

Political Views and College Choices in a Polarized America

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Abstract

We examine the role of students' political views in shaping college enrollment decisions in the United States. We hypothesize that students derive utility from attending institutions aligned with their political identities, which could reinforce demographic and regional disparities in educational attainment and reduce ideological diversity on campuses. Using four decades of survey data on college freshmen, we document increasing political polarization in colleges' student bodies, which is not fully explained by sorting along demographic, socioeconomic, or academic lines. To further explore these patterns, we conduct a series of survey-based choice experiments that quantify the value students place on political alignment relative to factors such as cost and proximity. We find that both liberal and conservative students prefer institutions with more like-minded peers and, especially, with fewer students from the opposite side of the political spectrum. The median student is willing to pay up to \$2,617 (12.5%) more to attend a college where the share of students with opposing political views is 10 percentage points lower, suggesting that political identity plays a meaningful role in the college choice process.

Keywords: College choice, polarization, politics, higher education

JEL Codes: I20, I23, J1

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1 Introduction

The United States has become increasingly politically polarized over the past four decades (Boxell, Gentzkow, and Shapiro 2017). Politicians disagree more frequently on policy issues (Desilver 2022), while the public expresses more negative attitudes towards opposing political parties (Boxell, Gentzkow, and Shapiro 2024). The latter phenomenon, known as “affective polarization,” can impact a wide range of non-political behaviors and attitudes, including relationships (Chopik and Motyl 2016; Huber and Malhotra 2017; Shafranek 2021), migration and location decisions (Tam Cho, Gimpel, and Hui 2013; Hui 2013; Gimpel and Hui 2015; Ewers and Shockley 2023), and economic behavior (Gift and Gift 2015; McConnell et al. 2018; Panagopoulos et al. 2020).

Yet existing literature has not considered the influence of political views on one of the most consequential decisions individuals make: whether and where to attend college. The scope for politics to influence college choice in the American context is quite large. Tools like Niche and the Princeton Review regularly publish lists of the “most liberal” and “most conservative” colleges, providing students with the perceived political leanings of different institutions, and news outlets have highlighted that students and parents increasingly consider politics when making college decisions (Nietzel 2024; Brickman 2025; Knox 2025). Additionally, surveys suggest that Republicans and Democrats have diverged sharply in their views of higher education in recent years, with Republicans becoming less favorable since 2015, in part because they believe that campuses are too left-leaning (Parker 2019), and that professors—who are left-leaning, on average (Zipp and Fenwick 2006; Gross 2013; Langbert 2018; Chin et al. 2025)—bring their political views into the classroom.

In this paper, we use two complementary methodological approaches to provide novel evidence that students’ political views shape their college choices. First, we generate new descriptive statistics on the political views of college students, across institutions and over time, from pre-collected survey data extending back into the 1980s. Second, we conduct a survey experiment on currently enrolled college students that allows us to identify participants’ preferences for the political views of a college’s state and student body. Together, these approaches allow us to: 1) understand how

students have sorted into colleges along political lines over time, and 2) demonstrate that student preferences for politically-aligned campus environments likely contribute to these sorting patterns.

The descriptive portion of our analysis shows that, since the 1980s, colleges have grown increasingly polarized in the political beliefs of their students. That is, colleges that had the highest representation of liberal students at the beginning of our time series have an even higher representation of liberal students today, and vice-versa for conservative students. We also find that little of the growing dispersion of political views across colleges can be explained by changes in the sorting of students along standard observable characteristics like race, gender, academic preparation, geographic origins, or even religion. To document these trends, we draw on The Freshman Survey (TFS), administered by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). Conducted since the 1960s, TFS has collected detailed information on the characteristics and viewpoints of more than 15 million first-year college students, including their political leanings. Our analysis focuses on the years from 1982 onward, when the survey began recording students' home geographies, allowing us to account for the political composition of students' home counties and changes in the geographic sorting of students across institutions over our analysis period.

The fact that increasing polarization is not fully explained by demographic or academic observables suggests that political views could play a direct role in student enrollment choices. The second portion of our analysis supports this hypothesis. Our evidence comes from survey-based hypothetical choice experiments that we conducted on a sample of current college students. We employed a stated-preferences approach that elicits participants' choice probabilities for hypothetical colleges characterized by a set of attributes, including the political leaning of their state and student body. Our results indicate that both liberal- and conservative-leaning students prefer to attend colleges in states and with student bodies that align with their political views. Moreover, in alignment with theories of affective polarization, students strongly prefer to attend colleges with fewer students in the *opposite* political party (as opposed to moderate-leaning students). We estimate that liberal students are willing to pay \$2,617 more to attend a college with a 10 percentage point lower share of conservative students (relative to moderate students), while conservative students are willing to pay \$2,201 to attend a college with a 10 percentage point lower share of liberal

students. In comparison, liberal students are willing to pay up to \$1,162 more to attend a college with a 10pp higher share of liberal students, and we find no statistically significant own-affiliation preference for conservative students. These estimates are relatively consistent across demographic and academic characteristics, suggesting that political identity plays a meaningful role in the college choice process for a wide range of students.

Our work contributes to a nascent literature on the relationships between political views, polarization, and postsecondary education. Most of this work has concentrated on the links between postsecondary education and future political participation and partisanship. For example, Bell et al. (2024) find that colleges can play a role in increasing students' voting rates after college. Chinnoy and Koenen (2024) further document that colleges vary widely in the political affiliations of their alumni, and Firoozi (2025) shows that attending a selective college reduces Republican Party affiliation. Less attention has been paid to the role of political identities at the college entrance stage. One exception is Kane (2025), who finds that high-achieving women reduced applications to colleges located in states with abortion bans following the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022 and that political identity likely played a role in this decline. By examining how college campuses have become more politically polarized over time, and how political views influence enrollment decisions, our paper contributes new evidence on the role of political identity at an earlier and less-studied margin of the college choice process.

It is surprising that, historically, models of college choice have not considered political characteristics of students nor institutions, as a now-voluminous literature documents that a variety of non-academic and non-financial factors can influence students' college decisions. For instance, Simonsohn (2010) finds that incidental factors like weather during a college visit can impact enrollment decisions, while Pope and Pope (2014) show that college sports success significantly increases applications and Jacob, McCall, and Stange (2018) highlight students' preference for consumption amenities like student activities, sports, and dormitories. A number of papers also show that students seek out colleges with similar students or familiar environments. For example, Black, Cortes, and Lincove (2020) find that minority students' application decisions are influenced by the proportion of same-race students on campus and Altmejd et al. (2021) show that younger

siblings often follow the college choices of older siblings. Meanwhile, outside of the U.S., Delavande and Zafar (2019) show that Pakistani students' choice of university is highly sensitive to the perceived alignment between their own ideology and the institution's. We add to this literature by showing that, in an increasingly politically polarized American climate, students also choose colleges based on alignment with their political views.

More broadly, our work is related to a vast literature on identity and sorting in various contexts, such as K-12 school choice and neighborhood choice. This literature has established that homophily —the tendency to associate with others who have similar characteristics —affects many aspects of social life (McPherson, Lynn, and Cook 2001). For example, families choose neighborhoods based on shared race and other traits (Bayer, Ferreira, and McMillan 2007; Aliprantis, Carroll, and Young 2024), and balance academic considerations against other peer characteristics when making K-12 school choices (Hastings, Kane, and Staiger 2006), while students themselves form friendships disproportionately with peers of the same race (Currarini, Jackson, and Pin 2009; Currarini, Jackson, and Pin 2010). A related concept is own-group bias, where individuals favor people of the same group when making decisions, which has been documented in contexts such as hiring decisions (Giuliano, Levine, and Leonard 2009; Giuliano, Levine, and Leonard 2011; Miller and Schmutte 2023; Benson, Board, and Meyer-Ter-Vehn 2024). We estimate both a same-group preference and a preference to avoid the opposing group, relative to a middle ground —in our context, the politically moderate students. Our results show some same-group preference, but document a greater role for affective polarization: students prefer to avoid others of the opposing political conviction more than to associate with those of the same political viewpoint.

Our findings have important implications for trends in educational attainment, income inequality, and polarization. Political views in the United States are increasingly correlated with urban/rural residence and socioeconomic status (Pew Research Center 2024). Thus, sorting across colleges by political views —and particularly, sorting into the most elite and well-resourced colleges, which play an outsized role in developing future societal leaders (Chetty, Deming, and Friedman 2025) —has the potential to exacerbate existing rural/urban (United States Department of Agriculture 2017; Wells et al. 2019) and socioeconomic (Reber and Smith 2023) disparities

in educational attainment and economic mobility. Furthermore, increased polarization of student bodies represents a missed opportunity to foster political dialogue in college. Research has shown that dialogue between people of opposing views can foster political tolerance, increase understanding of the rationale behind opposing viewpoints, and increase agreement on divisive topics (Mutz 2002; Balietti et al. 2021). Because college presents a unique opportunity to form new friendships and social networks, a more politically diverse student body could therefore lead to more productive conversations about political views and policy issues and, potentially, could counteract current trends in political polarization.¹

If colleges seek to ensure that students interact with others with opposing views, our findings imply that they will need to actively work to attract a politically diverse pool of applicants and enrollees. This issue of political diversity on college campuses has surfaced recently in the context of broader discussions over free speech and non-discrimination in higher education. Alan Garber, the current president of Harvard University, commented recently on this phenomenon in an interview with National Public Radio (NPR), stating that “the administration and others have said conservatives are too few on campus and their views are not welcome. In so far as that’s true, that’s a problem we really need to address” (Inskeep, Manuel, and Advani 2025). To address similar concerns, many colleges are now establishing centers and initiatives intended to promote viewpoint diversity (Green 2025); as just one example, the state of Ohio has established “intellectual diversity centers” at five public universities across the state (Henry 2023). And although there is renewed focus on viewpoint diversity today, the concern is not new. In 2006, then-president of Princeton University, Shirley Tilghman, said that “having more students who weren’t the obvious Princeton candidates would be a very good thing for the undergraduate student body, because it would give students more opportunities to encounter students with different world views” (Princeton Alumni Weekly 2006). Our research contributes to this ongoing discussion, suggesting that to attract and maintain representation of diverse viewpoints on campuses, colleges would need to counteract students’ tendency to sort along political lines.

¹While causal evidence on the effects of cross-group exposure in the college context specifically is limited, there are a few studies using identification strategies involving random roommate assignment. For example, Sun (2025) finds that when liberal students are assigned a moderate or conservative roommate, they have more favorable views of conservative students while maintaining their ideology. These results are similar to those found by researchers studying race relations using a similar design: assignment of White students to Black roommates increases White students’ support for affirmative action and increases interactions between White and minority students (Boisjoly et al. 2006).

2 College Students' Political Views, 1982-2019

2.1 HERI Data

We document changes in college students' political views —over time and across colleges —by leveraging individual-level survey responses to The Freshman Survey (TFS), created and administered by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). Since 1966, over 2,000 colleges and universities have fielded TFS to their incoming students, resulting in a rich dataset of over 15 million first-year college students. The survey is designed to be completed by incoming first-year students *before* students begin classes (e.g., at an orientation session) and captures a wide variety of information on their backgrounds, views, and expectations for college. Importantly for our analysis, every year since 1969, TFS has included a question that asks students to characterize their political views on a 5-point scale: far left, liberal, middle-of-the-road, conservative, and far right. In most of our analyses, we collapse the 5-point Likert scale to three categories: liberal or far left, middle-of-the-road, and conservative or far right.

While TFS is, to our knowledge, the only large-scale dataset tracking college students' political views over the past five decades, there are two limitations to it for our analysis. First, TFS only provides information on students' home geographies beginning in 1982. Given the steady rise in partisan sorting along geographic lines since the 1970s (Kaplan, Spenkuch, and Sullivan 2022), we wish to observe and condition our analyses on students' home geographies and, thus, limit our primary analysis sample to the 1982-2019 time period. Second, colleges opt-in to administering TFS to their students and, thus, the sample is not nationally representative. Historically, private and selective colleges have been overrepresented in the sample (Stolzenberg et al. 2020). However, TFS provides survey weights designed to address both within-institution response bias —where female students tend to be more likely to complete the survey than male students —and the non-representative institution sample. Colleges with low internal response rates are given a weight of zero. For example, in the most recent (2019) dataset, colleges where fewer than 65% of first-time, full-time students completed the survey are given a weight of zero. We use these weights throughout our analyses and, where possible, include institution-level fixed effects to compare

within-institution changes in student political views over time, abstracting from changes in which colleges participate in the survey each year.

Table 1 provides summary statistics on our 1982-2019 TFS sample, both overall (column 1) and separately by stated political view (columns 2-4). We restrict the sample to first-time students attending four-year colleges in the U.S., who respond to the political views question, and for which at least 100 students within an institution completed the survey. In total, we observe more than 7 million students from 1,022 unique institutions. In Panel A, we document that approximately 29% of our sample identifies as liberal or far left, 22.4% identify as conservative or far right, and a plurality —48.4% —identify as “middle of the road.”

In Panel B, we report demographic characteristics of our sample, which is overwhelmingly “traditional aged” freshmen between the ages of 17 and 19. Approximately 46.3% of the sample are male and 71% are White. However, both male and White students are overrepresented among conservative students and underrepresented among liberal students. Students come from a variety of religious backgrounds, with 43.6% identifying as Protestant, 29.2% identifying as Catholic, and 2.7% identifying as Jewish. Protestant students are significantly more likely to be conservative, while Catholic students are more likely to identify as “middle of the road,” and Jewish students are more likely to be liberal. Across all political identities, 30-40% of students are first-generation college students (defined as not having a parent with a bachelor’s degree), although “middle of the road” students are more likely to be.

In Panel C, we summarize students’ academic backgrounds and college choice process. Approximately 44% of students in our sample report that they had a high school grade point average (GPA) equivalent to an A, while 49% report a B, and 7.2% report a C. Generally, “middle of the road” students are more likely to indicate they had a B or C average. A majority of students in our sample attend college 50-500 miles from home and nearly two-thirds say the college they attend was their first choice, with conservative students more likely to say so than liberal or moderate students.

Finally, in Panel D, we provide information on the types of colleges attended by students in our sample. The average college attended has a mean SAT score of 1166. Just over one-third of

students attend public research universities, while another 26% attend public regional universities. Within the private sector, 10.9% of students attend private research universities, while 13.2% attend religious colleges, 8.7% attend liberal arts colleges, and 4.1% attend historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Liberal students are overrepresented at research universities (both public and private), liberal arts colleges, and HBCUs, while moderate students are overrepresented at public regional universities and Catholic colleges, and conservative students are overrepresented at non-Catholic religious colleges.

2.2 Student Political Views over Time

We begin by documenting how students' political views have changed, in the aggregate, over time. Panel A of Figure 1 plots the share of students identifying as liberal or far left, middle of the road, and conservative or far right since 1969, using TFS survey weights. Throughout the 1970s, there was a marked decline in the share of students identifying as liberal —with a corresponding rise in the share of students identifying as conservative or middle of the road. The share of students identifying as liberal and conservative converged to approximately 21-22% each in 1982, when our observation of student home geographies begins. Panel B shows that, following this point of convergence, there has been a steady rise in the share of students identifying as liberal, particularly since the early 2000s. However, this increase has not been driven by a decline in the share of students identifying as conservative; rather, fewer students now identify as middle of the road. In 2019, 37.6% of students identify as liberal (compared to 21.9% in 1982), 19.5% identify as conservative (compared to 21.1% in 1982), and 42.9% identify as middle of the road (compared to 56.9% in 1982).

We next show that students' political views have evolved differently across different sets of institutions, concentrating on the 1982-2019 period. First, in Panel A of Figure 2, we show differential trends by institution type. We see that the increase in students identifying as liberal since the early 1980s has largely occurred within liberal arts colleges, HBCUs, and research universities, generating a divide in political viewpoints between these institutions and public regional universities and religious colleges. At the same time, religious colleges —particularly those that are not

Catholic —have grown more conservative.

In Panel B of Figure 2, we split the sample into quintiles based on colleges' median SAT scores to show that political views have evolved differently across the selectivity distribution of American colleges. In particular, the rise in the share of students identifying as liberal has been most pronounced at the most selective (top quintile of median SAT scores), or “elite”, institutions. In 1982, 25% of students at these institutions identified as liberal, whereas 21.3% at institutions in the bottom 80% of the selectivity distribution did so: a difference of only 3.7pp. By 2019, 52.3% of students at the most selective institutions identify as liberal, whereas 34.6% at all other institutions do: a much larger difference of 17.7pp. We also see that the share of students identifying as conservative at the most selective institutions has fallen, particularly since the early 2000s.

The diverging lines in Figure 2 suggest that colleges have become polarized along political lines, where colleges that were, at baseline, more liberal (e.g., liberal arts colleges and selective universities) became more liberal and where colleges that were, at baseline, more conservative (e.g., religious institutions) have become more conservative. We show this fact explicitly in Figure 3 where we separate colleges by the share of their students who identified as liberal in the years 1982-1987 —by quartiles in Panel A and by deciles in Panel B.

In the lefthand figure in Panel A we see a growing gap in the share of students who identify as liberal between the, at baseline, most (top quartile) and least (bottom quartile) liberal colleges in the U.S.. In 1982, 35% of students at the most liberal colleges identified as liberal or far left, while 16.5% of students at the least liberal colleges did: a difference of 18.5 percentage points (pp). By 2019, this difference widened to 30.1pp, an 11.6pp change. Similarly, the difference in the share of students identifying as conservative or far right between the least and most liberal campuses has widened from 8.4pp to 17.9pp. These diverging trends are even more pronounced when we split the sample by deciles of liberal shares at baseline (Panel B), suggesting that the distribution of political views across colleges has widened since the 1980s. We explore this change in the next section.

2.3 Changes in the Distribution of Student Political Views

We now show how the *distribution* of student political views, across colleges, has changed over time. To do so, we collapse the data to the college-level across six time periods: 1982-1987, 1988-1993, 1995-2000, 2001-2006, 2007-2012, and 2013-2019. For each time period, we compute the share of students at each college who identify as liberal or far left, middle of the road, or conservative or far right.

Figure 4 shows, graphically, how the distribution of political views across colleges has changed over time. First, in Panel A, we plot the distribution of the share of students who identify as liberal or far left across the six time periods. We see that, in the 1980s, colleges were relatively homogeneous with regard to the share of their students who identified as liberal. For example, in the 1982-1987 time period, about half of campuses had between 20 and 30% of students identifying as liberal, i.e., the interquartile range (IQR) was 10pp. Over time, however, the distribution has moved to the right —reflecting the general shift towards more students identifying as liberal, as we show in Figure 1 —and, more strikingly, has become much wider. In the most recent time period (2013-2019), about half of campuses had between 22 and 46% of students identifying as liberal, i.e., the IQR grew to 24pp. Panel B shows a similar trend with the share of conservative students, where the IQR has grown from 8.7pp in 1982-1987 to 16.3pp in 2013-2019.

One concern with the figures in Panels A and B is that, due to the fact that different colleges participate in TFS each year, we may be capturing changes in participating institutions, rather than true changes in the distribution of political views across different colleges. We address this concern in Panels C and D, where we limit our sample to a consistent set of 618 institutions (60% of all institutions) that we observe at least once in each time period. The evolution of the distributions look very similar to those in Panels A and B. With the consistent sample, the IQR for the share of students identifying as liberal grew from 12.7pp to 30.4pp between 1982 and 2013, while the IQR for the share of students identifying as conservative grew from 9.4pp to 16.2pp.

Building on Figure 4, we next explicitly show how different parts of the distributions have changed since our baseline time period of 1982-1987. To do so, we follow the approach of Firpo, Fortin, and Lemieux (2009) and use recentered influence functions (RIFs) to estimate uncondi-

tional quantile regressions for different quantiles of interest, where the explanatory variables are indicators for each time period following 1982-1987. We estimate these regressions on our full sample and on the consistent sample of institutions we observe in each time period, allowing us to account for changes in which institutions participated in TFS over time.

Figure 5 presents our results. First, in Panel A, we show how the distribution of liberal students has changed over time. We see that the bottom of the distribution has fallen —reflecting the fact that a small number of colleges have become *less* liberal over time —while the middle of the distribution, such as the 25th and 50th percentiles, has increased, reflecting the general increase in liberal students over time that we document in Figure 1. However, this increase has not been even across different parts of the distribution. It is largest at the top end of the distribution, including the 75th, 90th, and 95th percentiles, particularly in more recent years. Thus, while the median college has gotten somewhat more liberal over the 1982-2019 time period, a substantial share of colleges have become *much* more liberal over time. These results hold whether we consider the full sample or our consistent sample of colleges that regularly participate in TFS.

Panel B presents similar changes in the distribution of conservative students. We see that the median college (50th percentile) has grown no more or less conservative over the 1982-2019 period. However, we see changes in both the bottom, i.e., 1st, 5th and 10th percentiles, and top, i.e., 90th, 95th, and 99th percentiles that reflect a widening of the distribution. Once again, these results hold in both the full and consistent samples.

2.4 Decomposing Changes in the Distribution of Student Political Views

We now estimate linear regression specifications to assess the extent to which the growing difference in political views across different college characteristics, i.e., college type, selectivity, and baseline political views, can be explained by changes in other observable characteristics of students across colleges, such as gender, race, socioeconomic background, religion, and academic preparation. Specifically, we run regressions of the following form:

$$PoliticalView_{ict} = \beta(t - 1982) + \sum_k \theta_k \mathbb{1}[c \in G_k] + \sum_k \lambda_k \mathbb{1}[c \in G_k] * (t - 1982) + X_{ict}\Gamma + u_{ict} \quad (1)$$

where $PoliticalView_{ict}$ is an indicator for the political view of student i who is a college freshman at college c in year t . Our first regressor is a linear year variable, $t - 1982$, capturing the years since the start of our analysis period. Thus, β estimates a linear time trend. We then include a series of indicator variables, $\mathbb{1}[c \in G_k]$ indicating whether college c belongs to a particular group, i.e., a given quantile of the selectivity or baseline political views distribution, and interactions between these indicators and the linear time trend to estimate how political views have trended differently across different types of colleges.

To understand how the diverging trends in political views across colleges can be explained by other changes in the characteristics of students enrolled in these colleges, we iteratively augment our baseline specification with various control variables (X_{ict}). First, we add institution-level fixed effects to compare within-institution changes in student political views over time. Then, given that liberal and conservative students tend to differ in terms of characteristics like race/ethnicity and sex (see Table 1), we add a rich set of student-level demographic controls (race/ethnicity, sex, age, first-generation status, and home state), followed by religion controls (Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish affiliation). Recognizing that the U.S. higher education market has become increasingly stratified by selectivity (Hoxby 2009), we then add academic controls (high school GPA and ACT/SAT score). Finally, because colleges may enroll students from different regional and national markets over time (Hoxby 1997; Long 2004) —and because the United States has become increasingly geographically polarized along political lines (Brown and Enos 2021) —we add in two controls for students’ geographic origins. First, we control for the Democratic vote share in the most recent Presidential election (e.g., 1980 for students entering college in fall 1982) in a student’s home county. Second, we add state-by-year fixed effects, using a student’s home state.²

Table 2 shows how student political views have trended across different types of institutions, mirroring the visual evidence in Figure 2. We omit an indicator for public regional colleges, allowing them to serve as our baseline group, and standardize the coefficients so that they represent changes per decade since 1982. In Panel A, we see that, relative to public regional colleges,

²In the tables that follow, the sample sizes change across specifications because a non-trivial share of survey respondents —approximately 28.2% —do not respond to at least one demographic, religious, academic, or geographic question. However, the probability of doing so is not meaningfully different across liberal (28.6%), middle of the road (28.2%), and conservative (27.7%) respondents and we show in Appendix Tables A.2, A.3, and A.4 that our results are similar if we restrict all specifications to students with non-missing data.

both public and private research universities, liberal arts colleges, and HBCUs have become more liberal over time —even when controlling for changes in the demographic, religious, academic, and geographic composition of these institutions. Specifically, in our most saturated specification in column (7), we see that, relative to regional public colleges, the share of students identifying as liberal or far left has increased by 1.4pp per decade at public research universities, 2pp per decade at private research universities, 2.2pp per decade at HBCUs, and 2.5pp per decade at liberal arts colleges. In contrast, in Panel B, we see relatively little change in the share of students identifying as conservative across different types of colleges —suggesting that the differential trends in liberal students are driven by shifts away from “middle of the road” students.

Table 3 next conducts our analysis by quintiles of selectivity. As shown in Figure 2, selective colleges have grown more liberal and less conservative over time. Specifically, relative to the least selective colleges —our omitted category —the most selective colleges (5th quintile) have seen a 3.4pp increase in liberal students per decade and a corresponding 3.3pp decrease in the share of conservative students, even after accounting for demographic, religion, academic, and geographic control variables. Even relative to somewhat selective colleges (3rd quintile), the most selective colleges have become 2.3pp more liberal and 3.1pp less conservative per decade since 1982.

Finally, Table 4 estimates equation (1) by dividing colleges into quartiles based on their baseline (1982-1987) share of students who identify as liberal or far left. We omit the first quartile, i.e., the least liberal colleges at baseline, as our reference group. Relative to these colleges, the most liberal colleges have seen an increase in the share of students identifying as liberal of 4pp per decade, and a decrease in the share of students identifying as conservative of 3.7pp, even in our most saturated specification. Moreover, the coefficients remain relatively consistent across specifications, indicating that relatively little of the dispersion of political views across colleges that we document in Figures 3, 4, and 5 can be explained by changes in the sorting of students along observable characteristics we can observe.

3 Measuring Preferences for Politically-Aligned Campuses

Our analysis thus far establishes that (a) colleges have diverged in the political views of their student bodies since the 1980s and (b) this divergence cannot be well-explained by traditional control variables such as demographic background, religion, academic preparation, or changes in state politics over time. This growing polarization across colleges raises the question of whether students actively consider a college’s political climate when making enrollment decisions. This is a question that the HERI survey data is not well-suited to answer, nor are commonly used college choice datasets. The HERI data does not include information on application, admission, and enrollment outcomes at individual colleges, making it impossible to separate the role of students’ decisions from colleges’ admission decisions, and other commonly used data sources do not include student or college political views. Thus, to answer this question, we implement a survey experiment that isolates the effect of political leaning from other institutional characteristics, allowing us to directly measure its influence on students’ choices.

We employ a stated-preferences approach that elicits participants’ choice probabilities for hypothetical colleges characterized by a set of attributes, a method that has been used widely in both education applications and more broadly (Blass, Lach, and Manski 2010; Delavande and Manski 2015; Wiswall and Zafar 2018; Folke and Rickne 2022; Koşar, Ransom, and van der Klaaw 2022; Aucejo, French, and Zafar 2023; Ugalde 2024).³ Specifically, we analyze eight attributes: cost of attendance, student body size, institution type (private-religious, private-non-religious, public), quality (measured by average SAT/ACT scores), metropolitan area size, distance from home, state political leaning, and student body political leaning.

To accommodate all of these attributes while keeping the cognitive burden on participants manageable, we present each participant with twelve scenarios, each varying a subset of four or five attributes at a time. Each scenario presents two alternatives: College A and College B. These scenarios are further divided into two blocks of six scenarios, with each block featuring a distinct set of attributes. One block includes cost, size, type, and quality, while the other includes cost,

³The instrument was programmed in Qualtrics and the study was preregistered at <https://aspredicted.org/nk6g-5n68.pdf>. Online Appendix B contains the survey instrument.

distance, city size, and both state and student body political leaning. Cost of attendance appears in all scenarios to facilitate comparisons in monetary terms. We randomize the order in which participants see each block and the order of attributes within a scenario, though the latter remains constant across scenarios for each individual. We then exogenously vary attribute magnitudes to identify participants' preferences. The scenarios are incomplete or not fully specified, meaning that not every characteristic of the colleges is explicitly stated. For example, participants are not provided with information on colleges' consumption amenities (Jacob, McCall, and Stange 2018) or social activities (Aucejo, French, and Zafar 2023). Participants are instructed that colleges differ only in the provided attributes and are otherwise identical. To ensure realism, we draw each attribute's magnitude from its actual distribution among U.S. colleges or students, where relevant.⁴ We sample attributes separately for each participant, and sample each attribute independently of the others. As a result, no two participants face the same set of scenarios.

In each scenario, participants report the probability of choosing one of the two colleges based on the provided attributes.⁵ We elicit probabilities to allow participants to express uncertainty about how they would value options in the context in which real choices are made. Appendix Figure A.1 displays the distribution of elicited probabilities across the 12 scenarios. Although responses tend to be rounded to multiples of 5 or 10, which is common when eliciting probabilistic beliefs, they span the full range of values rather than clustering at extreme values or at the midpoint. This suggests no evidence of excessive rounding. Only 0.78% of participants reported a probability of 100 in every scenario, and 62% reported interior probabilities in all scenarios, highlighting the importance of allowing respondents to express uncertainty.

Eliciting choice probabilities relies on the implicit assumption that participants' stated choices align with their real-world decisions. A growing body of research finds that stated preferences produce estimates comparable to those derived from revealed preference methods, particularly when the scenarios are realistic and personally relevant (Fuster, Kaplan, and Zafar 2021; Fuster and Zafar 2023). In this context, college decisions are highly relevant to participants. Moreover, the

⁴See Online Appendix C for details about each attribute and the scenario-generating process.

⁵The exact wording in the survey was: "Please assume you have been accepted into both colleges, and you must choose to attend one college. Besides the attributes listed above, the colleges are equal in every other way. **Please indicate the percent chance you would attend the below colleges:**"

scenarios were designed using actual distributions of attributes observed in U.S. colleges, ensuring realistic comparisons similar to those students would have faced in their own college choice processes.

3.1 Experimental Sample

Our sample consists of 1,028 undergraduate students in the United States who completed an online survey administered through the Prolific platform.⁶ Participants were screened to ensure current undergraduate status and were paid \$5 for their participation. The average completion time was 17 minutes, and the median was 13 minutes. We conducted an initial test with 30 participants on May 29 to ensure the functioning of the survey instrument. The full survey was then fielded from June 11 to June 18, 2025, remaining open until the target sample size was reached.

Table 5 presents summary statistics for our sample. Columns (1)-(4) contain the full sample, while columns (5)-(8) restrict the sample to traditional college-aged students, ages 18-25. Panel A shows the distribution of political views, measured on the same five-point Likert scale as in the HERI survey, ranging from far left to far right. Overall, 46% of participants identify as liberal or far left, 28% as “middle of the road,” and 26% as conservative or far right. Moreover, approximately 70% report being “somewhat” or “very” interested in politics. However, this proportion varies sharply by political leaning: 80% of liberals and 75% of conservatives report that they are interested in politics, compared to only 47% among moderates.

Panel B reports demographic characteristics. The sample is diverse in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Women account for 57% of participants, while 52% identify as White, approximately 20% as Black, and 10% as Hispanic. 45% of respondents are first-generation college students. The average ACT/SAT score is 27, and the average age is slightly higher than expected at 27 years. While most demographic characteristics are similar across political views, liberal participants tend to be slightly younger. Columns (5)-(8) restrict the sample to participants aged 18 to 25 (60% of the full sample), representing more traditional undergraduate ages. All key patterns remain unchanged in this subsample and the average age (21.2) does not vary meaning-

⁶We preregistered a sample size of 1,030. However, despite our precautions, one participant completed the survey twice. We excluded both responses from the analysis sample, resulting in 1,028 observations.

fully across political views.

Finally, in Panel C, we summarize information on the colleges that students report that they attend. The majority (62.7%) of our sample attends public four-year universities, while an additional 24.5% attend private four-year institutions, 5.1% attend for-profit institutions and 3.7% attend community colleges. The average college attended in our sample has an admissions rate of 71.5% and an average ACT score of 25. Consistent with our analysis of the HERI data, liberal students are overrepresented in private, non-religious institutions (such as liberal arts colleges), while conservative students are overrepresented at religiously-affiliated private institutions.

In Appendix Table A.5, we compare the characteristics of our experimental sample to both the HERI sample and national data on college students from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) and the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS), both of which are provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Our experimental sample skews slightly more female and more Black than the HERI and national samples, and also has a higher average age. However, the percentage of students that identify as first-generation (45.2%) is in line with national estimates (e.g., 44.8% in NPSAS). In Appendix Table A.6, we further compare the distribution of institution types in our experimental sample to data from HERI (2019) and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Overall, the share of students enrolled in public versus private institutions in the experimental sample is similar to HERI and IPEDS. Taken together, these comparisons suggest that, despite some demographic differences, our sample is reasonably aligned with national data in terms of both student characteristics and the types of institutions represented.

3.2 Utility Model and Estimation

To estimate students' preferences from our survey experiment, we first specify a utility model of college choice. Let U_{ijs} denote the utility that student i derives from college $j \in \{A, B\}$ in scenario s . This utility is defined as:

$$U_{ijs} = X'_{ijs}\beta_i + \varepsilon_{ijs} \quad (2)$$

where X_{ijs} is a vector of college attributes. The vector β_i represents student i 's preferences for these attributes. The term ε_{ijs} accounts for uncertainty about additional attributes not specified in the incomplete survey scenarios. Following Blass, Lach, and Manski (2010) and Wiswall and Zafar (2018), ε_{ijs} represents resolvable uncertainty, which is expected to be clarified in an actual choice situation. The key identifying assumption is that $\varepsilon_{iAs}, \varepsilon_{iBs}$ are i.i.d and independent of the experimentally manipulated college attributes X_{iAs}, X_{iBs} . This assumption holds by design, as participants are informed that colleges differ only in the listed attributes and are otherwise identical. We assume ε_{ijs} are i.i.d Type 1 extreme value.

Then, participant i 's reported probability of choosing college j in scenario s is

$$q_{ijs} = Q_{is}[x_{ijs}\beta_i + \varepsilon_{ijs} > x_{iks}\beta_i + \varepsilon_{ik}, \quad k \neq j] \quad (3)$$

where Q_{is} is the continuous subjective distribution on $\{\varepsilon_{is}\}_s$. We assume that participants' subjective beliefs follow an i.i.d. Type I extreme value distribution. Then the choice probabilities can be written as

$$q_{ijs} = \frac{e^{x_{ijs}\beta_i}}{e^{x_{ijs}\beta_i} + e^{x_{iks}\beta_i}}, \quad k \neq j \quad (4)$$

Further applying the log-odds transformation to (4) results in:

$$\ln\left(\frac{q_{ijs}}{q_{iks}}\right) = (x_{ijs} - x_{iks})\beta_i = (x_{ijs} - x_{iks})b + u_{ijs} \quad k \neq j \quad (5)$$

where $\beta_i = b + \eta_i$, $u_{ijs} = (x_{ijs} - x_{iks})\eta_i$.

Participants often round their subjective probabilities to the nearest 5 or 10 percent, but minor rounding of interior probabilities is generally not problematic (Blass, Lach, and Manski 2010). In contrast, rounding near the boundaries [0,100] poses greater challenges due to the sensitivity of the log-odds transformation. Following Blass, Lach, and Manski (2010) and a common assumption in stated-choice analysis, we assume that preferences are symmetrically distributed around a central vector b . This implies that the unobserved components u_{ijs} have a median of zero conditional on

x_{ijs} . Under this assumption:

$$M \left[\ln \left(\frac{q_{ijs}}{q_{iks}} \right) \middle| x_{ijs}, x_{iks} \right] = (x_{ijs} - x_{iks})b \quad (6)$$

and, therefore, b can be consistently estimated using least absolute deviations (LAD).

To ensure the log-odds transformation is defined, we replace probabilities equal to 0 or 100 with values slightly inside the unit interval.⁷ The LAD estimator is robust to this transformation and to the influence of extreme values. We include individual fixed effects to account for baseline differences in choice tendencies across respondents. This allows us to estimate the preferences for attributes from within-individual variation. To aid the economic interpretation, we report willingness-to-pay (WTP) measures, calculated as the negative ratio of each attribute’s preference coefficient to the cost coefficient, yielding values in dollars. We report block bootstrap standard errors based on 500 replications.⁸

3.3 Experimental Results

We begin by estimating median preferences as described in the previous section. We then translate these preferences into willingness-to-pay (WTP) for colleges’ political attributes, focusing on this measure for the remainder of this section due to its ease of interpretation.

Table 6 presents the estimated median preference parameters. In columns (1)-(4), we report results for the full sample, in aggregate and separated by stated political view, and in columns (5)-(8), we restrict the sample to respondents aged 18-25. Across specifications and samples, we see that students prefer colleges that are less expensive, closer to home, and of higher quality (as proxied for by average SAT/ACT scores) —all of which are consistent with prior literature. Students also prefer to attend public or private, non-religious (vs. private, religious) institutions, although this preference is strongest for liberal-identifying students.

Students’ preferences diverge sharply, however, when we consider campus- and state-level political characteristics. Liberal students prefer to attend colleges with a higher share of liberal and

⁷Specifically, we replace 0 with 0.001 and 100 with 99.9.

⁸Each replication resamples participants with replacement and uses their full set of responses across all scenarios to reestimate the model, preserving the original correlation structure. See Blass, Lach, and Manski (2010) and Wiswall and Zafar (2018) for more details.

a lower share of conservative (vs. middle of the road) students. Meanwhile, conservative students prefer to attend institutions with a lower share of liberal students, but do not exhibit a preference for more conservative (vs. middle of the road) students. Liberal students further prefer colleges in states with a higher share of Democratic voters, while conservative students prefer colleges in states with a *lower* share of Democratic voters. Students identifying as moderate or “middle of the road” do not express strong preferences in terms of students’ political leanings, but weakly prefer campuses in states with a higher share of Democratic voters.

To better understand the magnitude of students’ preferences, in Figure 6, we transform the coefficients in Table 6 into willingness-to-pay estimates. Specifically, we report students’ willingness to pay (WTP) for a 10pp increase in the share of liberal students, conservative students, and state Democratic vote share, which we obtain by dividing these coefficients by the cost coefficient and multiplying by \$10,000.⁹ We then present these results by stated political leaning, for the full sample, the aged 18-25 sample, and the sample of students who report they are “somewhat” or “very” interested in politics.

The leftmost panel of Figure 6 presents these WTP estimates for students who identify as liberal or far left. In the full sample, students are willing to pay \$1,162 more to attend a college with a 10pp greater share of students identifying as liberal, \$2,617 more to attend a college with a 10pp *lower* share of students identifying as conservative, and \$3,064 more to attend a college in a state with a 10pp higher share of Democratic voters. The point estimates for the aged 18-25 and interested in politics sub-samples are quite similar and are not statistically different from the full sample.

The middle panel of Figure 6 shows moderate—or “middle of the road”—students’ willingness-to-pay for colleges’ political attributes. Consistent with the results in Table 6, these students are not willing to pay more to attend a college with a higher share of liberal or conservative students; the estimated WTPs for these attributes are negative, but not statistically different than zero for the full sample or either sub-sample. However, they are willing to pay approximately \$956 more to attend a college in a state with a 10pp higher Democratic vote share.

Finally, the rightmost panel of Figure 6 presents the WTP estimates for students who identify

⁹Table A.7 contains WTP estimates for the other college characteristics.

as conservative or far right. In the full sample, students are willing to pay \$2,201 more to attend a college with 10pp *lower* share of liberal students and \$2,720 to attend a college in a state with a 10pp *lower* Democratic vote share. Students are not, however, willing to pay more to attend a college with a higher share of conservative (vs. moderate) students. Similar to the results for liberal and moderate students, these estimates remain stable—and not statistically different from one another—across the full sample and the age- and interest-based sub-samples.

These results indicate that there are modest differences in how conservative and liberal students value the political environments of college campuses: liberal students prefer campuses with more liberal and fewer conservative students, whereas conservative students prefer campuses with fewer liberal students (with no preference for more conservative vs. moderate students). We hypothesize two possible sources for this asymmetry: 1) liberal and conservative students simply value the political mix of their peers differently, or 2) there may be selection into college-going along political lines that we are unable to capture because we are studying current college students, not *potential* college-goers. If the average conservative high school graduate is less likely to attend college than a liberal high school graduate, and if there are heterogeneous preferences for college political alignment within conservative and liberal groups, then the conservative students who do enroll in college will be those that are less concerned with avoiding liberal students. In other words, the conservative students who enroll in college may be selected as those who are more willing to interact with liberal students.

A key takeaway from Figure 6 is that, while liberal and conservative students differ in their preferences for peers with the same political viewpoint, they both prefer to attend colleges with fewer students of opposing viewpoints. This pattern reflects affective polarization: students are not just seeking politically aligned environments, but are also willing to incur financial costs to avoid peers with opposing views. Rather than simply preferring ideological similarity, these choices suggest discomfort toward political difference, an attitude that aligns with broader trends in the U.S., where partisans increasingly view the opposing side in negative, personal terms. The magnitudes of these estimates are large relative to the average college cost participants view in the experiment (approximately \$20,993) and relative to students' preferences for other attributes. For example,

students are willing to pay the same amount to attend a college with 10pp fewer students of the opposite political view as they are to attend a college that is 155 (conservative) or 340 (liberal) more miles away, or has average SAT scores that are 73 (conservative) or 106 (liberal) points higher.

In Figure 7, we further explore students' WTPs to avoid students of the opposite political party by subsetting the data by students' stated political leaning and then by a variety of demographic and academic characteristics. Our results indicate that female (vs. male) and non-first-generation (vs. first-generation) students tend to have a higher willingness to pay to avoid students of the opposite political party. However, our estimates are generally statistically indistinguishable across groups, suggesting that affective polarization in college preferences is broadly shared among students, regardless of demographic or academic background.

4 Conclusion

Political views are an increasingly salient and relevant identity in American life, shaping everything from where to live, whom to spend time with, and what to purchase. We show that political views also now influence one of the most consequential decisions young adults make: where to attend college. Using four decades of survey responses from college freshmen, we document a steady increase in political sorting across American colleges, driven largely by growth in the share of liberal students at already-liberal institutions and, to some extent, the growth in the share of conservative students at already-conservative institutions. Importantly, these trends are not fully explained by simultaneous changes in student demographics, religious affiliations, academic preparation, or geographic origins, suggesting that political views themselves play a role in determining where students enroll.

To better understand the extent to which students actively consider political climates when choosing colleges, we implement a survey experiment with current undergraduate students. We find that both liberal- and conservative-leaning students are willing to pay non-trivial amounts to attend institutions in states and with students that are aligned with their own political views and, particularly, to avoid peers with opposing political views. Depending on their political affiliation,

the median student is willing to pay \$2,201 or \$2,617 to attend a college with a 10pp lower share of students from the opposite political party—an amount that rivals their willingness to pay for other commonly-studied attributes like academic quality and proximity to home.

Together, our findings suggest that college choices in the United States are increasingly shaped not just by academic or financial considerations but by political identity as well. These results have several important implications for both higher education and American society more broadly. First, as students increasingly self-select into politically homogeneous institutions, college campuses may become less politically diverse over time, reducing opportunities for students to engage with differing viewpoints. Second, because political identity is correlated with geographic and demographic characteristics (e.g., race and socioeconomic status), such sorting may also reinforce existing geographic and demographic disparities in educational choices and attainment. Finally, to the extent that students' college experiences shape their long-term political views, civic engagement, and social networks, politically homogeneous colleges may further reinforce and propagate political polarization in the broader population.

Our results do not rule out the possibility that colleges' recruiting or admission decisions could have played a role in the sorting patterns we observe over time. For example, admission requirements such as essays, extracurricular activities, and interviews have the potential to contribute to sorting along political lines. Future research could explore this potential explanation. In addition, future research could explore how political considerations influence students' educational decisions at different stages of the college choice process, including before students apply to colleges. For example, surveying prospective students could reveal whether political viewpoints shape aspirations and application choices, including the decision to apply to college at all. Another important direction for future work is to examine how these preferences change during college and whether campus experiences alter students' willingness to engage with politically mixed environments. It is also worth studying how these preferences interact with perceptions of a college's political attributes, including the role of inaccurate or incomplete information in shaping choices; while our research design provides students with concrete information on the distribution of political views by college, it is ultimately *beliefs* about these distributions that will shape students' choices.

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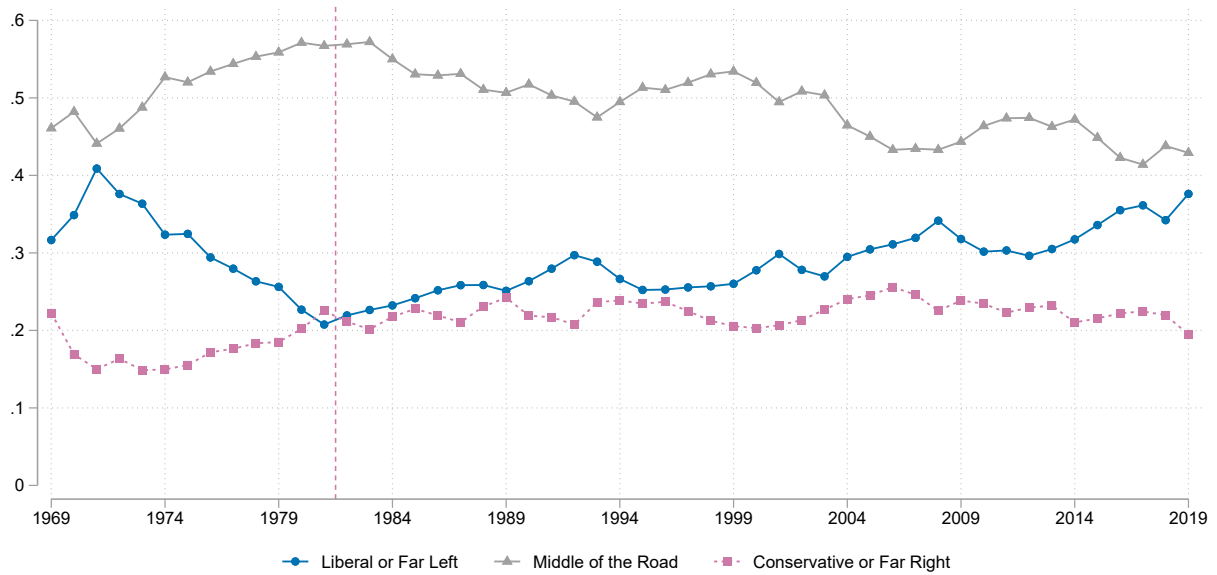
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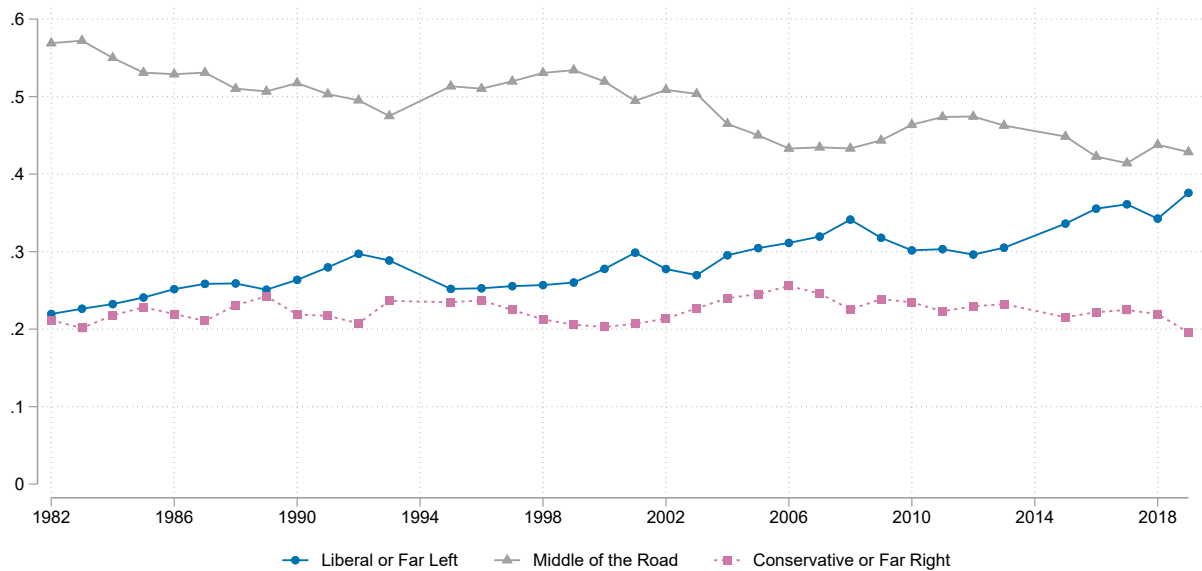
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Figure 1: Student Political Views Over Time

(a) 1969-2019



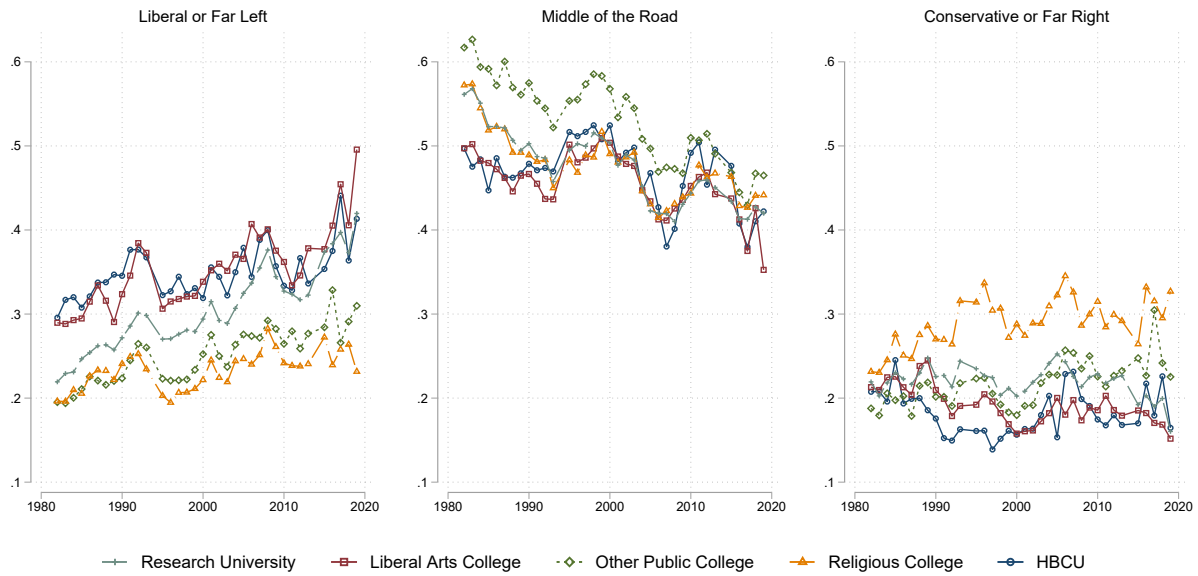
(b) 1982-2019



Notes: This figure plots the share of students who report their political leaning as (1) liberal or far left, (2) middle of the road, or (3) conservative far right in each year of the HERI TFS sample, weighted to be nationally representative.

Figure 2: Student Political Views Over Time, by Type of Institution

(a) By Institution Type



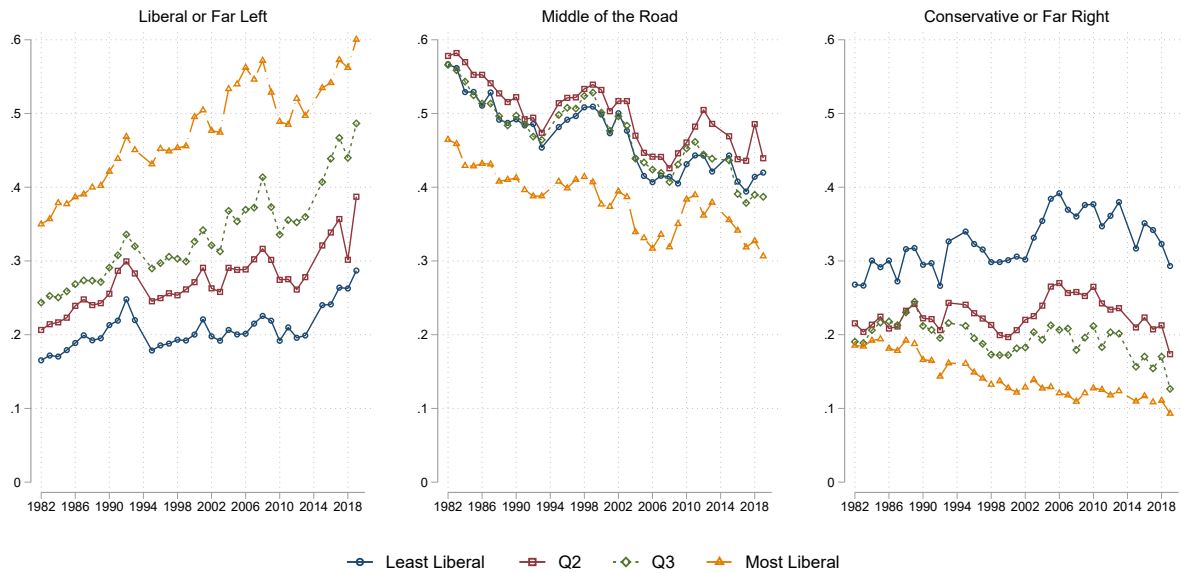
(b) By Baseline Selectivity



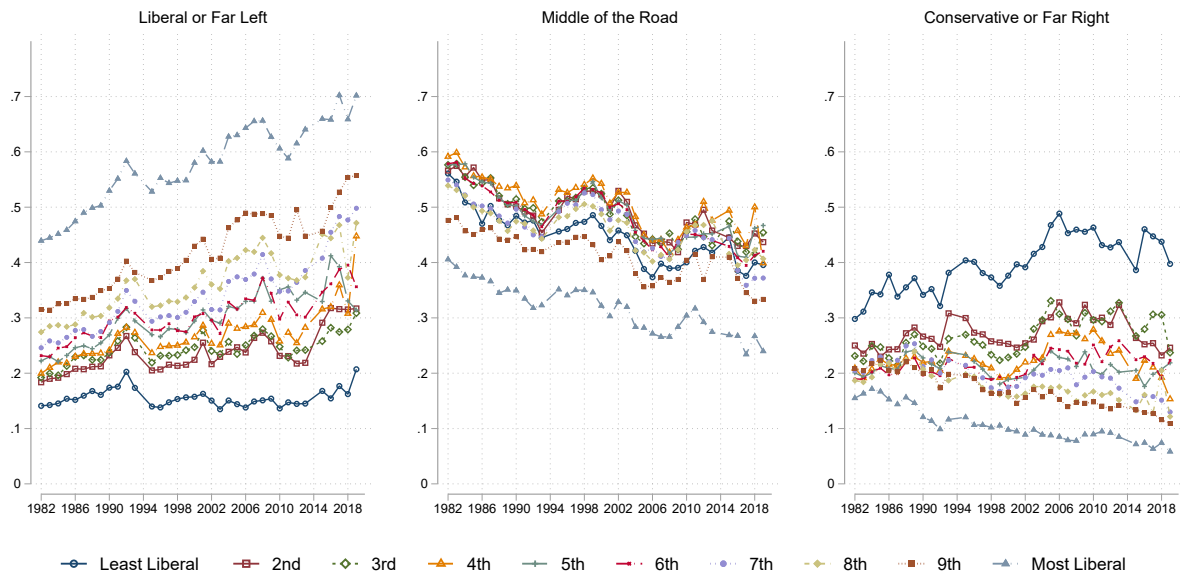
Notes: This figure plots the share of students who report their political leaning as (1) liberal or far left, (2) middle of the road, or (3) conservative far right in each year of the HERI TFS sample, weighted to be nationally representative. Panel (a) divides the sample by institution type, while panel (b) divides the sample by institution selectivity quintile, defined using a college's median SAT/ACT score.

Figure 3: Student Political Views Over Time, by Institution's Baseline Views

(a) By Quartile

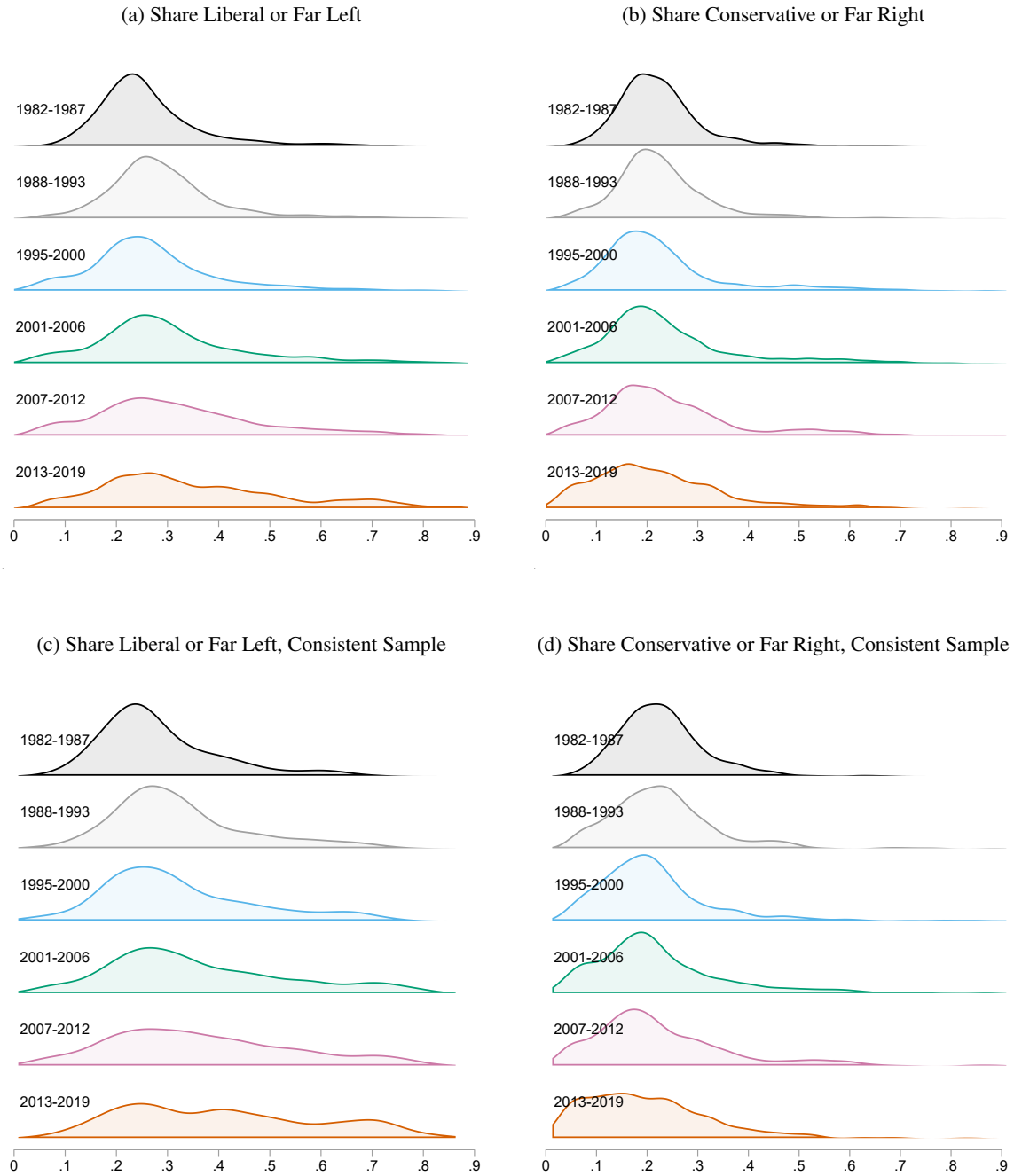


(b) By Decile



Notes: This figure plots the share of students who report their political leaning as (1) liberal or far left, (2) middle of the road, or (3) conservative far right in each year of the HERI TFS sample, weighted to be nationally representative. Both panels divide the sample based on the share of a college's students who identified as liberal or far left in the years 1982-1987. Panel (a) splits the sample by quartiles, while Panel (b) does so by deciles.

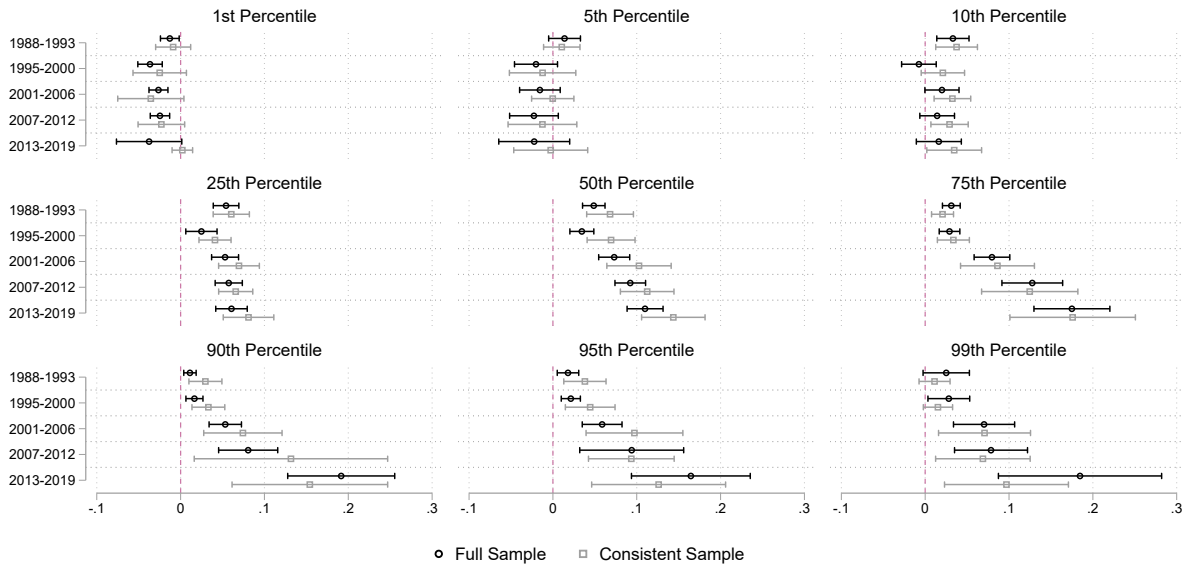
Figure 4: Distribution of Student Political Views Over Time



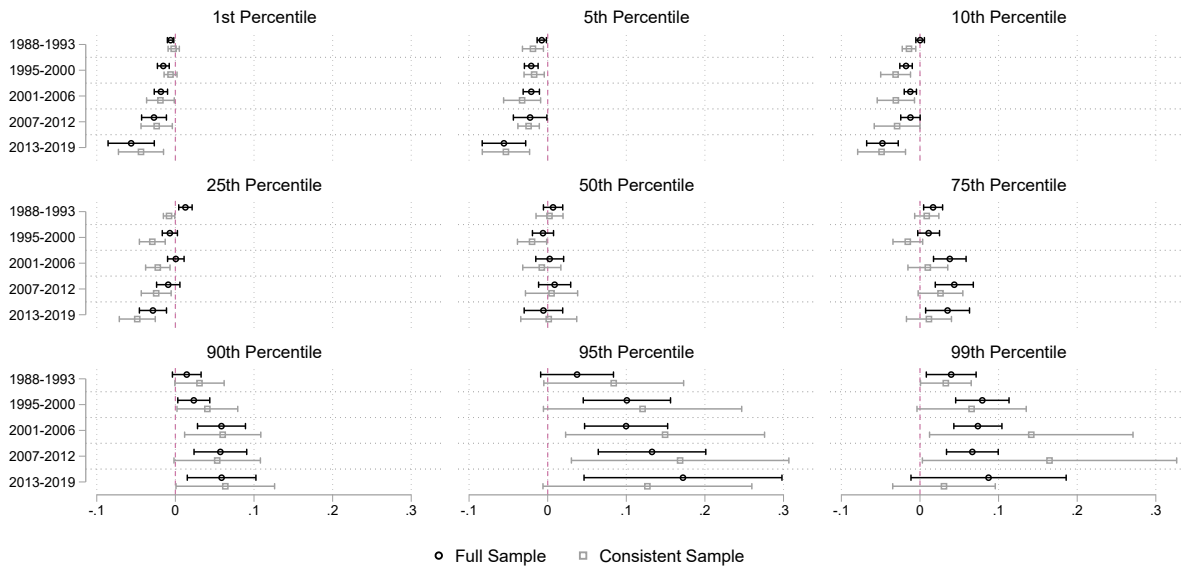
Notes: This figure plots the distribution of political views across colleges, separately in six time periods. Panels (a) and (c) show the share of students at a college who identify as liberal or far left, while panels (b) and (d) show the share of students who identify as conservative or far right. Panels (a) and (b) use the full sample of colleges in the HERI TFS data, while panels (c) and (d) restrict the sample to colleges who administer the survey at least once in each time period.

Figure 5: Changes in Distribution of Student Political Views Over Time

(a) Share Liberal or Far Left

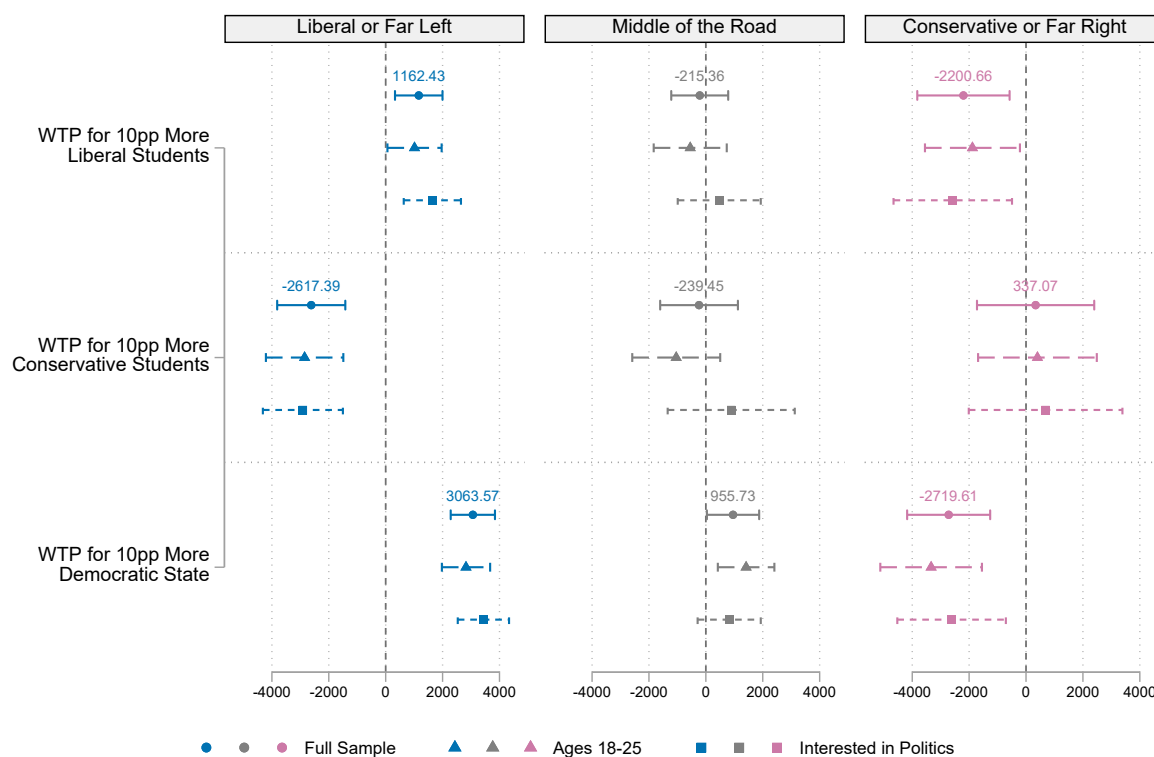


(b) Share Conservative or Far Right



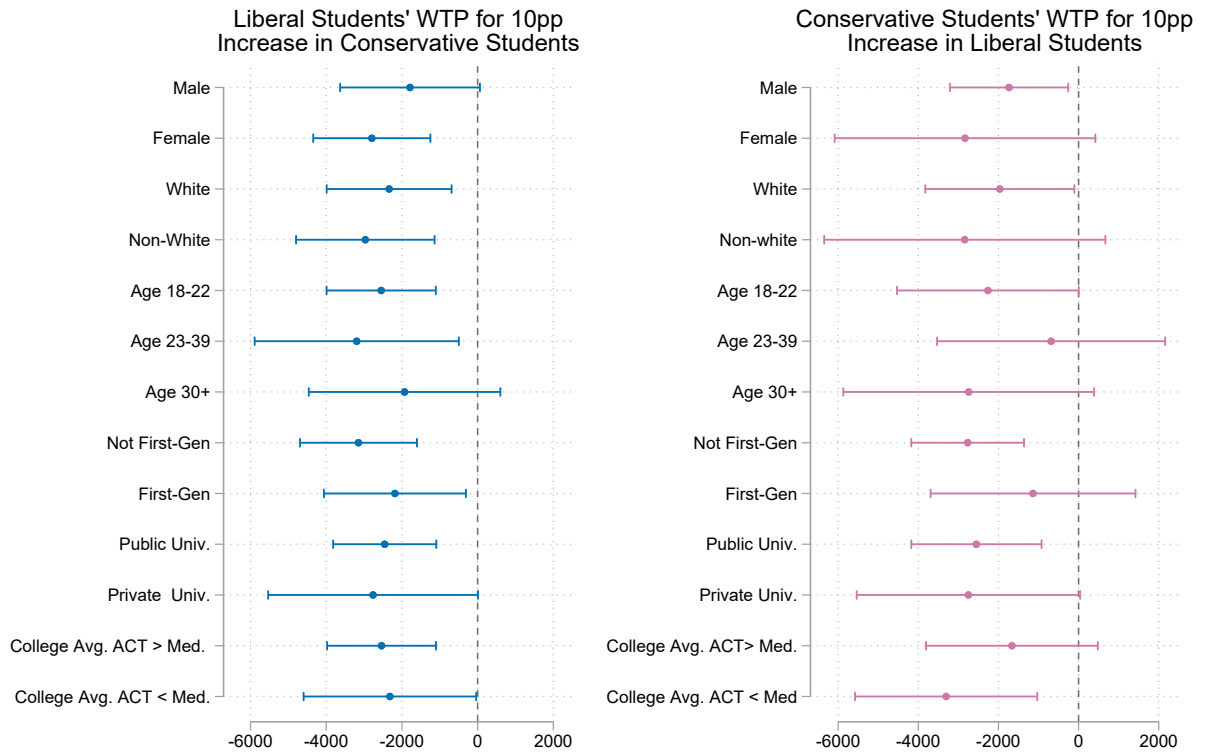
Notes: This figure plots unconditional quantile regression estimates of how different quantiles of the distribution of political views across colleges have changed since the 1982-1987 time period, using both the full sample of colleges in the HERI TFS dataset and restricting the sample to colleges. Whiskers represent 95% confidence intervals based on standard errors clustered at the college level. See Section 2.3 of the text for estimation details.

Figure 6: Willingness to Pay for Colleges' Political Attributes by Political View



Notes: This figure displays willingness-to-pay (WTP) estimates for a 10 percentage point increase in the share of liberal students, conservative students, or state Democratic vote share, by respondents' political views. Estimates are shown for the full sample (circles), students aged 18–25 (triangles), and students who report being “somewhat” or “very” interested in politics (squares). Whiskers represent 95% confidence intervals based on block bootstrapped standard errors with 500 replications.

Figure 7: Willingness to Pay for Opposite Political View Students



Notes: This figure displays willingness-to-pay (WTP) estimates for a 10 percentage point increase in the share of students with the opposing political orientation. The left panel shows liberal students' WTP for a 10 percentage point increase in conservative students, while the right panel shows conservative students' WTP for a 10 percentage point increase in liberal students. Each point represents a subgroup-specific estimate, and whiskers indicate 95% confidence intervals based on block bootstrapped standard errors with 500 replications.

Table 1: Summary Statistics, HERI TFS Analysis Sample

	All (1)	Liberal (2)	Moderate (3)	Conservative (4)
<i>Panel A. Political View</i>				
Liberal or Far Left	0.292	1.000	0.000	0.000
Middle of the Road	0.484	0.000	1.000	0.000
Conservative or Far Right	0.224	0.000	0.000	1.000
<i>Panel B. Demographics</i>				
Age 17-19	0.980	0.981	0.980	0.979
Male	0.463	0.411	0.453	0.551
White	0.710	0.640	0.713	0.796
Black	0.092	0.114	0.091	0.065
Hispanic	0.054	0.072	0.052	0.033
Asian	0.065	0.077	0.069	0.039
Protestant	0.436	0.335	0.435	0.566
Catholic	0.292	0.246	0.320	0.292
Jewish	0.027	0.046	0.022	0.015
First-Generation Student	0.361	0.333	0.400	0.313
<i>Panel C. Academics & College Choice</i>				
H.S. GPA: A	0.437	0.448	0.406	0.492
H.S. GPA: B	0.491	0.483	0.517	0.445
H.S. GPA: C	0.072	0.069	0.077	0.064
College <50 miles from home	0.352	0.337	0.372	0.329
College 50-500 miles from home	0.505	0.494	0.506	0.519
College 500+ miles from home	0.142	0.170	0.122	0.152
College was first choice	0.660	0.604	0.675	0.701
<i>Panel D. College Characteristics</i>				
Selectivity (SAT)	1166	1179	1156	1173
Public Research University	0.366	0.382	0.365	0.348
Private Research University	0.109	0.125	0.097	0.113
Liberal Arts College	0.087	0.107	0.082	0.074
Public Regional University	0.264	0.231	0.287	0.258
Catholic College	0.041	0.036	0.044	0.042
Other Religious College	0.091	0.070	0.085	0.131
HBCU	0.041	0.049	0.040	0.033
Observations	7,013,869	2,138,529	3,278,673	1,596,667

Notes: This table summarizes the HERI TFS sample from 1982 to 2019, with nationally-representative survey weights applied. Column (1) includes the full sample, column (2) restricts the sample to students who report they identify as “liberal or far left,” column (3) to students who report they identify as “middle of the road,” and column (4) to students who report the identify as “conservative or far right.”

Table 2: Change in Freshmen Political Views, by Institution Type

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Panel A. Liberal or Far Left							
Decades * Public Research University	0.012 (0.009)	0.016** (0.006)	0.016** (0.006)	0.014*** (0.005)	0.010* (0.006)	0.008 (0.005)	0.014*** (0.004)
Decades * Private Research University	0.021** (0.009)	0.031*** (0.007)	0.028*** (0.006)	0.026*** (0.006)	0.019*** (0.006)	0.016*** (0.006)	0.020*** (0.005)
Decades * Liberal Arts College	0.011 (0.010)	0.037*** (0.006)	0.037*** (0.006)	0.033*** (0.005)	0.025*** (0.006)	0.022*** (0.005)	0.025*** (0.004)
Decades * HBCU	-0.014 (0.009)	-0.000 (0.008)	0.004 (0.008)	0.020*** (0.008)	0.014* (0.008)	0.011 (0.007)	0.022*** (0.006)
Decades * Catholic College	-0.008 (0.009)	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.005 (0.006)	-0.005 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.004)
Decades * Other Religious College	-0.013 (0.009)	-0.001 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.005)	0.001 (0.005)	-0.002 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.004)	0.006* (0.003)
Decades Since 1982	0.026*** (0.007)	0.017*** (0.005)	0.014*** (0.004)	0.009** (0.004)	-0.002 (0.004)	-0.004 (0.004)	
Observations	7,013,869	7,013,869	5,817,645	5,520,405	4,970,958	4,961,137	4,961,137
Panel B. Conservative or Far Right							
Decades * Public Research University	-0.012 (0.009)	-0.016*** (0.006)	-0.014*** (0.005)	-0.012** (0.005)	-0.014*** (0.006)	0.004 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)
Decades * Private Research University	-0.031*** (0.009)	-0.034*** (0.006)	-0.029*** (0.006)	-0.027*** (0.006)	-0.030*** (0.007)	0.011*** (0.004)	0.007** (0.003)
Decades * Liberal Arts College	-0.029*** (0.009)	-0.039*** (0.005)	-0.036*** (0.004)	-0.032*** (0.004)	-0.029*** (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	-0.000 (0.003)
Decades * HBCU	-0.013 (0.009)	-0.021*** (0.005)	-0.027*** (0.005)	-0.041*** (0.005)	-0.030*** (0.005)	0.017** (0.006)	0.011** (0.005)
Decades * Catholic College	0.006 (0.010)	0.004 (0.006)	0.005 (0.006)	0.004 (0.006)	0.006 (0.007)	0.001 (0.005)	-0.002 (0.004)
Decades * Other Religious College	0.005 (0.010)	-0.008 (0.005)	-0.005 (0.005)	-0.005 (0.004)	-0.004 (0.005)	0.006 (0.004)	0.005* (0.003)
Decades Since 1982	0.013* (0.008)	0.020*** (0.004)	0.022*** (0.003)	0.025*** (0.003)	0.020*** (0.003)	-0.018*** (0.003)	
Observations	7,013,869	7,013,869	5,817,645	5,520,405	4,970,958	4,961,137	4,961,137
Institution FEs		X	X	X	X	X	X
Demographic Controls			X	X	X	X	X
Religion Controls				X	X	X	X
Academic Controls					X	X	X
Home County Vote Share						X	X
State-Year FEs							X

Notes: This table reports regression estimates of equation (1). The dependent variable in Panel A is an indicator for whether a student identifies as liberal or far left, while the dependent variable in Panel B is an indicator for whether a student identifies as conservative or far right. Demographic controls include race/ethnicity, sex, age, first-generation status, and home state. Religion controls include indicators for Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish affiliation. Academic controls include high school GPA and SAT/ACT score. Home county vote share is the Democratic vote share in the last presidential election in a student's home county. State-year fixed effects (FEs) are constructed using a student's home state. All standard errors are clustered at the college level. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3: Change in Freshmen Political Views, by College's Selectivity

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Panel A. Liberal or Far Left							
Decades * 5th Quintile (Most Selective)	0.048*** (0.008)	0.046*** (0.004)	0.049*** (0.005)	0.044*** (0.004)	0.040*** (0.005)	0.036*** (0.004)	0.034*** (0.004)
Decades * 4th Quintile	0.030*** (0.008)	0.026*** (0.006)	0.030*** (0.006)	0.026*** (0.005)	0.025*** (0.005)	0.022*** (0.005)	0.021*** (0.004)
Decades * 3rd Quintile	0.021*** (0.007)	0.012*** (0.005)	0.014*** (0.005)	0.011*** (0.004)	0.010** (0.004)	0.010** (0.004)	0.011*** (0.003)
Decades * 2nd Quintile	0.002 (0.006)	0.001 (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)	0.003 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)	0.002 (0.002)
Decades Since 1982	0.019*** (0.004)	0.016*** (0.002)	0.010*** (0.002)	0.007*** (0.002)	-0.006*** (0.002)	-0.010*** (0.002)	
Observations	7,009,414	7,009,414	5,813,506	5,516,401	4,967,798	4,957,977	4,957,977
Panel B. Conservative or Far Right							
Decades * 5th Quintile (Most Selective)	-0.043*** (0.006)	-0.040*** (0.004)	-0.036*** (0.005)	-0.031*** (0.005)	-0.040*** (0.005)	-0.037*** (0.004)	-0.033*** (0.004)
Decades * 4th Quintile	-0.020*** (0.007)	-0.012** (0.005)	-0.013*** (0.005)	-0.008** (0.004)	-0.014*** (0.005)	-0.012*** (0.004)	-0.011*** (0.003)
Decades * 3rd Quintile	-0.011* (0.007)	-0.002 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.005)	0.003 (0.005)	-0.002 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.005)	-0.002 (0.004)
Decades * 2nd Quintile	0.009* (0.005)	0.005 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	0.005 (0.003)	0.003 (0.004)	0.003 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)
Decades Since 1982	0.014*** (0.004)	0.012*** (0.002)	0.016*** (0.002)	0.017*** (0.002)	0.016*** (0.002)	0.019*** (0.002)	
Observations	7,009,414	7,009,414	5,813,506	5,516,401	4,967,798	4,957,977	4,957,977
Institution FEs		X	X	X	X	X	X
Demographic Controls			X	X	X	X	X
Religion Controls				X	X	X	X
Academic Controls					X	X	X
Home County Vote Share						X	X
State-Year FEs							X

Notes: This table reports regression estimates of equation (1). The dependent variable in Panel A is an indicator for whether a student identifies as liberal or far left, while the dependent variable in Panel B is an indicator for whether a student identifies as conservative or far right. Demographic controls include race/ethnicity, sex, age, and first-generation status. Religion controls include indicators for Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish affiliation. Academic controls include high school GPA and SAT/ACT score. Home county vote share is the Democratic vote share in the last presidential election in a student's home county. State-year fixed effects (FEs) are constructed using a student's home state. All standard errors are clustered at the college level. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 4: Change in Freshmen Political Views, by College's Baseline Liberal Share

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Panel A. Liberal or Far Left							
Decades * 4th Quartile (Most Liberal)	0.045*** (0.008)	0.049*** (0.005)	0.052*** (0.005)	0.047*** (0.005)	0.047*** (0.005)	0.043*** (0.005)	0.040*** (0.004)
Decades * 3rd Quartile	0.036*** (0.007)	0.032*** (0.006)	0.033*** (0.006)	0.025*** (0.005)	0.026*** (0.006)	0.022*** (0.005)	0.019*** (0.004)
Decades * 2nd Quartile	0.021*** (0.006)	0.019*** (0.005)	0.019*** (0.005)	0.016*** (0.004)	0.015*** (0.004)	0.012*** (0.004)	0.011*** (0.004)
Decades Since 1982	0.011*** (0.004)	0.010*** (0.003)	0.005* (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	-0.014*** (0.003)	-0.017*** (0.003)	
Observations	4,862,802	4,862,802	4,046,280	3,845,354	3,306,942	3,301,845	3,301,845
Panel B. Conservative or Far Right							
Decades * 4th Quartile (Most Liberal)	-0.049*** (0.007)	-0.047*** (0.005)	-0.048*** (0.005)	-0.046*** (0.005)	-0.046*** (0.006)	-0.043*** (0.005)	-0.037*** (0.005)
Decades * 3rd Quartile	-0.036*** (0.008)	-0.030*** (0.007)	-0.031*** (0.006)	-0.027*** (0.006)	-0.031*** (0.007)	-0.028*** (0.007)	-0.023*** (0.005)
Decades * 2nd Quartile	-0.018** (0.007)	-0.015** (0.006)	-0.017*** (0.006)	-0.016*** (0.005)	-0.019*** (0.007)	-0.017*** (0.006)	-0.014** (0.006)
Decades Since 1982	0.026*** (0.006)	0.023*** (0.005)	0.028*** (0.004)	0.030*** (0.004)	0.028*** (0.005)	0.031*** (0.005)	
Observations	4,862,802	4,862,802	4,046,280	3,845,354	3,306,942	3,301,845	3,301,845
Institution FEs		X	X	X	X	X	X
Demographic Controls			X	X	X	X	X
Religion Controls				X	X	X	X
Academic Controls					X	X	X
Home County Vote Share						X	X
State-Year FEs							X

Notes: This table reports regression estimates of equation (1). The dependent variable in Panel A is an indicator for whether a student identifies as liberal or far left, while the dependent variable in Panel B is an indicator for whether a student identifies as conservative or far right. Demographic controls include race/ethnicity, sex, age, and first-generation status. Religion controls include indicators for Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish affiliation. Academic controls include high school GPA and SAT/ACT score. Home county vote share is the Democratic vote share in the last presidential election in a student's home county. State-year fixed effects (FEs) are constructed using a student's home state. All standard errors are clustered at the college level. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 5: Prolific Summary Statistics

	Full Sample				Ages 18-25			
	All (1)	Liberal (2)	Moderate (3)	Conservative (4)	All (5)	Liberal (6)	Moderate (7)	Conservative (8)
Panel A: Political View								
Liberal or Far Left	0.463	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.496	1.000	0.000	0.000
Middle of the Road	0.275	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.239	0.000	1.000	0.000
Consevative or Far Right	0.262	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.265	0.000	0.000	1.000
Interested in Politics	0.696	0.798	0.466	0.755	0.708	0.813	0.472	0.726
Panel B: Demographics								
Male	0.392	0.338	0.424	0.454	0.376	0.330	0.430	0.414
Female	0.574	0.607	0.555	0.535	0.592	0.622	0.542	0.580
Other Gender	0.034	0.055	0.021	0.011	0.032	0.048	0.028	0.006
White	0.519	0.485	0.481	0.621	0.476	0.446	0.401	0.599
Black	0.200	0.214	0.177	0.201	0.216	0.218	0.218	0.210
Asian	0.089	0.122	0.074	0.048	0.120	0.163	0.085	0.070
Hispanic	0.098	0.097	0.127	0.071	0.096	0.088	0.148	0.064
Other Race	0.092	0.082	0.141	0.059	0.093	0.085	0.148	0.057
Age	27.48	26.11	29.09	28.24	21.24	21.31	21.33	21.02
Freshman	0.152	0.122	0.198	0.156	0.165	0.133	0.225	0.172
Sophomore	0.250	0.242	0.247	0.268	0.241	0.228	0.254	0.255
Junior	0.265	0.265	0.254	0.275	0.275	0.299	0.218	0.280
Senior	0.268	0.311	0.223	0.242	0.277	0.299	0.254	0.255
Grad Student/Other	0.031	0.021	0.053	0.026	0.022	0.017	0.042	0.013
First-Gen	0.452	0.451	0.511	0.390	0.346	0.354	0.362	0.318
ACT/SAT Score	27.44	27.55	27.01	27.67	27.39	27.67	26.91	27.27
Panel C: College Characteristics								
Community College	0.037	0.032	0.053	0.030	0.019	0.014	0.035	0.013
For-Profit	0.051	0.038	0.064	0.059	0.022	0.017	0.028	0.025
Public Research University	0.344	0.366	0.318	0.335	0.42	0.429	0.423	0.401
Other Public University	0.283	0.288	0.286	0.271	0.261	0.269	0.225	0.28
Private Research University	0.064	0.063	0.049	0.082	0.088	0.099	0.063	0.089
Other Private - Religious	0.072	0.048	0.088	0.097	0.076	0.051	0.113	0.089
Other Private - Nonreligious	0.109	0.124	0.106	0.086	0.091	0.099	0.099	0.07
Missing College	0.04	0.042	0.035	0.041	0.024	0.024	0.014	0.032
College Admit Rate	0.715	0.700	0.739	0.717	0.667	0.637	0.701	0.691
College Average ACT	25.31	25.47	24.92	25.37	25.92	26.08	25.77	25.71
# of Students	1,028	476	283	269	593	294	142	157

Notes: This table summarizes the experimental sample, both overall and restricted to participants aged 18-25. We split the sample based on participants' self-reported current political leaning on a 5-point Likert scale: columns (2) and (5) include participants who identify as liberal or far left, columns (3) and (7) include those who identify as "middle of the road", and columns (4) and (8) include those who identify as conservative or far right.

Table 6: Least Absolute Difference Estimates by Political View

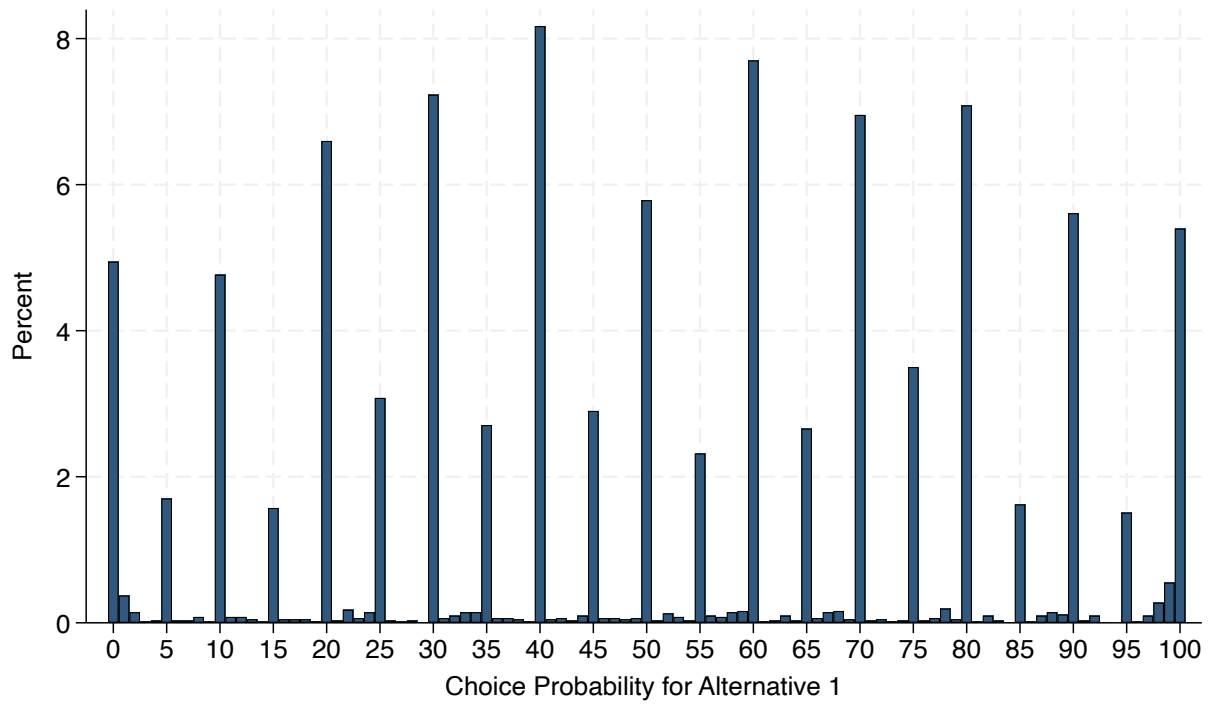
	Full Sample				Ages 18-25			
	All (1)	Liberal (2)	Moderate (3)	Conservative (4)	All (5)	Liberal (6)	Moderate (7)	Conservative (8)
% Liberal Students (out of 100)	0.000 (0.003)	0.014*** (0.005)	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.018*** (0.006)	-0.001 (0.005)	0.010* (0.006)	-0.008 (0.010)	-0.013** (0.007)
% Conservative Students (out of 100)	-0.014*** (0.005)	-0.031*** (0.007)	-0.003 (0.009)	0.003 (0.008)	-0.017*** (0.006)	-0.033*** (0.008)	-0.010 (0.011)	0.006 (0.010)
State Democratic Vote Share (out of 100)	0.014*** (0.003)	0.036*** (0.004)	0.012** (0.005)	-0.022*** (0.006)	0.013*** (0.004)	0.032*** (0.005)	0.017*** (0.007)	-0.026*** (0.007)
Cost (in \$1000s)	-0.110*** (0.005)	-0.117*** (0.007)	-0.124*** (0.010)	-0.082*** (0.009)	-0.115*** (0.007)	-0.123*** (0.010)	-0.132*** (0.014)	-0.078*** (0.010)
Distance (in 100s of miles)	-0.104*** (0.008)	-0.090*** (0.009)	-0.119*** (0.014)	-0.116*** (0.015)	-0.086*** (0.008)	-0.073*** (0.011)	-0.110*** (0.019)	-0.096*** (0.015)
Average SAT score (in 100s of points)	0.281*** (0.033)	0.290*** (0.054)	0.301*** (0.059)	0.246*** (0.052)	0.282*** (0.042)	0.289*** (0.073)	0.354*** (0.080)	0.200*** (0.048)
Public	1.895*** (0.125)	3.227*** (0.231)	1.068*** (0.168)	0.465** (0.183)	1.882*** (0.160)	2.944*** (0.258)	1.268*** (0.236)	0.553*** (0.190)
Private Non-Religious	1.544*** (0.126)	2.676*** (0.215)	0.818*** (0.190)	0.354** (0.167)	1.563*** (0.150)	2.358*** (0.239)	1.277*** (0.239)	0.455*** (0.149)
Number of Students (in 1000s)	0.005 (0.004)	0.015** (0.007)	-0.007 (0.007)	-0.001 (0.006)	0.015*** (0.005)	0.015* (0.008)	0.016* (0.009)	0.012 (0.008)
Large Metro	-0.174** (0.079)	0.005 (0.124)	-0.158 (0.156)	-0.379*** (0.137)	-0.184 (0.113)	0.012 (0.154)	-0.211 (0.183)	-0.354** (0.169)
Medium Metro	-0.080 (0.078)	0.159 (0.106)	-0.099 (0.149)	-0.292* (0.160)	0.013 (0.097)	0.221* (0.120)	-0.014 (0.215)	-0.137 (0.182)
Observations	12,348	5,712	3,396	3,240	7,116	3,528	1,704	1,884

Notes: This table reports least absolute deviation (LAD) regression estimates of equation (6). Columns (1)-(4) use the full sample, while columns (5)-(8) restrict the sample to participants aged 18-25. For each sample, we further stratify by participants' self-reported current political leaning on a 5-point Likert scale: columns (2) and (5) include participants who identify as liberal or far left, columns (3) and (7) include those who identify as "middle of the road", and columns (4) and (8) include those who identify as conservative or far right. Block bootstrapped standard errors with 500 replications are shown in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Online Appendix

A Additional Figures & Tables

Figure A.1: Elicited Choice Probabilities for Alternative 1



Notes: Histograms of choice probabilities for alternative one across all scenarios.

Table A.1: Summary Statistics, HERI TFS Samples

	Full Sample (1969-2019)			Analysis Sample (1982-2019)		
	All (1)	Non-Zero Weight (2)	Weighted (3)	All (4)	Non-Zero Weight (5)	Weighted (6)
Panel A. College Characteristics						
Selectivity (SAT)	1215	1223	1167	1214	1224	1166
Public Research University	0.320	0.313	0.374	0.304	0.304	0.366
Private Research University	0.177	0.182	0.111	0.173	0.180	0.109
Liberal Arts College	0.137	0.143	0.085	0.141	0.146	0.087
Public Regional University	0.159	0.145	0.262	0.167	0.147	0.264
Catholic College	0.062	0.067	0.040	0.067	0.072	0.041
Other Religious College	0.115	0.124	0.088	0.122	0.129	0.091
HBCU	0.030	0.026	0.040	0.026	0.022	0.041
Panel B. Demographics						
Male	0.459	0.463	0.474	0.446	0.450	0.463
White	0.769	0.776	0.749	0.742	0.750	0.710
Black	0.076	0.071	0.089	0.072	0.068	0.092
Hispanic	0.038	0.036	0.044	0.045	0.043	0.054
Asian	0.058	0.058	0.052	0.070	0.070	0.065
Age 17-19	0.982	0.983	0.978	0.983	0.985	0.980
Protestant	0.423	0.419	0.443	0.420	0.412	0.436
Catholic	0.306	0.310	0.293	0.306	0.312	0.292
Jewish	0.040	0.040	0.031	0.035	0.036	0.027
First-Generation Student	0.364	0.352	0.407	0.324	0.313	0.361
Panel C. Academics & College Choice						
H.S. GPA: A	0.439	0.449	0.393	0.480	0.489	0.437
H.S. GPA: B	0.490	0.485	0.518	0.464	0.459	0.491
H.S. GPA: C	0.070	0.066	0.089	0.056	0.052	0.072
College <50 miles from home	0.319	0.305	0.357	0.310	0.301	0.352
College 50-500 miles from home	0.516	0.522	0.508	0.517	0.520	0.505
College 500+ miles from home	0.166	0.173	0.135	0.173	0.179	0.142
College was first choice	0.696	0.696	0.675	0.683	0.683	0.660
Panel D. Political Views						
Liberal or Far Left	0.308	0.309	0.296	0.303	0.305	0.292
Middle of the Road	0.476	0.474	0.491	0.470	0.467	0.484
Conservative or Far Right	0.216	0.218	0.213	0.227	0.228	0.224
# of Institutions	1,261	1,117	1,117	1,197	1,022	1,022
# of Students	12,209,351	9,390,399	9,390,399	8,975,241	7,013,869	7,013,869

Notes: This table summarizes the HERI TFS sample, both for the full time period available (1969-2019) and our analysis sample (1982-2019). Columns (1) and (4) present the unweighted means, columns (2) and (5) restrict the sample to observations with non-zero weights, and columns (4) and (6) apply the nationally-representative weights.

Table A.2: Change in Freshmen Political Views, by Institution Type, Constant Sample

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Panel A. Liberal or Far Left							
Decades * Public Research University	0.012 (0.011)	0.011 (0.007)	0.013* (0.007)	0.013* (0.007)	0.010* (0.006)	0.009 (0.006)	0.014*** (0.004)
Decades * Private Research University	0.014 (0.011)	0.026*** (0.008)	0.026*** (0.008)	0.025*** (0.007)	0.018*** (0.006)	0.016** (0.006)	0.018*** (0.005)
Decades * Liberal Arts College	0.006 (0.012)	0.030*** (0.007)	0.031*** (0.007)	0.027*** (0.006)	0.025*** (0.006)	0.023*** (0.005)	0.025*** (0.004)
Decades * HBCU	-0.021** (0.011)	-0.010 (0.008)	-0.003 (0.008)	0.013 (0.008)	0.014* (0.008)	0.011 (0.008)	0.020*** (0.007)
Decades * Catholic College	-0.009 (0.011)	-0.008 (0.007)	-0.008 (0.007)	-0.008 (0.007)	-0.008 (0.006)	-0.008 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.004)
Decades * Other Religious College	-0.013 (0.011)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.005)	-0.002 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.005)	0.005 (0.003)
Decades Since 1982	0.026*** (0.009)	0.018*** (0.005)	0.012** (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)	-0.003 (0.004)	-0.007 (0.004)	
Observations	4,961,137	4,961,137	4,961,137	4,961,137	4,961,137	4,961,137	4,961,137
Panel B. Conservative or Far Right							
Decades * Public Research University	-0.016 (0.011)	-0.013** (0.007)	-0.013** (0.006)	-0.012** (0.006)	-0.013** (0.006)	0.003 (0.004)	0.000 (0.003)
Decades * Private Research University	-0.027** (0.011)	-0.029*** (0.008)	-0.026*** (0.007)	-0.025*** (0.007)	-0.026*** (0.007)	0.009** (0.004)	0.007** (0.003)
Decades * Liberal Arts College	-0.026*** (0.010)	-0.030*** (0.005)	-0.029*** (0.005)	-0.026*** (0.005)	-0.026*** (0.005)	0.001 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.003)
Decades * HBCU	-0.010 (0.011)	-0.012** (0.006)	-0.018*** (0.005)	-0.030*** (0.005)	-0.028*** (0.005)	0.015** (0.007)	0.012** (0.006)
Decades * Catholic College	0.004 (0.012)	0.008 (0.008)	0.010 (0.007)	0.008 (0.007)	0.009 (0.007)	-0.001 (0.005)	-0.002 (0.004)
Decades * Other Religious College	0.000 (0.012)	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.002 (0.005)	-0.003 (0.005)	-0.002 (0.005)	0.003 (0.004)	0.005 (0.003)
Decades Since 1982	0.015 (0.009)	0.017*** (0.004)	0.020*** (0.004)	0.023*** (0.004)	0.017*** (0.004)	-0.013*** (0.003)	
Observations	4,961,137	4,961,137	4,961,137	4,961,137	4,961,137	4,961,137	4,961,137
Institution FEs		X	X	X	X	X	X
Demographic Controls			X	X	X	X	X
Religion Controls				X	X	X	X
Academic Controls					X	X	X
Home County Vote Share						X	X
State-Year FEs							X

Notes: This table reports regression estimates of equation (1), restricting the sample to students with non-missing demographic, religion, and academic information. The dependent variable in Panel A is an indicator for whether a student identifies as liberal or far left, while the dependent variable in Panel B is an indicator for whether a student identifies as conservative or far right. Demographic controls include race/ethnicity, sex, age, first-generation status, and home state. Religion controls include indicators for Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish affiliation. Academic controls include high school GPA and SAT/ACT score. Home county vote share is the Democratic vote share in the last presidential election in a student's home county. State-year fixed effects (FEs) are constructed using a student's home state. All standard errors are clustered at the college level. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.3: Change in Freshmen Political Views, by College's Selectivity, Constant Sample

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Panel A. Liberal or Far Left							
Decades * 5th Quintile (Most Selective)	0.053*** (0.009)	0.050*** (0.005)	0.051*** (0.005)	0.049*** (0.005)	0.039*** (0.005)	0.036*** (0.005)	0.034*** (0.004)
Decades * 4th Quintile	0.034*** (0.010)	0.033*** (0.007)	0.035*** (0.007)	0.031*** (0.006)	0.026*** (0.006)	0.024*** (0.005)	0.022*** (0.004)
Decades * 3rd Quintile	0.026*** (0.009)	0.012** (0.005)	0.014** (0.005)	0.013*** (0.005)	0.010** (0.005)	0.010** (0.004)	0.010*** (0.004)
Decades * 2nd Quintile	0.000 (0.008)	-0.001 (0.004)	0.000 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)	0.003 (0.003)	0.002 (0.003)
Decades Since 1982	0.015** (0.006)	0.009*** (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.008*** (0.003)	-0.012*** (0.003)	
Observations	4,957,977	4,957,977	4,957,977	4,957,977	4,957,977	4,957,977	4,957,977
Panel B. Conservative or Far Right							
Decades * 5th Quintile (Most Selective)	-0.043*** (0.007)	-0.041*** (0.005)	-0.039*** (0.005)	-0.036*** (0.005)	-0.039*** (0.005)	-0.036*** (0.005)	-0.031*** (0.004)
Decades * 4th Quintile	-0.018** (0.009)	-0.014** (0.006)	-0.015*** (0.005)	-0.012** (0.005)	-0.014*** (0.005)	-0.012*** (0.005)	-0.011*** (0.003)
Decades * 3rd Quintile	-0.016** (0.008)	-0.000 (0.006)	-0.000 (0.006)	0.001 (0.006)	-0.000 (0.005)	-0.000 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.004)
Decades * 2nd Quintile	0.013** (0.006)	0.006 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)	0.001 (0.004)	0.000 (0.003)
Decades Since 1982	0.015*** (0.005)	0.014*** (0.002)	0.018*** (0.002)	0.019*** (0.002)	0.014*** (0.002)	0.017*** (0.002)	
Observations	4,957,977	4,957,977	4,957,977	4,957,977	4,957,977	4,957,977	4,957,977
Institution FEs		X	X	X	X	X	X
Demographic Controls			X	X	X	X	X
Religion Controls				X	X	X	X
Academic Controls					X	X	X
Home County Vote Share						X	X
State-Year FEs							X

Notes: This table reports regression estimates of equation (1), restricting the sample to students with non-missing demographic, religion, and academic information. The dependent variable in Panel A is an indicator for whether a student identifies as liberal or far left, while the dependent variable in Panel B is an indicator for whether a student identifies as conservative or far right. Demographic controls include race/ethnicity, sex, age, first-generation status, and home state. Religion controls include indicators for Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish affiliation. Academic controls include high school GPA and SAT/ACT score. Home county vote share is the Democratic vote share in the last presidential election in a student's home county. State-year fixed effects (FEs) are constructed using a student's home state. All standard errors are clustered at the college level. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.4: Change in Freshmen Political Views, by College's Baseline Liberal Share, Constant Sample

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6) (7)	
Panel A. Liberal or Far Left							
Decades * 4th Quartile (Most Liberal)	0.048*** (0.009)	0.053*** (0.006)	0.056*** (0.006)	0.049*** (0.005)	0.046*** (0.005)	0.042*** (0.005)	0.039*** (0.004)
Decades * 3rd Quartile	0.039*** (0.008)	0.034*** (0.007)	0.036*** (0.007)	0.029*** (0.007)	0.026*** (0.006)	0.023*** (0.006)	0.019*** (0.004)
Decades * 2nd Quartile	0.024*** (0.008)	0.021*** (0.006)	0.022*** (0.006)	0.017*** (0.005)	0.015*** (0.005)	0.012*** (0.004)	0.011*** (0.004)
Decades Since 1982	0.004 (0.005)	0.003 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.004)	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.018*** (0.003)	
Observations	3,301,845	3,301,845	3,301,845	3,301,845	3,301,845	3,301,845	3,301,845
Panel B. Conservative or Far Right							
Decades * 4th Quartile (Most Liberal)	-0.049*** (0.008)	-0.050*** (0.007)	-0.049*** (0.006)	-0.045*** (0.006)	-0.045*** (0.006)	-0.042*** (0.005)	-0.036*** (0.005)
Decades * 3rd Quartile	-0.039*** (0.009)	-0.034*** (0.008)	-0.033*** (0.007)	-0.030*** (0.007)	-0.030*** (0.007)	-0.028*** (0.007)	-0.023*** (0.006)
Decades * 2nd Quartile	-0.019** (0.009)	-0.019** (0.008)	-0.019*** (0.007)	-0.017** (0.007)	-0.019*** (0.007)	-0.017** (0.007)	-0.013** (0.006)
Decades Since 1982	0.028*** (0.007)	0.027*** (0.006)	0.031*** (0.005)	0.032*** (0.005)	0.027*** (0.005)	0.029*** (0.005)	
Observations	3,301,845	3,301,845	3,301,845	3,301,845	3,301,845	3,301,845	3,301,845
Institution FEs		X	X	X	X	X	X
Demographic Controls			X	X	X	X	X
Religion Controls				X	X	X	X
Academic Controls					X	X	X
Home County Vote Share						X	X
State-Year FEs							X

Notes: This table reports regression estimates of equation (1), restricting the sample to students with non-missing demographic, religion, and academic information. The dependent variable in Panel A is an indicator for whether a student identifies as liberal or far left, while the dependent variable in Panel B is an indicator for whether a student identifies as conservative or far right. Demographic controls include race/ethnicity, sex, age, first-generation status, and home state. Religion controls include indicators for Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish affiliation. Academic controls include high school GPA and SAT/ACT score. Home county vote share is the Democratic vote share in the last presidential election in a student's home county. State-year fixed effects (FEs) are constructed using a student's home state. All standard errors are clustered at the college level. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.5: Experimental Sample Demographics Comparison

	HERI (2019) (1)	Prolific All (2)	Prolific Freshmen (3)	NPSAS (2020) (4)	BPS (2012/2017) (5)
Male	0.450	0.392	0.346	0.426	0.434
Female	0.550	0.574	0.615	0.560	0.566
White	0.490	0.519	0.474	0.518	0.624
Black	0.087	0.200	0.276	0.117	0.125
Asian	0.148	0.089	0.077	0.099	0.070
Hispanic	0.103	0.098	0.096	0.171	0.131
Other Race	0.172	0.092	0.077	0.095	0.051
Age	18.52	27.48	26.462	23.70	18.90
Freshman	1.000	0.152	1.000	0.182	1.000
Sophomore	0.000	0.250	0.000	0.188	0.000
Junior	0.000	0.265	0.000	0.224	0.000
Senior	0.000	0.268	0.000	0.396	0.000
First-Gen	0.305	0.452	0.487	0.448	0.425
Average ACT/SAT Score	26.17	27.44	26.770	23.30	23.30
Liberal or Far Left	0.376	0.463	0.372		
Middle of the Road	0.429	0.275	0.359		
Consevative or Far Right	0.195	0.262	0.269		

Notes: This table summarizes our HERI and Prolific samples and compares them to national estimates of the composition of college students. Column (4) is taken from the 2020 survey of the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS). Column (5) is taken from the 2012/2017 cohort of the Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS). Both columns (4) and (5) are restricted to students pursuing a bachelor's degree.

Table A.6: Experimental Sample College Type Comparison

	HERI (2019) (1)	Prolific (2)	IPEDS (2020) (3)
Public Research University	0.417	0.431	0.310
Other Public University	0.263	0.188	0.281
Private Research University	0.133	0.075	0.049
Other Private - Religious	0.117	0.066	0.102
Other Private - Nonreligious	0.071	0.107	0.112
Community College	0.000	0.048	0.096
For-Profit	0.000	0.049	0.051

Notes: This table summarizes the characteristics of colleges attended by students in our HERI and Prolific samples and compares them to the national, enrollment-weighted distribution of four-year colleges in IPEDS.

Table A.7: Willingness to Pay for Non-Political Attributes, by Political View

	Full Sample				Ages 18-25			
	All (1)	Liberal (2)	Moderate (3)	Conservative (4)	All (5)	Liberal (6)	Moderate (7)	Conservative (8)
Public	17,228*** (1,309)	27,559*** (2,561)	8,621*** (1,524)	5,652*** (2,163)	16,385*** (1,507)	24,002*** (2,702)	9,616*** (1,822)	7,092*** (2,623)
Private Non-Religious	14,031*** (1,265)	22,853*** (2,290)	6,605*** (1,621)	4,304** (2,035)	13,614*** (1,401)	19,229*** (2,338)	9,683*** (1,860)	5,834*** (2,121)
SAT (100s of points higher)	2,550*** (306.0)	2,475*** (481.6)	2,434*** (498.2)	2,986*** (722.6)	2,458*** (373.6)	2,360*** (633.8)	2,682*** (568.1)	2,567*** (703.5)
Distance (100s of miles closer)	947.6*** (78.08)	772.0*** (86.36)	960.3*** (129.0)	1,410*** (242.6)	750.3*** (78.91)	596.4*** (92.99)	833.2*** (156.6)	1,233*** (217.9)
Number of students (1000s)	44.21 (36.16)	128.5** (55.27)	-56.19 (60.99)	-17.75 (78.71)	133.7*** (41.11)	125.2** (62.64)	121.6* (64.90)	153.6* (89.03)
Large Metro	-1,586** (722.9)	44.71 (1,062)	-1,273 (1,247)	-4,609** (1,831)	-1605* (909.4)	98.22 (1,216)	-1,600 (1,396)	-4,537* (2,519)
Medium Metro	-729.4 (706.8)	1362 (912.2)	-799.0 (1,207)	-3551* (2,035)	111.664 (842.9)	1800* (1,034)	-108.9 (1,686)	-1753 (2,392)
Observations	12,348	5,712	3,396	3,240	7,116	3,528	1,704	1,884

Notes: This table displays willingness-to-pay (WTP) estimates for non-political attributes of colleges. Block bootstrapped standard errors with 500 replications are shown in parentheses.

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

B Survey Instrument

- Q1** Are you currently enrolled in a four-year college or university?
- Q2** From the list below, please select the college or university you are attending. If you do not see your college or university on the list, please enter it below.
- Q3** If you did not see your college or university on the above list, please enter it below.
- Q4** How many years have you been in college (including this year)?
- Q5** What is the highest level of education completed by any of your parents/guardians (those that raised you)?
- Q6** Which of the following best represents your family's total annual income last year, before taxes?
- Q7** If you took the SAT during high school, what was your best combined score on the SAT (out of 1600)? If you do not remember your exact SAT score, please provide your best guess.
- Q8** If you took the ACT during high school, what was your best combined score on the ACT (out of 36)? If you do not remember your exact ACT score, please provide your best guess.
- Q9** In which U.S. state did you complete your final year of high school? If you did not complete high school in the United States, please select the last option.
- Q10** Please describe in a few sentences how you decided which college to attend for your undergraduate studies.
- Q11** In some of the following questions, you will be asked about the **PERCENT CHANCE** of something happening. The percent chance must be a number between 0 and 100.
- Numbers like 2% or 5% indicate “almost no chance”. Numbers like 19% or so may mean “not much chance”. Numbers like 47% or 55% chance may be a “pretty even chance”. Numbers like 82% or so indicate a “very good chance”. Numbers like 95% or 98% mean “almost certainly”.
- The percent chance can also be thought of as the number of chances out of 100. For example, imagine that you are playing baseball. When asked about the percent chance that your team will win, you answer 70. This means that you believe your team would win 70 out of 100 games, on average, if you played the opposing team many times.
- Next, we will ask you two practice questions.
- Q11.1** For the following questions, please indicate the percent chance (out of 100) you would choose each option:
- What is the percent chance that you will eat pizza in the next two days? ____
 - What is the percent chance that you will eat pizza in the next two weeks? ____
- Q11.2** Since eating pizza “in the next 2 weeks” includes the possibility of eating pizza “in the next 2 days”, your answer to Question b. should be at least as large as your answer in Question a.
- Q11.3** Please adjust your answer to the following question: What is the percent chance that you will eat pizza in the next 2 weeks?
- For reference: You answered that there was a __ percent chance of you eating pizza in the next 2 days. ____
- Q12** In questionnaires like ours, sometimes there are participants who do not carefully read the questions and just quickly click through the survey. This means that there are a lot of random answers which compromise the results of research studies. To show that you read our questions carefully, please answer “Not at all interested” to the following question:
- Based on the text you read above, how interested are you in music?*

Q13 College Choice Scenarios: Part One

In this part of the survey, you will be comparing two hypothetical four-year bachelor-degree granting colleges with different features. Apart from these features, the colleges are identical in every other way.

First, we will show you a question that is designed to test your comprehension of the attributes being presented. Then, we will show you six scenarios in which you will compare the colleges.

For this part of the survey, the features you will see are listed below:

- **Student Body Political Leaning:** The percent share of the student body that identifies as conservative, moderate, or liberal.
- **State Vote Share:** The percent share each political party received in the 2024 presidential election.
- **Metro Size:**
 - Less than 250,000 people. For example: Ames, Iowa (Iowa State University) or Ithaca, New York (Cornell University)
 - Between 250,000 people and 1 million people. For example: Waco, Texas (Baylor University) or Madison, Wisconsin (University of Wisconsin - Madison)
 - Over 1 million people. For example: Los Angeles, California (UCLA) or New York City, New York (NYU)
- **Distance:** The travel distance, in miles, from the home you lived in when you graduated high school to the college's campus.
- **Cost per year:** The cost for tuition, fees, room, and board that you and/or your family would be expected to pay or cover with loans per year. Assume that aid from grants and scholarships has already been applied.

Q14 The following question is designed to help you understand how information will be displayed in future scenarios.

Q15 College A

Cost per year: \$20,000

Metro Size: Under 250,000 people

Student Body Political Leaning: Conservative: 50%, Moderate: 20%, Liberal: 30%

State Vote Share: Republican: 40%, Democrat: 60%

Distance From Home: 30 miles

College B

Cost per year: \$15,000

Metro Size: Between 250,000 and 1 million people

Student Body Political Leaning: Conservative: 30%, Moderate: 30%, Liberal: 40%

State Vote Share: Republican: 50%, Democrat: 50%

Distance From Home: 90 miles

Please select the college that has the higher proportion of students that identify as moderate.

Q16 You will now see 6 different scenarios. For each scenario, please assume you have been accepted to both colleges and that the cost of attendance displayed is the amount that you and/or your family would be expected to pay or cover with loans per year. Assume that aid from grants and scholarships has already been applied. Indicate the percentage chance (out of 100) you would choose to attend each. The chances for both colleges should be whole numbers between 0 and 100, adding up to 100.

As a reminder: You will be comparing two hypothetical four-year bachelor-degree granting colleges with different features. Apart from these features, the colleges are identical in every other way.

Q17 Example Scenario

Remember: Please assume you have been accepted into both colleges, and you must choose to attend one college. Besides the attributes listed above, the colleges are equal in every other way.

Please indicate the percent chance you would attend the below colleges:

College A

Cost per year: ---

Metro Size: ---

Student Body Political Leaning: ---

State Vote Share: ---

Distance From Home: ---

College B

Cost per year: ---

Metro Size: ---

Student Body Political Leaning: ---

State Vote Share: ---

Distance From Home: ---

C Procedures for Scenario Generation

Within the survey, there are two sets of scenarios, each with six questions. Each participant will see both sets of scenarios, and the order in which students see the two scenarios is randomly determined. One set, Social Scenarios, is designed to garner information from the students regarding their preference for the following attributes of colleges and universities: Cost per Year, Metro Size, Student Body Political Leaning, State Vote Share, and Distance from Home. The second set, Institutional Scenarios, has the following scenarios: Cost per Year, Type, Average ACT/SAT Score, and Student Body Size. Descriptions for each of these attributes can be found within the survey.

For each participant, the order in which the attributes appear within the scenario is randomized. The attribute values for each college within a scenario are also randomized. The manner in which they are randomized are presented below.

Note on Weighting:

Each option presented below has an assigned weight. These weights are drawn from historical data, including from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The probability with which an option is assigned to a hypothetical college in a scenario is based on the ratio of its weight to the sum total of all weights. For example, for option 3 of Student Body Political Leaning, the probability that option 3 is assigned to a college is 6/140.

Attributes

1. Student Body Political Leaning

The following table details the possible options that could be assigned to a college in a scenario. For each of the six scenarios in the survey with this attribute, two of the following options are chosen randomly, weighted by the respective weight of the scenario, and assigned to College A and College B. A similar procedure is used for all following attributes, unless otherwise stated.

This attribute is based on data from HERI. For each institution, the share of first-year students identifying as conservative, moderate, or liberal was rounded to the nearest 10 percent. In cases where the rounded values summed to more than 100 percent, the non-moderate values were reduced so that the three categories totaled exactly 100 percent. The weight for each category reflects the proportion of institutions in the dataset falling into that category.

Option	Conservative (%)	Moderate (%)	Liberal (%)	Weight
1	0	10	90	1
2	0	20	80	6
3	0	30	70	6
4	0	40	60	2
5	0	50	50	1
6	10	20	70	8
7	10	30	60	7
8	10	40	50	23
9	10	60	30	2
10	20	30	50	1
11	20	40	40	13
12	20	50	30	22
13	20	60	20	3
14	30	40	30	11

Option	Conservative (%)	Moderate (%)	Liberal (%)	Weight
15	30	50	20	15
16	30	60	10	2
17	40	40	20	5
18	40	50	10	1
19	50	30	20	2
20	50	40	10	5
21	60	30	10	2
22	70	20	10	1
23	70	30	0	1

2. Student Body Size

For this attribute, a bin is randomly assigned based on historical weights, and then a number within the bin is randomly assigned with equal weights. The number chosen from within the bin is chosen based on the increment presented in the table. For example, if the first bin (1,000-2,500 students) is chosen, given the increment of 500 students, the following numbers are possible to be randomly chosen: 1,000 students, 1,500 students, 2,000 students, 2,500 students. This attribute is based on enrollment data from IPEDS. Institutions with fewer than 1,000 students and all two-year institutions were excluded. The remaining institutions were grouped into the enrollment bins shown below. The weight for each bin reflects the number of institutions in that bin.

Option	Bin	Increment	Weight
1	1,000–2,500 students	500 students	490
2	3,000–5,000 students	500 students	341
3	6,000–10,000 students	1,000 students	260
4	11,000–20,000 students	1,000 students	192
5	21,000–29,000 students	1,000 students	79

Option	Bin	Increment	Weight
6	30,000–45,000 students	5,000 students	94

3. Distance from Home

In a similar manner to Student Body Size, a bin is randomly chosen first based on historical weights, and then a number from the bin is randomly chosen with equal probability.

This attribute is based on distance categories from the 2020 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:20). We merged some bins and excluded all institutions located fewer than 26 miles from the student’s home. The weight for the 30–50 mile category comes directly from the estimated percentage of schools between 26 and 50 miles. The weight for the 60–100 mile category is the sum of the weights for the 51–76 mile and 76–100 mile categories.

Option	Bin	Increment	Weight
1	30–50 miles	5 miles	10.2
2	60–100 miles	10 miles	12.08
3	110–200 miles	10 miles	12.43
4	250–500 miles	50 miles	10.62
5	600–1,000 miles	100 miles	6.63
6	1,250–2,000 miles	250 miles	8.73

4. Cost per Year

In order to ensure that the variation in choice we observe is not being driven solely by differences in price, we restrict the cost of College B in each scenario to be within \$15,000 of the cost of College A. We note that there are 12 scenarios for which Cost per Year appears as an attribute. Thus, the following table is sampled 24 times for each student, 12 each for College A and College B.

This attribute is based on cost estimates from NPSAS:20. The weights reflect the estimated percentage of institutions whose in-state tuition and required fees fall within each cost category. For example, the weight for Option 1 (\$5,000) is drawn from the percentage of institutions with costs between \$1 and \$4,999. After the survey was conducted, we noted that the weights for the \$70,000 bin and the \$75,000 bin had been swapped. The values are very similar, so this likely had no effect on the survey design and no impact on the resulting estimates. This note is included for transparency.

Option	Cost	Weight
1	\$5,000	8.49
2	\$10,000	21.06
3	\$15,000	17.4
4	\$20,000	14.15
5	\$25,000	10.98
6	\$30,000	7.79
7	\$35,000	5.13
8	\$40,000	2.98
9	\$45,000	2.53
10	\$50,000	1.61
11	\$55,000	0.96
12	\$60,000	0.94
13	\$65,000	0.69
14	\$70,000	1.11

5. State Vote Share

To ensure realistic combinations of Student Body Political Leaning and State Vote Share, if certain options are selected for Student Body Political Leaning, then the options from which State Vote Share attributes are pulled are adjusted to reflect the likely political climate of the state. The respective tables are shown below.

This attribute was constructed using the 2024 presidential election results. For each state, the share of votes for the Republican and Democratic candidates was rounded to the nearest 10 percent. The weight for each category reflects the proportion of states in the dataset falling into that category.

Unrestricted Vote Share:

Option	Republican (%)	Democrat (%)	Weight
1	10	90	1

	Option	Republican (%)	Democrat (%)	Weight
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2	30	70	2
3	40	60	11
4	50	50	13
5	60	40	14
6	70	30	10

Vote Share if Option 1,2,3,4, or 5 is selected for Student Body Political Leaning:

	Option	Republican (%)	Democrat (%)	Weight
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1	10	90	1
2	30	70	2
3	40	60	11

Vote Share options if Option 23 is selected for Student Body Political Leaning:

	Option	Republican (%)	Democrat (%)	Weight
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1	60	40	14
2	70	30	10

6. Average ACT/SAT

This attribute is based on admissions data from IPEDS. Institutions were grouped according to their average ACT composite score, which was then converted to the SAT equivalent. The weight for each category reflects the number of institutions in the dataset within that score range.

	Option	ACT	SAT	Weight
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1	15	850	5
2	16	890	14

Option	ACT	SAT	Weight
3	17	930	21
4	18	970	45
5	19	1010	98
6	20	1040	99
7	21	1080	153
8	22	1110	155
9	23	1140	157
10	24	1180	126
11	25	1210	84
12	26	1240	58
13	27	1280	47
14	28	1310	35
15	29	1340	30
16	30	1370	22
17	31	1400	20
18	32	1430	26
19	33	1460	12
20	34	1500	13
21	35	1540	2

7. Type

There are three possible types that can be generated: Public, Private, non-religious, and Private, religious. The three are drawn from with equal probability (1/3). For the sake of ensuring useful variation, for the first three scenarios in which the attributes appear, the code ensures that the type of College B is different than that of College A.

8. **Metro Size**

There are three possible sizes that can be assigned: Less than 250 thousand people, Between 250 thousand and 1 million people, and More than 1 million people. In a similar manner to Type, it is guaranteed by the code that, for the first three scenarios in which these attributes appear, that the metro size of College B will be different than that of College A.

Example Scenarios

The following screenshots provide examples of how scenarios could appear to students. These were generated by previewing the survey, following the randomization procedures as described above.

Institutional Scenario Examples

Scenario 1

Remember: Please assume you have been accepted into both colleges, and you must choose to attend one college. Besides the attributes listed above, the colleges are equal in every other way.

For a reminder of attribute descriptions, please click [here](#).

Please indicate the percent chance you would attend the below colleges:

College A

Cost per year: \$5,000

Type: Private, non-religious

Average ACT/SAT Score: ACT: 23, SAT: 1140

Student Body Size: 3,000 students

College B

Cost per year: \$5,000

Type: Private, religious

Average ACT/SAT Score: ACT: 20, SAT: 1040

Student Body Size: 4,000 students

College A %

College B %

Total %



Scenario 2

Remember: Please assume you have been accepted into both colleges, and you must choose to attend one college. Besides the attributes listed above, the colleges are equal in every other way.

For a reminder of attribute descriptions, please click [here](#).

Please indicate the percent chance you would attend the below colleges:

College A

Cost per year: \$45,000

Type: Public

Average ACT/SAT Score: ACT: 23, SAT: 1140

Student Body Size: 1,500 students

College B

Cost per year: \$30,000

Type: Private, non-religious

Average ACT/SAT Score: ACT: 21, SAT: 1080

Student Body Size: 2,000 students

College A

 %

College B

 %

Total

 %

Scenario 3

Remember: Please assume you have been accepted into both colleges, and you must choose to attend one college. Besides the attributes listed above, the colleges are equal in every other way.

For a reminder of attribute descriptions, please click [here](#).

Please indicate the percent chance you would attend the below colleges:

College A

Cost per year: \$30,000

Type: Private, religious

Average ACT/SAT Score: ACT: 19, SAT: 1010

Student Body Size: 10,000 students

College B

Cost per year: \$20,000

Type: Public

Average ACT/SAT Score: ACT: 22, SAT: 1110

Student Body Size: 1,500 students

College A		%
College B		%
Total	0	%



Scenario 4

Remember: Please assume you have been accepted into both colleges, and you must choose to attend one college. Besides the attributes listed above, the colleges are equal in every other way.

For a reminder of attribute descriptions, please click [here](#).

Please indicate the percent chance you would attend the below colleges:

College A

Cost per year: \$10,000

Type: Public

Average ACT/SAT Score: ACT: 23, SAT: 1140

Student Body Size: 2,000 students

College B

Cost per year: \$10,000

Type: Private, religious

Average ACT/SAT Score: ACT: 25, SAT: 1210

Student Body Size: 12,000 students

College A

 %

College B

 %

Total

 %

Scenario 5

Remember: Please assume you have been accepted into both colleges, and you must choose to attend one college. Besides the attributes listed above, the colleges are equal in every other way.

For a reminder of attribute descriptions, please click [here](#).

Please indicate the percent chance you would attend the below colleges:

College A

Cost per year: \$20,000

Type: Public

Average ACT/SAT Score: ACT: 23, SAT: 1140

Student Body Size: 40,000 students

College B

Cost per year: \$35,000

Type: Public

Average ACT/SAT Score: ACT: 21, SAT: 1080

Student Body Size: 9,000 students

College A		%
College B		%
Total	0	%



Scenario 6

Remember: Please assume you have been accepted into both colleges, and you must choose to attend one college. Besides the attributes listed above, the colleges are equal in every other way.

For a reminder of attribute descriptions, please click [here](#).

Please indicate the percent chance you would attend the below colleges:

College A

Cost per year: \$10,000

Type: Public

Average ACT/SAT Score: ACT: 27, SAT: 1280

Student Body Size: 2,500 students

College B

Cost per year: \$10,000

Type: Public

Average ACT/SAT Score: ACT: 25, SAT: 1210

Student Body Size: 2,500 students

College A

 %

College B

 %

Total

 %

Social Scenario Examples

Scenario 1

Remember: Please assume you have been accepted into both colleges, and you must choose to attend one college. Besides the attributes listed above, the colleges are equal in every other way.

For a reminder of attribute descriptions, please click [here](#).

Please indicate the percent chance you would attend the below colleges:

College A

Metro Size: Between 250 thousand and 1 million people
Student Body Political Leaning: Conservative: 30%, Moderate: 50%, Liberal: 20%
State Vote Share: Republican: 50%, Democrat: 50%
Distance From Home: 700 miles
Cost per year: \$10,000

College B

Metro Size: Less than 250 thousand people
Student Body Political Leaning: Conservative: 20%, Moderate: 50%, Liberal: 30%
State Vote Share: Republican: 40%, Democrat: 60%
Distance From Home: 50 miles
Cost per year: \$25,000

College A		%
College B		%
Total	0	%



Scenario 2

Remember: Please assume you have been accepted into both colleges, and you must choose to attend one college. Besides the attributes listed above, the colleges are equal in every other way.

For a reminder of attribute descriptions, please click [here](#).

Please indicate the percent chance you would attend the below colleges:

College A

Metro Size: More than 1 million people
Student Body Political Leaning: Conservative: 0%, Moderate: 40%, Liberal: 60%
State Vote Share: Republican: 40%, Democrat: 60%
Distance From Home: 450 miles
Cost per year: \$10,000

College B

Metro Size: Less than 250 thousand people
Student Body Political Leaning: Conservative: 10%, Moderate: 20%, Liberal: 70%
State Vote Share: Republican: 60%, Democrat: 40%
Distance From Home: 250 miles
Cost per year: \$25,000

College A		%
College B		%
Total	0	%



Scenario 3

Remember: Please assume you have been accepted into both colleges, and you must choose to attend one college. Besides the attributes listed above, the colleges are equal in every other way.

For a reminder of attribute descriptions, please click [here](#).

Please indicate the percent chance you would attend the below colleges:

College A

Metro Size: Between 250 thousand and 1 million people

Student Body Political Leaning: Conservative: 20%, Moderate: 40%, Liberal: 40%

State Vote Share: Republican: 50%, Democrat: 50%

Distance From Home: 160 miles

Cost per year: \$20,000

College B

Metro Size: Less than 250 thousand people

Student Body Political Leaning: Conservative: 20%, Moderate: 40%, Liberal: 40%

State Vote Share: Republican: 60%, Democrat: 40%

Distance From Home: 400 miles

Cost per year: \$15,000

College A

 %

College B

 %

Total

 %

Scenario 4

Remember: Please assume you have been accepted into both colleges, and you must choose to attend one college. Besides the attributes listed above, the colleges are equal in every other way.

For a reminder of attribute descriptions, please click [here](#).

Please indicate the percent chance you would attend the below colleges:

College A

Metro Size: Less than 250 thousand people
Student Body Political Leaning: Conservative: 20%, Moderate: 50%, Liberal: 30%
State Vote Share: Republican: 60%, Democrat: 40%
Distance From Home: 180 miles
Cost per year: \$20,000

College B

Metro Size: More than 1 million people
Student Body Political Leaning: Conservative: 30%, Moderate: 50%, Liberal: 20%
State Vote Share: Republican: 30%, Democrat: 70%
Distance From Home: 1,750 miles
Cost per year: \$25,000

College A		%
College B		%
Total	0	%



Scenario 5

Remember: Please assume you have been accepted into both colleges, and you must choose to attend one college. Besides the attributes listed above, the colleges are equal in every other way.

For a reminder of attribute descriptions, please click [here](#).

Please indicate the percent chance you would attend the below colleges:

College A

Metro Size: Less than 250 thousand people

Student Body Political Leaning: Conservative: 0%, Moderate: 40%, Liberal: 60%

State Vote Share: Republican: 40%, Democrat: 60%

Distance From Home: 60 miles

Cost per year: \$15,000

College B

Metro Size: More than 1 million people

Student Body Political Leaning: Conservative: 0%, Moderate: 30%, Liberal: 70%

State Vote Share: Republican: 40%, Democrat: 60%

Distance From Home: 700 miles

Cost per year: \$10,000

College A

 %

College B

 %

Total

 %

Scenario 6

Remember: Please assume you have been accepted into both colleges, and you must choose to attend one college. Besides the attributes listed above, the colleges are equal in every other way.

For a reminder of attribute descriptions, please click [here](#).

Please indicate the percent chance you would attend the below colleges:

College A

Metro Size: More than 1 million people
Student Body Political Leaning: Conservative: 0%, Moderate: 30%, Liberal: 70%
State Vote Share: Republican: 40%, Democrat: 60%
Distance From Home: 250 miles
Cost per year: \$55,000

College B

Metro Size: Between 250 thousand and 1 million people
Student Body Political Leaning: Conservative: 0%, Moderate: 20%, Liberal: 80%
State Vote Share: Republican: 40%, Democrat: 60%
Distance From Home: 2,000 miles
Cost per year: \$45,000

College A		%
College B		%
Total	0	%

