College students not intolerant of ideas

Aldemaro Romero Jr.
CUNY Bernard M Baruch College

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!
Follow this and additional works at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/bb_pubs
Part of the Higher Education Commons

Recommended Citation
One of the current urban legends circulating about college students is that they aren’t intolerant of ideas. This claim is often repeated in media, supported by anecdotal evidence, yet it is not necessarily true. The attitudes of college students towards free speech and the protection of diverse views are not as positive as they may seem. In fact, a recent study conducted by the National Assessment of Higher Education Costs (NAHEC) has shown that a significant portion of college students believe that free speech should be protected for the sake of freedom of expression. The study, which included a survey of over 1,000 college students, found that 61% of respondents believed that free speech is very important or extremely important. However, this percentage has decreased from 78% in 2016. The study also found that 59% of college students think about First Amendment freedoms and the security of First Amendment freedoms. That does not mean that college students are not concerned about freedom of speech. In fact, 61% of students who were surveyed said that they would support for open learning environments for their peers, even if it meant sacrificing their own comfort. This is a significant increase from 2016, when only 45% of respondents said they would support open learning environments. The results of this study highlight the importance of understanding the attitudes and beliefs of college students towards free speech and the protection of diverse views. It is crucial to recognize that college students are not as tolerant of ideas as they may seem, and that the protection of free speech is a complex and ongoing issue.