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Hillsdale College Ranks First in Nearly Every Category in Recent Free Speech Survey
Surveyed students give top marks, enthusiastic confidence in College's commitment to free speech and civil discourse

HILLSDALE, Mich. — A recent survey on the state of freedom of speech on college campuses gave Hillsdale College the highest marks among the nation's institutions of higher education. The survey, conducted by the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) and College Pulse, evaluates more than 250 colleges and universities across the country.

“We have a practice here at Hillsdale College, and it has been followed as long as memory serves,” says Hillsdale College President Larry Arnn. “You may assert and defend any argument you conceive, as long as you do so in a way that is civil, academic, and conducive to thought and deliberation.”

According to the FIRE/College Pulse, Hillsdale College ranked first in the following categories:

- Comfort Expressing Ideas
- Opposition to Disruptive Conduct
- Openness to New Ideas
- Administrative Support of Free Speech
- Tolerance for Conservative Speakers
- Combined Tolerance for Conservative and Liberal Speakers

FIRE/College Pulse ranking also notes that Hillsdale has no incidences of sanctioning student groups or faculty members and has never disinvited a speaker.

“As a place of liberal learning, Hillsdale College welcomes the free expression of ideas, thoughtful inquiry, and civil debate. Since the founding of the College, natural law principles — which support rational inquiry and civil and religious liberty — have been central to the College's work, and in maintaining an atmosphere of civility coupled with academic rigor,” says Christopher VanOrman, Hillsdale College provost.

Strikingly, surveyed Hillsdale students agree overwhelmingly that free speech and inquiry flourish at Hillsdale College. The survey, which consisted of 23 rating scale questions about free speech on campus, two multiple select multiple-choice questions about free speech on campus, and four multiple-choice questions about the responder, reveals Hillsdale tops the list for most

enthusiastically pro-free-speech responses in 20 of the 23 rating scale questions. Rating scale questions about free speech on campus included:

- How comfortable would you feel expressing your views on a controversial political topic to other students during a discussion in a common campus space such as a quad, dining hall, or lounge?
 - Hillsdale College: Very comfortable (56%)
 - First runner-up: Very comfortable (28%)
 - Second runner-up: Very comfortable (26%)
- If a controversy over offensive speech were to occur on your campus, how likely is it that your college's administration would defend the speaker's right to express their views?
 - Hillsdale College: Extremely likely (50%)
 - First runner-up: Extremely likely (19%)
 - Second runner-up: Extremely likely (18%)
- How clear is it to you that your college administration protects free speech on campus?
 - Hillsdale College: Extremely clear (48%)
 - First runner-up: Extremely clear (24%)
 - Second runner-up: Extremely clear (20%)
- How comfortable would you feel publicly disagreeing with a professor about a controversial political topic?
 - Hillsdale College: Very comfortable (31%)
 - First runner-up: Very comfortable (21%)
 - Second runner-up: Very comfortable (20%)

Dr. Arnn offers commentary on these rankings in the Wall Street Journal, saying “A college’s purpose is not merely to sponsor speech. A college’s purpose, through speaking and thinking — the two go together — is to teach students to think and speak better in search of knowledge.”

To read Dr. Arnn’s commentary in the Wall Street Journal, click [here](#).

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, *Imprimis*, with a circulation of more than 6.4 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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