



81% of College Students Want Flexibility to Choose How They Will Learn

74% Supportive of Moving to Remote-Only Learning For Health and Safety Reasons

Oct. 7, 2021 (Seattle, WA) - According to a new survey from BestColleges.com, an overwhelming majority of college students (81%) agree that schools should give students flexibility in terms of choosing their learning environment — remote, on-campus, or hybrid — due to COVID-19. Still, 74% of undergraduates say they would support a move to remote-only learning by their school for the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff. When it comes to current COVID-19 precautions on campuses, 64% believe the steps their schools are currently taking are appropriate.

Click here for more information:

<https://www.bestcolleges.com/research/students-want-flexibility-amid-campus-vaccine-mask-mandates/>

"Through the disruption in education over the past year and a half, many students found some benefits to learning online," said Melissa Venable, Ph.D., education advisor for BestColleges.com. "There is a growing expectation that institutions will offer a variety of class formats, giving each student the opportunity to choose how they learn."

Nationwide, less than half (49%) of college students believe college campuses should currently be open for in-person instruction. When asked how they expect to complete the remainder of the semester/quarter this fall, students were twice as likely to believe they would be learning mostly on-campus (48%) than remotely (23%), and 27% believed they would have a hybrid experience — a combination of both on-campus and remote learning. Students of color were almost twice as likely as white students to expect to complete the remainder of the term remotely (30% vs. 16%).

Most college students (65%) agree that colleges should mandate mask-wearing for all students, faculty, and staff, both vaccinated and unvaccinated. Slightly over half (54%) believe colleges should mandate the COVID-19 vaccine for all with allowances only for religious or medical exemptions. When asked how they feel about COVID-19 and the remainder of the fall term, 42% report feeling anxious and 41% are feeling hopeful. Only 26% of students said they feel safe, and 17% report feeling unsafe.

When asked whether students' COVID-19 vaccine status was influenced by their schools' decision to mandate or not mandate vaccination, 39% of students decided to become vaccinated because of their schools' mandate, and 37% decided to become vaccinated because their school did not mandate the vaccine. Smaller percentages of students said their decision to learn remotely was influenced by their school's vaccine mandate (10%) or lack of mandate (12%).

About a quarter of students (26%) say their college choice was impacted by higher education vaccine mandates and 38% were also influenced by how governments were handling COVID-19 in the states where schools are located. Students of color were almost twice as likely as white students to be influenced by vaccine mandates at colleges and universities (33% vs. 19%), and were more likely to take state governments' handling of COVID-19 into consideration than white students when choosing a college (48% vs. 31%).

"The impact that COVID-19 has had on higher education cannot be understated," said Dr. Venable. "College students have been directly affected in many ways, and want a voice in the decisions being made about the future of their college experience. It is important for schools to include student feedback when making decisions on key issues like mandates and remote learning moving forward."

Methodology

The survey was conducted from Sept 9 through 22 of 2021. Student respondents were fielded by Lucid LLC. Survey participants included 1,000 currently enrolled undergraduate students nationwide. Respondents were 18-26 years of age, enrolled at a college or university and pursuing a bachelor's degree. The respondents for the survey were screened by various quality checks, including systems like Relevant ID, and responses were manually reviewed to ensure consistency and accuracy.

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