

In both mainstream and student journalism, universities appear to be dominated by liberals in ways that impair intellectual diversity.

Mainstream media often reports on or publishes opinion pieces about the seeming bias in American higher education toward liberal values and against conservatism and broader intellectual diversity. This is apparent in WE1S's [Collection 1](#) (82,324 articles from U.S. journalistic media mentioning "humanities").

For example, basically all the top documents in [topic 162](#) of our topic model [C-1.250](#) of the collection (documents characterized by such words frequent words in the topic as *political, liberal, conservative, left, professors*) report or opine about the political bias of academic institutions toward leftist thought and politics.. Noted conservative columnist George F. Will's 2004 piece in *The Washington Post* titled "[Academia, Stuck To the Left](#)" (see our model's [analysis](#) of topics and terms in his column¹) thus makes much of a report based on voting records of the following numbers imputed to be representative of top U.S. campuses: "Cornell: 166 liberals, 6 conservatives. Stanford: 151 liberals, 17 conservatives. Colorado: 116 liberals, 5 conservatives. UCLA: 141 liberals, 9 conservatives." In the same vein, a 2016 [article](#) (see our model's [analysis](#)) published on a conservative political news site draws from studies and commentators to report that such disparity is more prominent in the humanities and social sciences than in STEM. The article also cites data indicating that the disparity is higher among seniors than freshmen, suggesting that during their

time in college students tend to become more liberal.

In parallel to mainstream media, students writing in campus newspapers report or offer views about the seemingly narrow range of political and intellectual views in higher ed. This is suggested in WE1S's [Collection 14](#) of 21,182 university and college newspaper articles mentioning *humanities* or *liberal arts* as studied in our topic model [C-14.250](#). Many of the top articles and opinion pieces in C-14.250's [topic 80](#) (whose most frequent words are *political, speech, free, conservative, liberal*) focus on controversies about alleged constraints on free speech and the dominance of liberal beliefs on campus.

Looking at mainstream and student journalism together in this way puts the spotlight on fundamental questions about higher ed's ideological and intellectual diversity--and on the fraught ground of "ideas" on which ideology and intellect overlap. What should such diversity look like in higher ed? How far should universities, classrooms, professors, and students be overtly political? How can diverse beliefs and ideas be encouraged without falling into the trap of pure relativism or "anything goes"?

Document collection studied: [C-1](#), [C-14](#)

Topic models studied: C-1 [C-1.250](#), [C-14.250](#) (both models at 250 topics)

Interesting sample topics: [C-1.250 #162](#), [C-14.250 #80](#)

Representative articles: [a](#), [b](#).

Evidentiary documentation for this key finding:
[WE1S report](#)

¹ Dfr-browser's view of a document in our model shows that document's association with one or more topics. To see an analysis of terms in the document, click on "View Metadata" at the top.