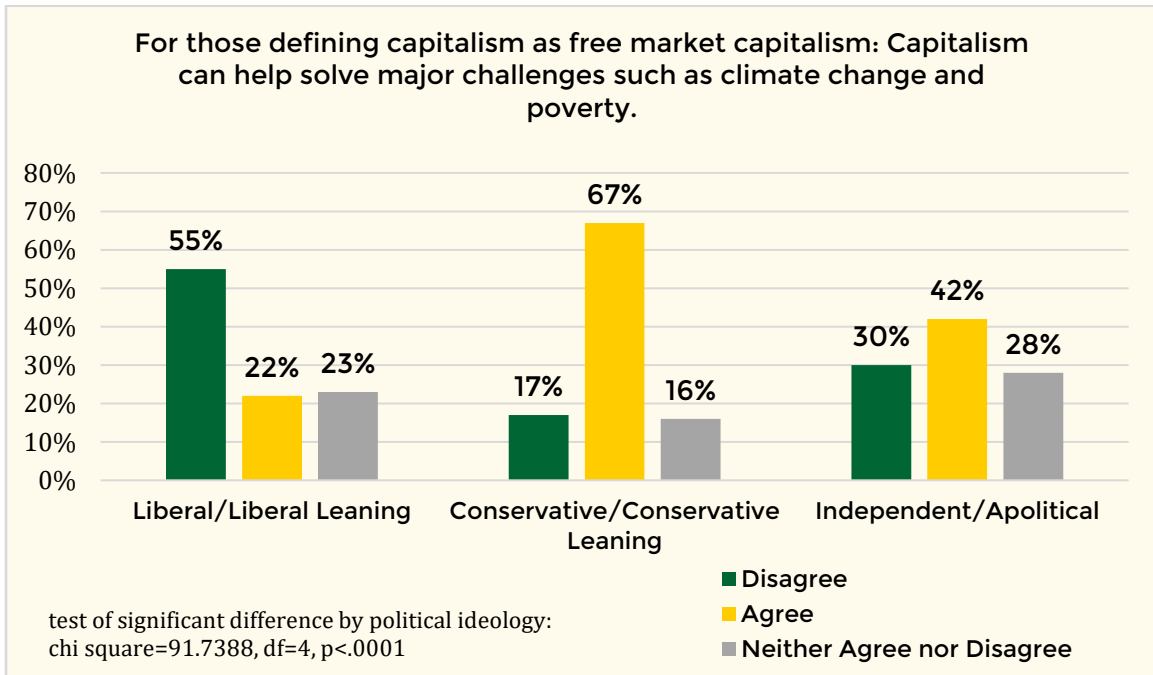


Figure 75: Significant differences exist among students with different political ideologies about capitalism’s ability to solve major challenges.

Among students who identified capitalism with cronyism, only 10 percent believe it can help solve major challenges. This compares to 72 percent who believe it cannot and 18 percent who are neutral.



Figure 76: Among students who define capitalism as a system of cronyism, 10 percent think it can help solve major challenges.

Regardless of political ideology, most students disagree with the idea that crony capitalism can help solve major challenges.

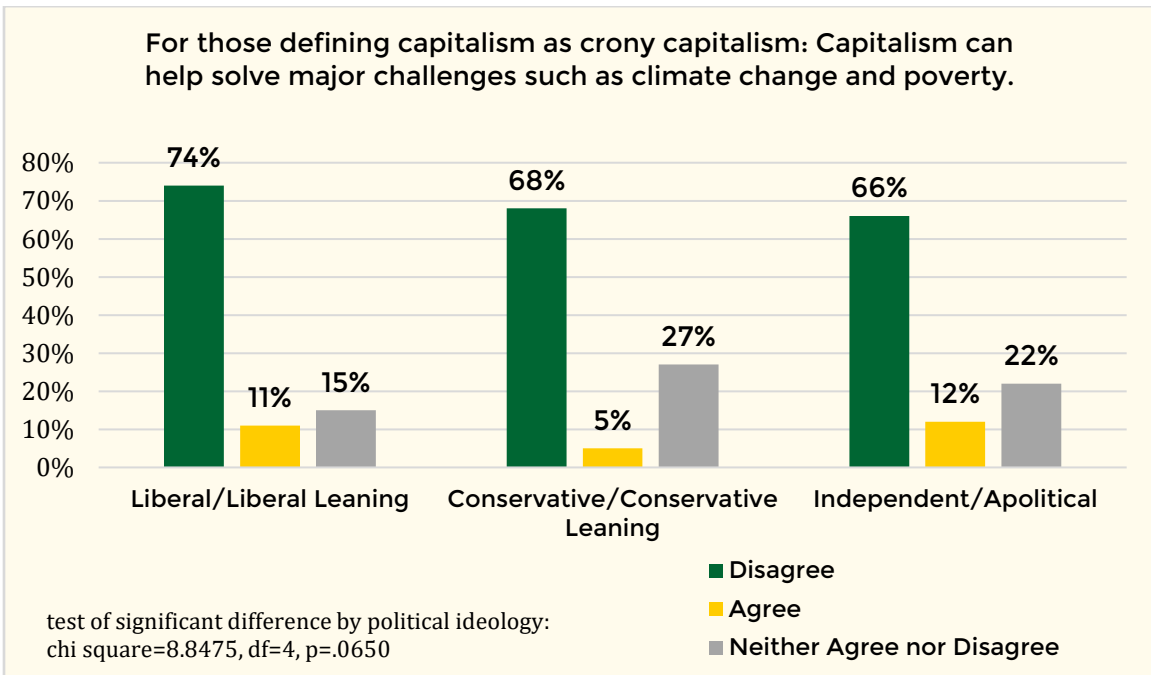


Figure 77: Most liberal, conservative, and politically independent students do not believe that crony capitalism can help solve major challenges.

Few Students Say College Has Given Them a More Positive View of Capitalism.

Although 56 percent of students say college classes and other college activities have not changed their views of capitalism, a large percentage say they have. Of those, students are more likely to say that college has given them a more negative view of capitalism than a more positive view.

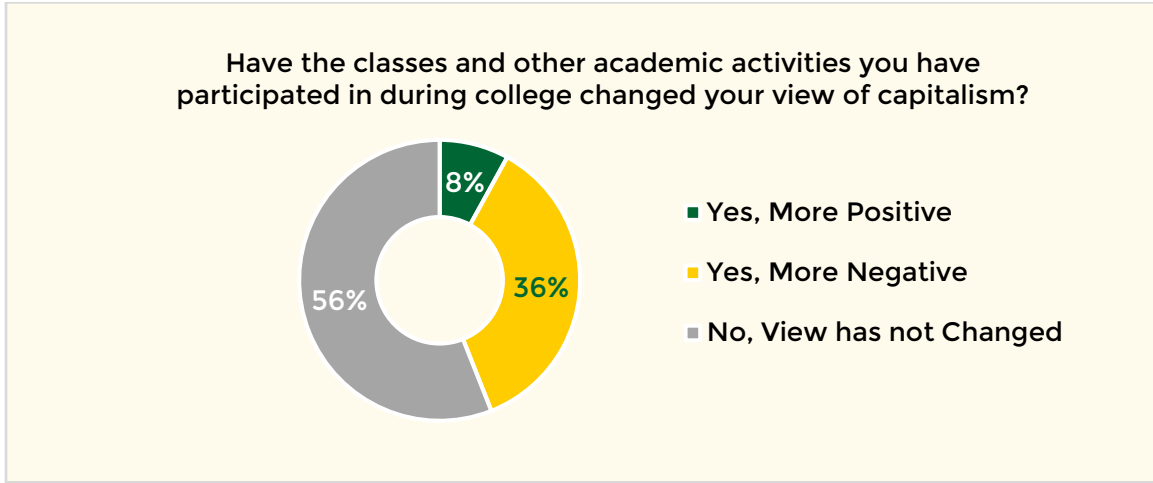


Figure 78: 36 percent of students say college classes and other activities have given them a more negative view of capitalism.

Liberal students are more likely than conservative or independent students to say their views have changed. Moreover, liberal students are also more likely to report a change that has become more negative.

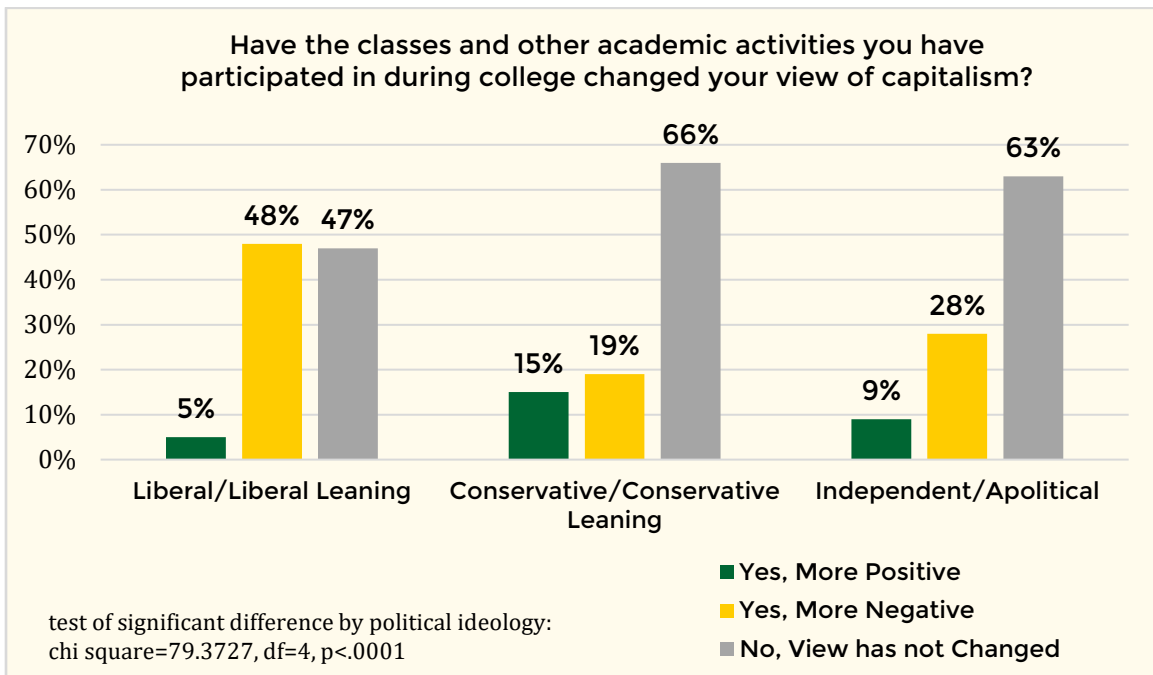


Figure 79: Significant differences exist among students with different political ideologies about how college has impacted their views toward capitalism.

A Majority of Students Say Professors Express Their Views on Capitalism and Socialism.

While only 16 percent of students report that many or most professors have expressed their views on capitalism and socialism, another 45 percent report that a few professors have.

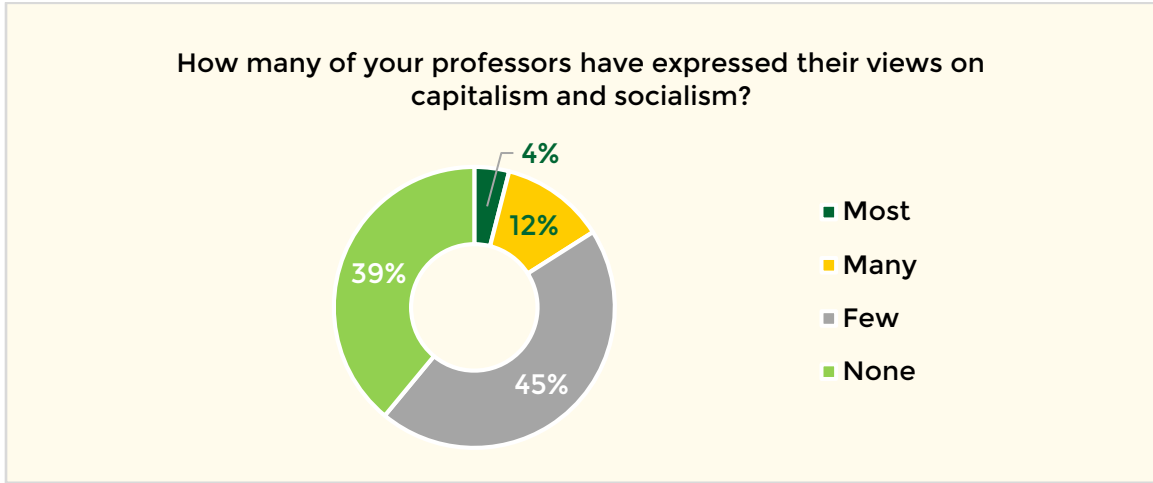


Figure 80: 61 percent of students report that at least a few of their professors have expressed their views on capitalism and socialism.

Students with different political ideologies agree on the number of professors that have expressed their view on capitalism and socialism.

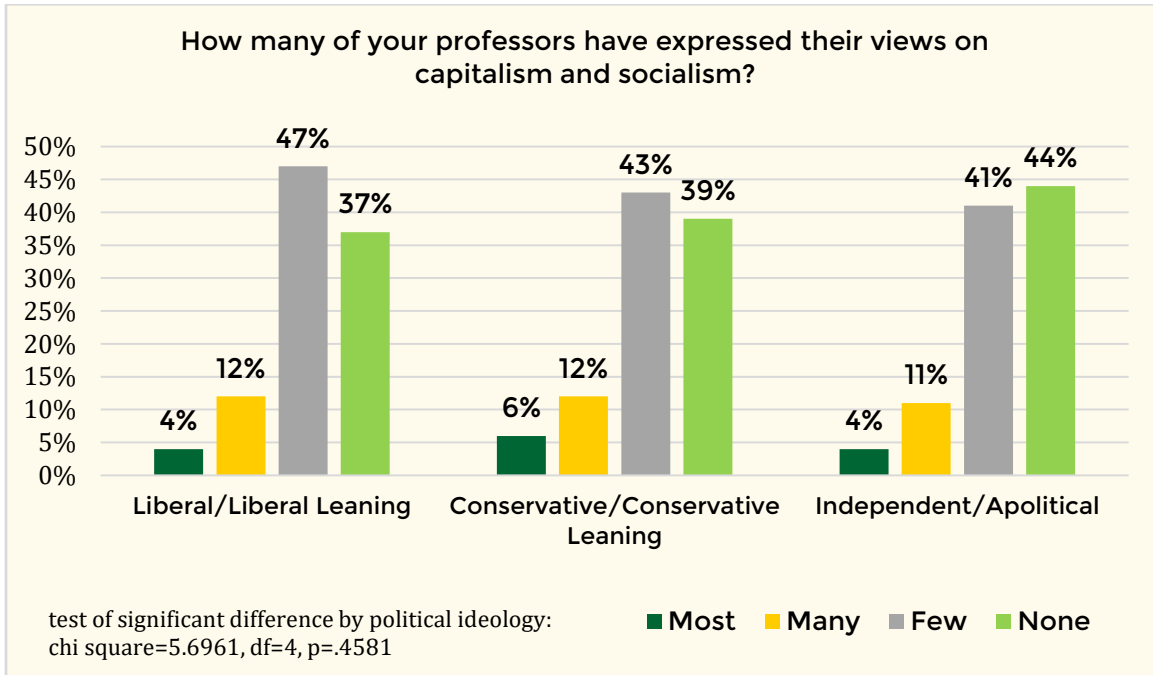


Figure 81: There is no significant different among students with different political ideologies in reporting the number of professors who have expressed their views on capitalism and socialism.

Among students who report professors that have expressed their views on capitalism, 30 percent say the views were favorable toward capitalism, and 70 percent say they were unfavorable.

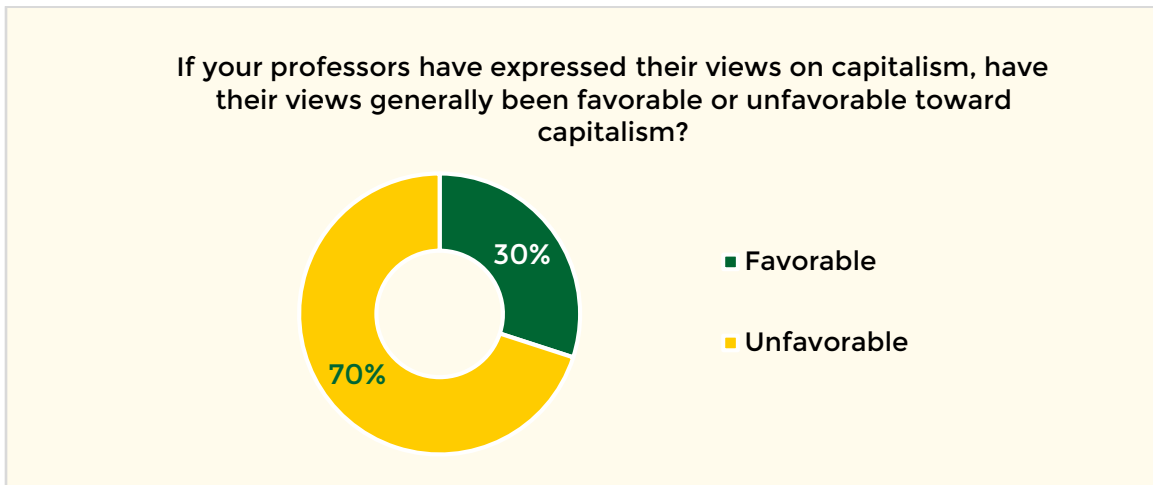


Figure 82: Among students whose professors have shared their views on capitalism, 70 percent said those views were unfavorable.

While there are some differences among students with different political views on whether professors shared positive or negative views toward capitalism, there is broad agreement that a much larger share of views shared by professors were unfavorable toward capitalism.

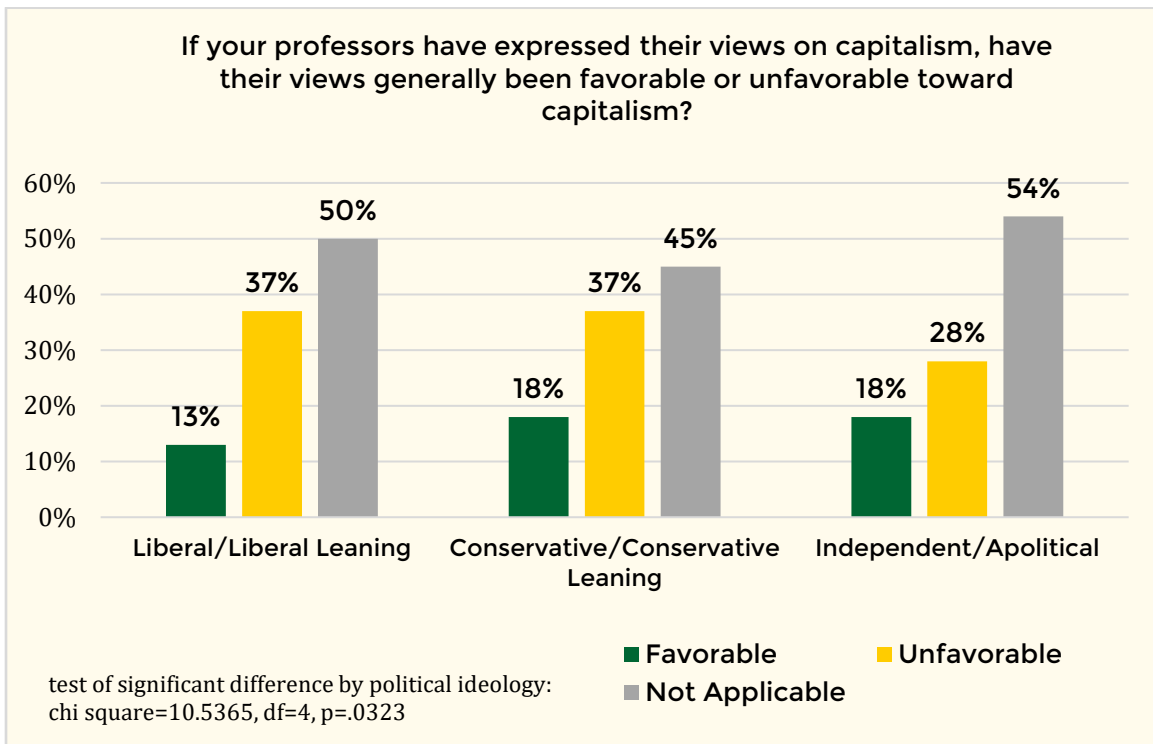


Figure 83: Across all political ideologies, more students report their professors expressing an unfavorable view of capitalism than a favorable view.

Student Views Differ on Defining Socialism.

When presented with two definitions of socialism, 58 percent of students define socialism as an economic system with active government involvement and policies that ensure an equitable distribution of resources (redistribution). Conversely, 42 percent of students define socialism as an economic system involving central planning and the collective ownership of goods and property (central planning).



Figure 84: 58 percent of students define socialism as redistribution and an active government.

Students of different political groups show significant differences in how they define socialism. Most liberal students (69 percent) and independent students (59 percent) define socialism as an economic system of redistribution, while most conservative students (64 percent) selected the definition associated with central planning.

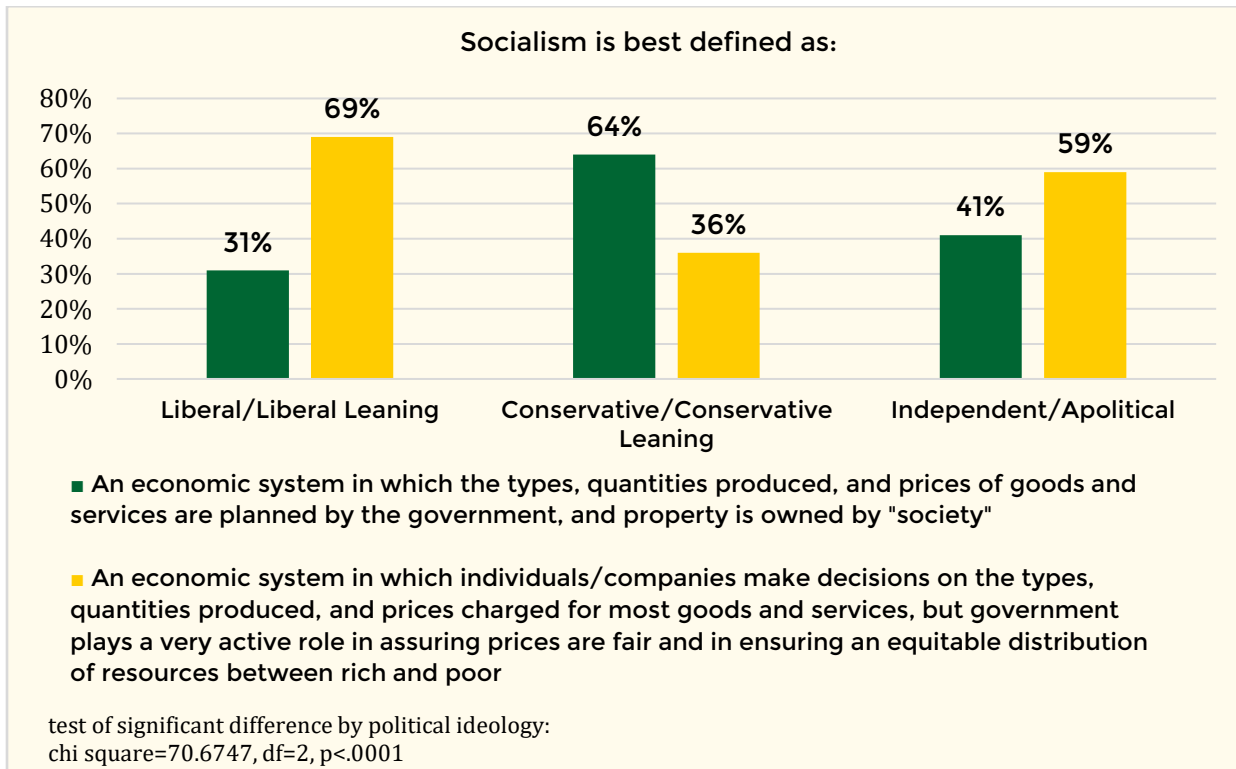


Figure 85: Significant differences exist among students with different political views in the way they define socialism.

About One-Third of Students Have a Positive View of Socialism.

Based on their definition of socialism, 32 percent of students have a positive view of socialism, another 32 percent report a negative view of socialism, and the remaining 36 percent report a neutral view of socialism.

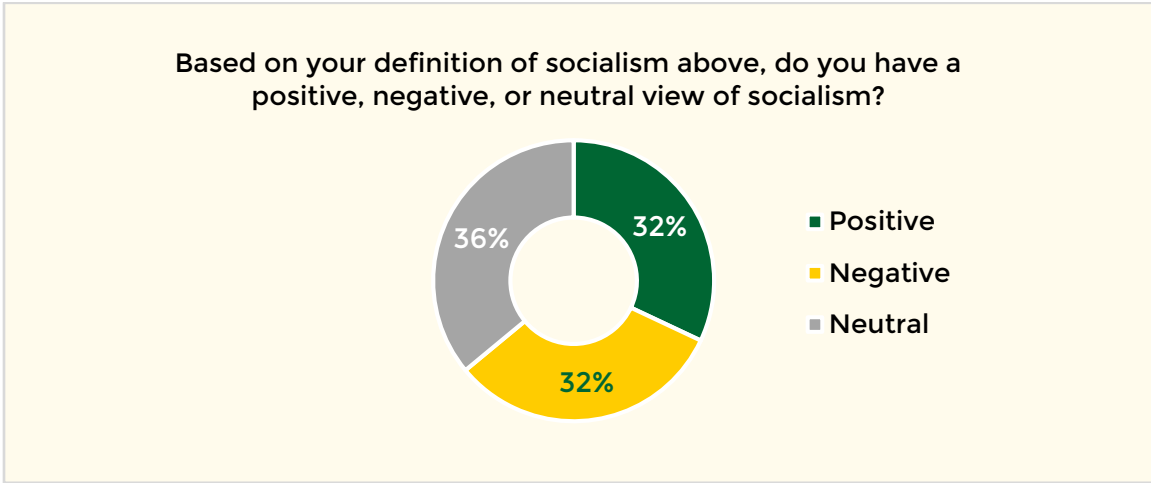


Figure 86: 32 percent of students report a positive view of socialism.

Significant differences among students with varying political views exist in terms of whether they have positive or negative views of socialism (based on how they define it). Nearly half (47 percent) of liberal students have a positive view of socialism compared to seven percent of conservative students.

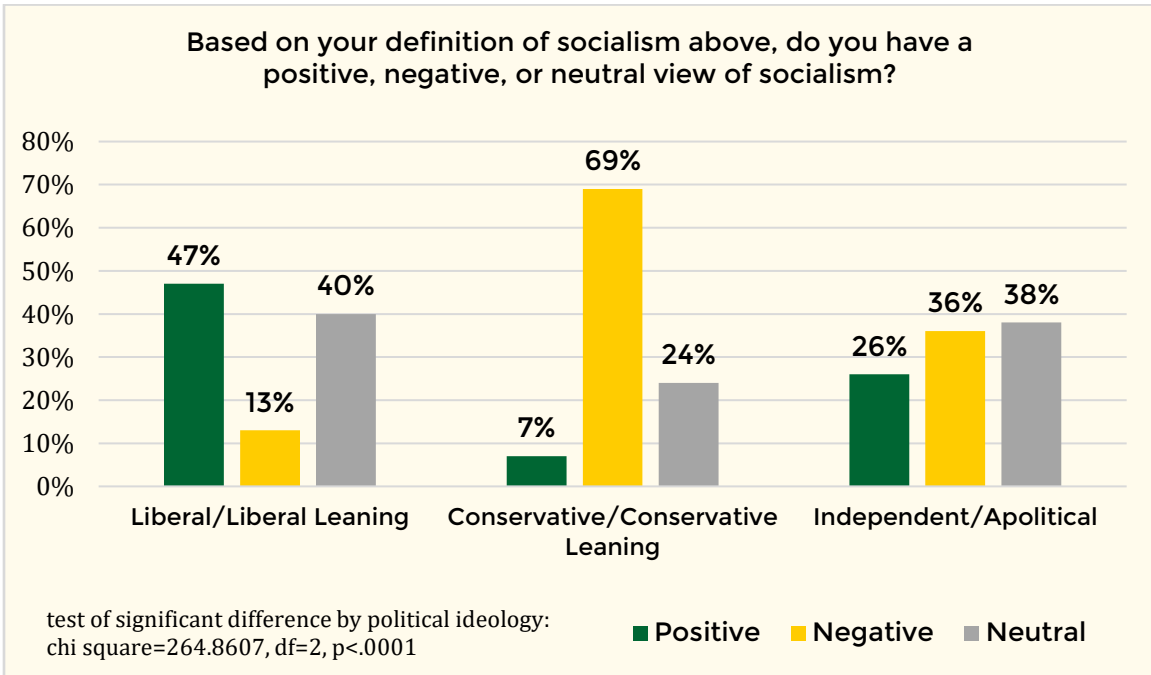


Figure 87: Significant differences exist among students with different ideologies in how they view socialism.

Among students who identified socialism with central planning, 14 percent have a positive view of socialism, while 55 percent have a negative view, and 31 percent have a neutral view.

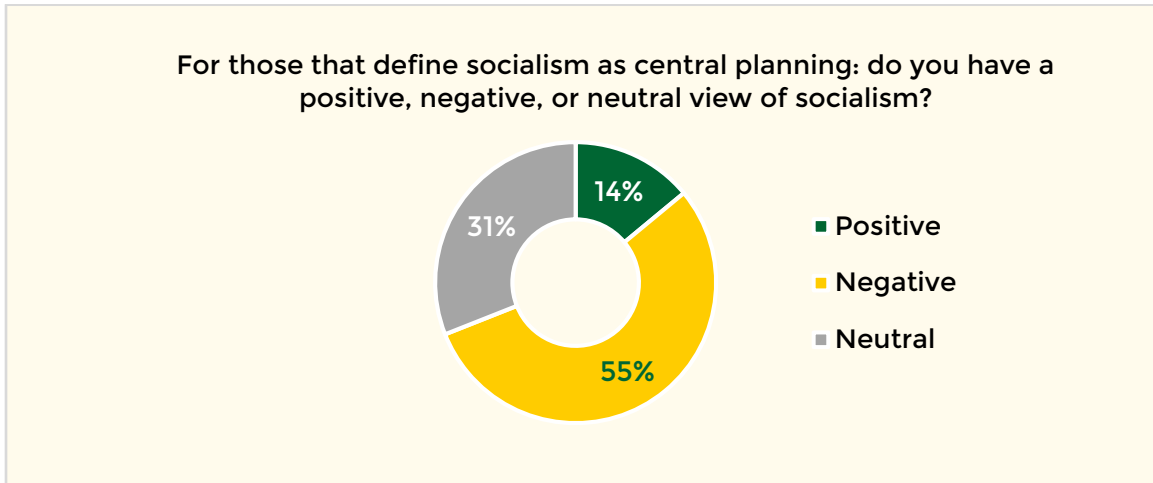


Figure 88: Among students who define socialism as a system of central planning, 14 percent have a positive view of socialism.

Students of different political groups show significant differences in how they view this type of socialism. A large majority of conservative students (79 percent) have a negative view of this type of socialism, compared to 60 percent of independent students and 26 percent of liberal students.

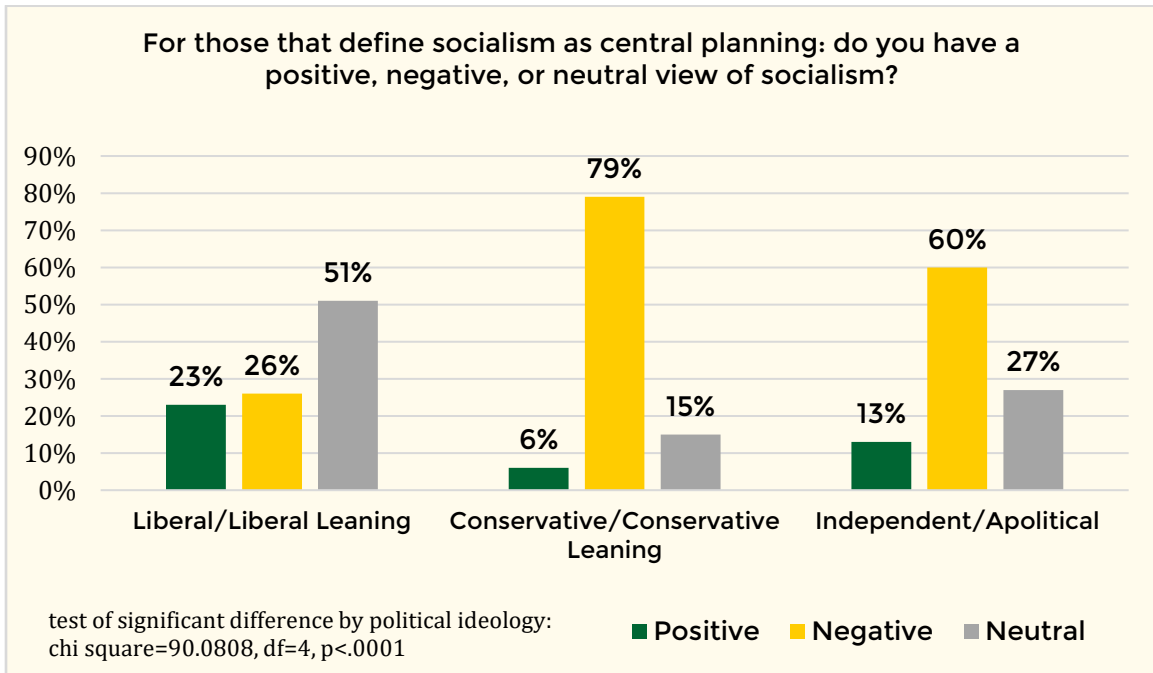


Figure 89: Significant differences exist among students with different political ideologies in how they view socialism.

Among students who define socialism as redistribution and active government, 45 percent have a positive view of socialism, while 17 percent have a negative view of socialism, and 38 percent have a neutral view of socialism.

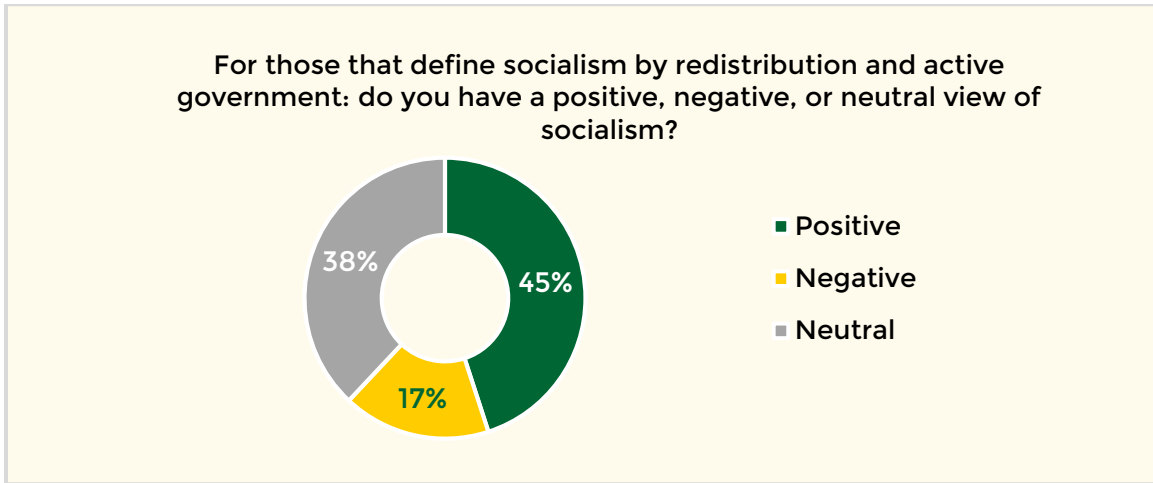


Figure 90: Among students who define socialism as a system of redistribution and active government, 45 percent have a positive view of socialism.

There are significant differences among students with different political views in their attitudes toward socialism. For those who selected the definition associated with redistribution and active government, 58 percent of liberal students have a positive view of socialism compared to 35 percent of independent students and nine percent of conservative students.

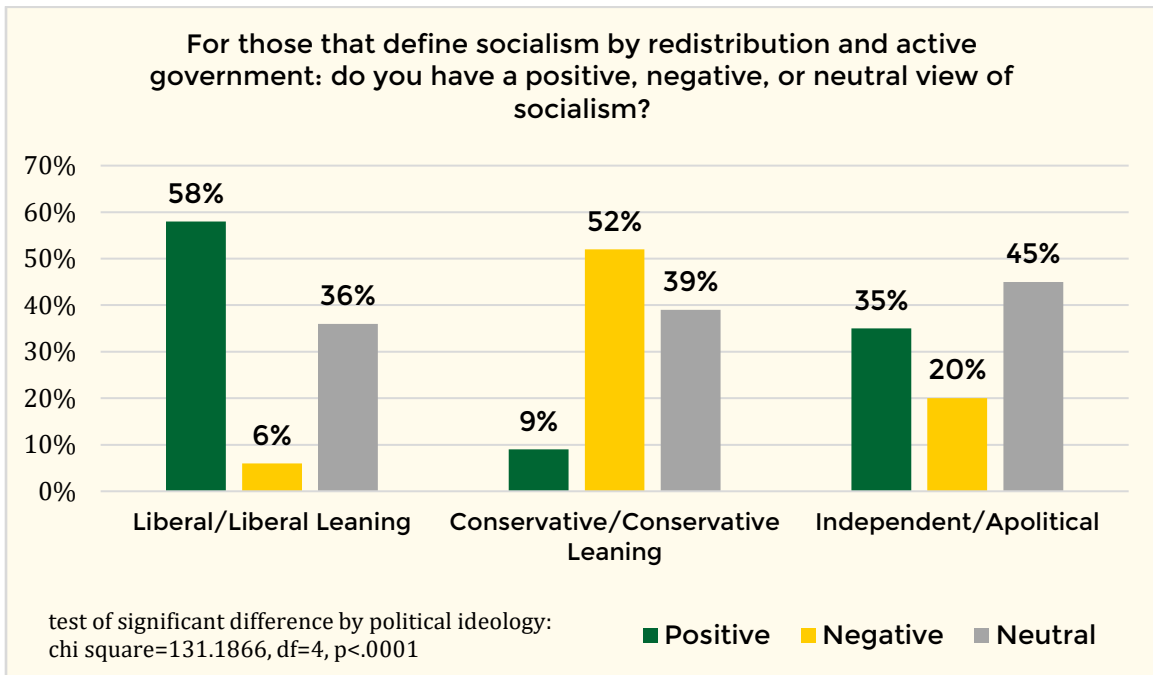


Figure 91: Significant differences exist among students with different political ideologies in how they view socialism.

Nearly Half of Students Believe Socialism Can Solve Major Challenges.

Forty-seven percent of students agree that socialism (as they define it) can help solve major challenges, while 31 percent disagree, and 22 percent are neutral on whether it can help solve major challenges.



Figure 92: 47 percent of students believe socialism (as they define it) can help solve major challenges.

There are large and significant differences among students with different political views about whether socialism can help solve major challenges. A majority of liberal students (65 percent) think socialism can help solve major challenges, compared to a majority of conservative students (62 percent) who disagree.

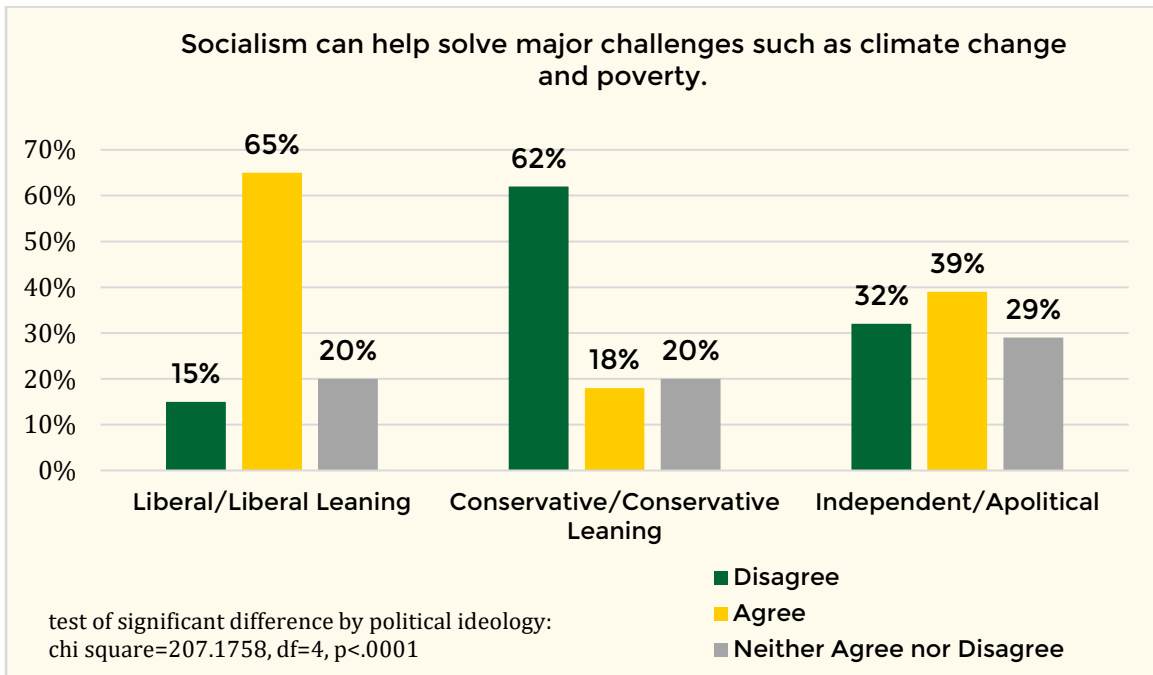


Figure 93: Significant differences exist among students with different political views in their evaluation of whether socialism (as they define it) can help solve major challenges.

Thirty-two percent of students who define socialism as central planning believe it can help solve major challenges, while 48 percent do not think it can help solve major challenges, and 20 percent are neutral on whether it can help solve major challenges.



Figure 94: Among students who define socialism as a system of central planning, 32 percent believe it can help solve major challenges.

Among students who define socialism as a system of central planning, 48 percent of liberal students agree that socialism can help solve major challenges, compared to 23 percent of independent students and 20 percent of conservative students. Differences in views toward this type of socialism’s ability to help solve major challenges are statistically significant among students with different political views.

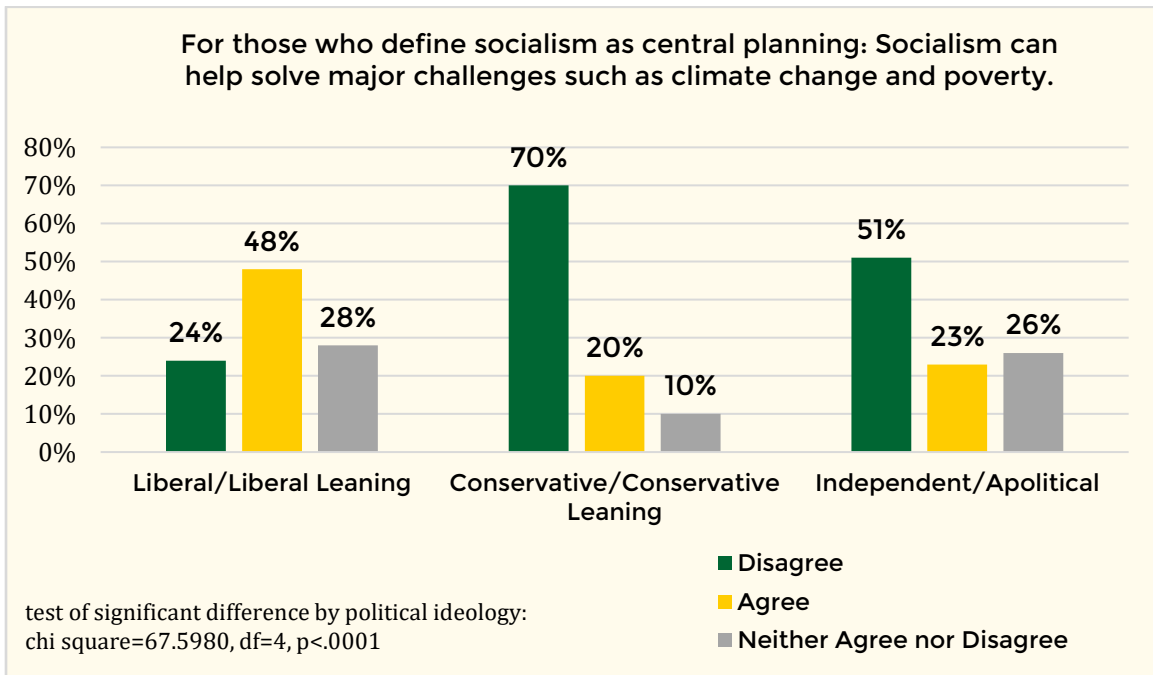


Figure 95: Significant differences exist among students with different political views in their evaluation of whether socialism can help solve major challenges.

Among students who define socialism as a system of redistribution and active government, 58 percent of students believe it can help solve major challenges, while 19 percent do not think it can help solve major challenges, and 23 percent are neutral on whether it can help solve major challenges.

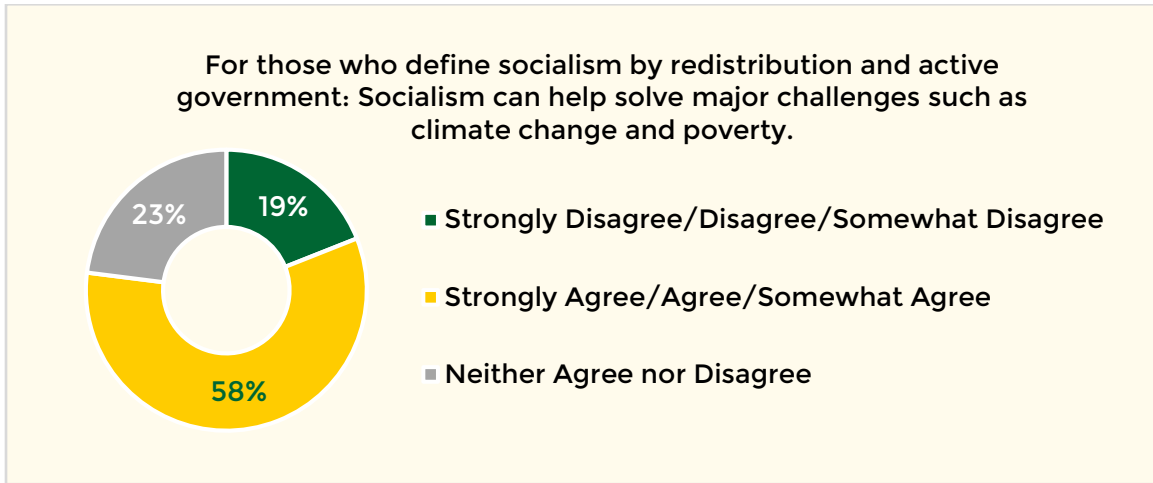


Figure 96: Among students who define socialism as a system of redistribution and active government, 58 percent of students agree that it can help solve major challenges.

Significant differences among students with different political views exist in their assessment of whether this type of socialism can help solve major challenges. Most liberal students (79 percent) who define socialism this way agree that it can help solve major challenges. In contrast, 50 percent of independent students and 15 percent of conservative students share this belief.

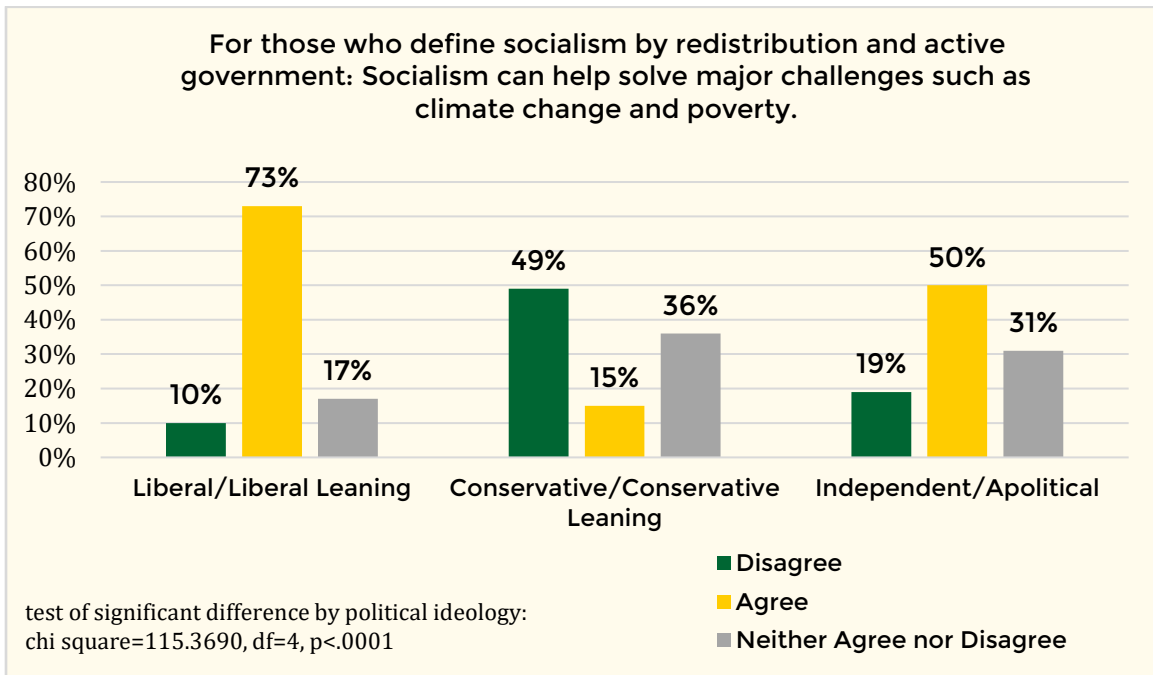


Figure 97: Significant differences exist among students with different political views in their evaluation of whether socialism can help solve major challenges.

About a Quarter of Students Say College Has Given Them a More Positive View of Socialism.

Although 59 percent of students say their view of socialism has not changed, 27 percent say classes and other college activities have made their view of socialism more positive, and 14 percent say they adopted a more negative view of socialism.

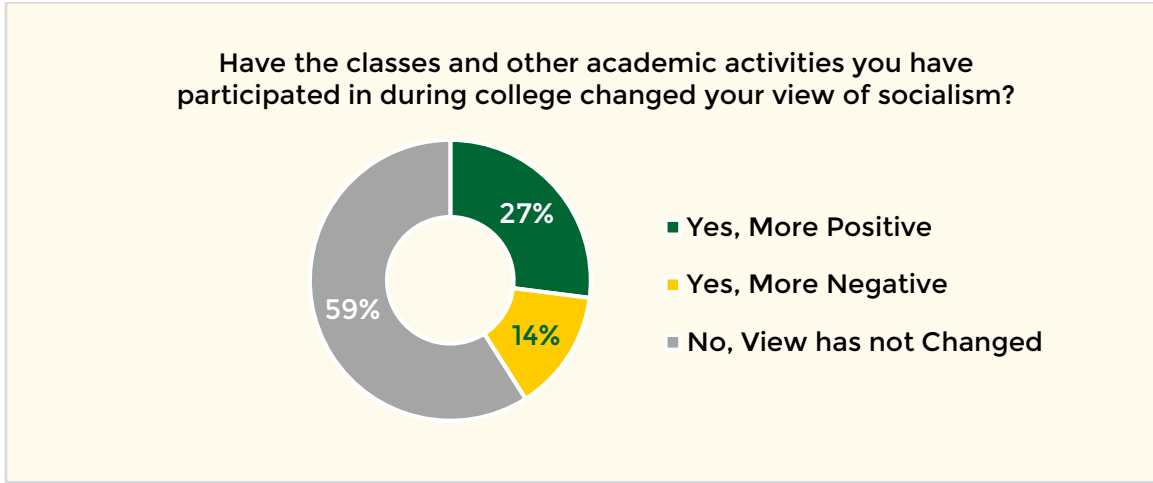


Figure 98: 27 percent of students say college classes and other activities have made their view of socialism more positive.

There are significant differences in the way that college classes and other activities have changed students' views of socialism among students with different political views. Thirty-nine percent of liberal students say classes and other college activities have made their view of socialism more positive, compared to 17 percent of independent students and nine percent of conservative students.

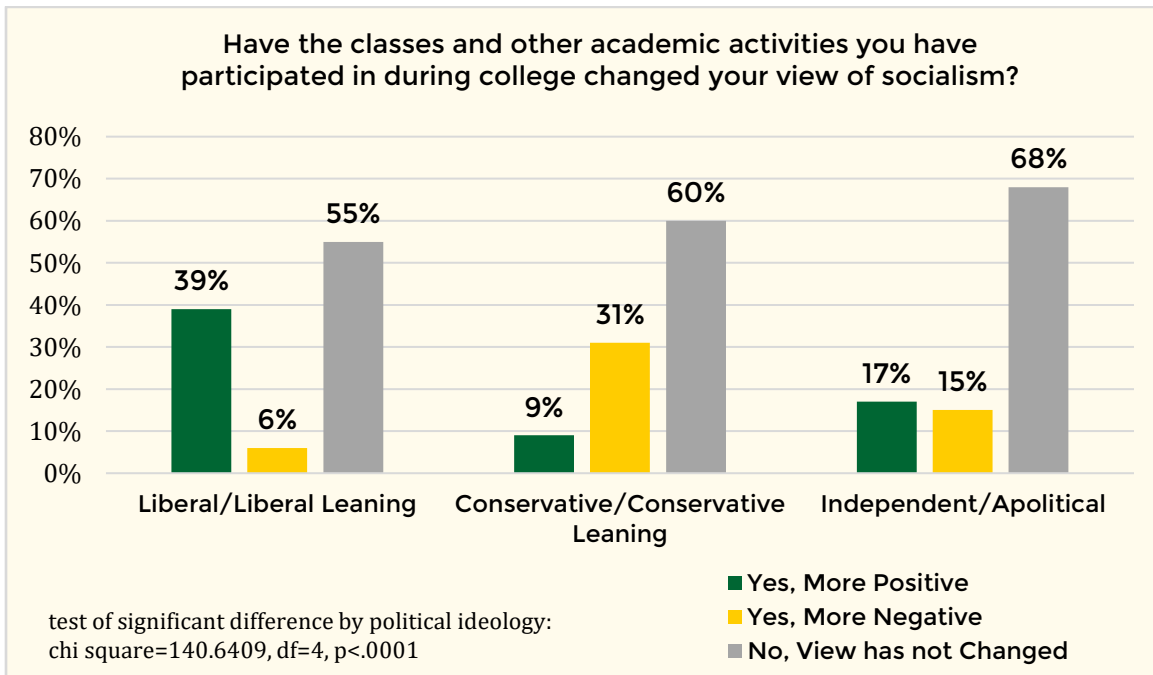


Figure 99: Significant differences exist among students with different political ideologies about how college has impacted their views toward socialism.