



HCCG College Students Report

Harvard College Consulting Group

January 2021



Introduction

The HCCG College Students report is a publication that tracks and analyzes trends the US College Students demographic. This report primarily utilizes data collected from college students who belong to a larger group known as "Gen-Z" (people born between 1997 and 2012) and is the demographic that is about to enter the workforce. Indeed, college students today are uniquely different from those from previous generations because they grew up with the internet, social media, and smartphones. As a result, companies are racing to understand how best to hire these college students, marketers are trying to figure out how to target this demographic, and, because college students today are also the most socially conscious demographic, nonprofits are seeking to appeal to them as well. This report discusses three topics: College Students and Career, College Students and Entertainment, and College Students and Nonprofits.

To drive insights, HCCG conducted 6 focus groups and surveyed 223 people. The report synthesizes qualitative findings from the focus groups with quantitative data from the survey. Here is the demographic data for the HCCG College Student Consumer Survey:

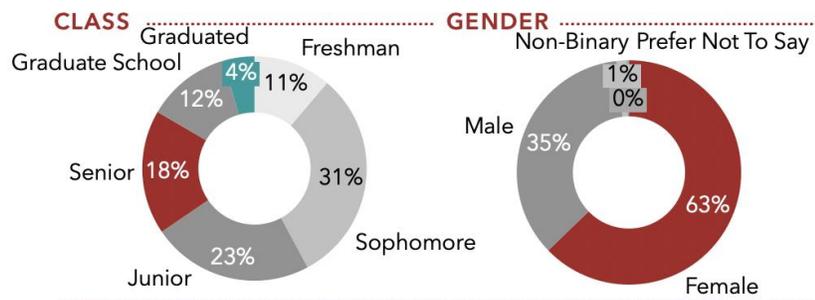
KEY STATISTICS

223 respondents

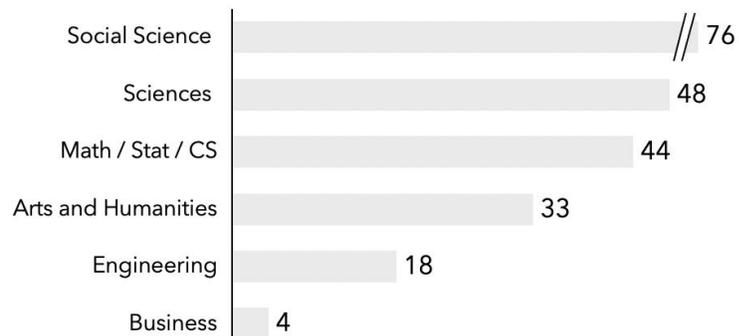
30 colleges represented, including:

- Harvard
- Brown
- MIT
- Stanford
- NYU
- UC Berkeley
- Yale
- UCLA
- Amherst

All major geographic regions in the US represented



MAJORS



HCCG Executive Summary

Key Takeaways from College Students and Career, College Students and Entertainment, and College Students and Nonprofits

College Students and Career

College Students prioritize social issues such as diversity and inclusion and environmental concerns, experiences over pay, and living in a large city after graduation. College students also prefer broader methods of looking for jobs such as career fairs and online job platforms.

College Students and Entertainment

Out of all social media platforms, college students spend the most time on Instagram with females spending more time on all such sites than males, except for Reddit where the opposite is true. The majority of survey respondents indicated a willingness to subscribe to 2-3 different content streaming platforms with Netflix and Hulu being the most popular.

College Students and Nonprofits

Generally, college students trust nonprofits with those with higher trust levels contributing more. Despite the digital era, college students prefer a personal touch when being solicited for donations. Furthermore, older college students contribute more but volunteer less than younger college students.



1. College Students and Career

I. Introduction

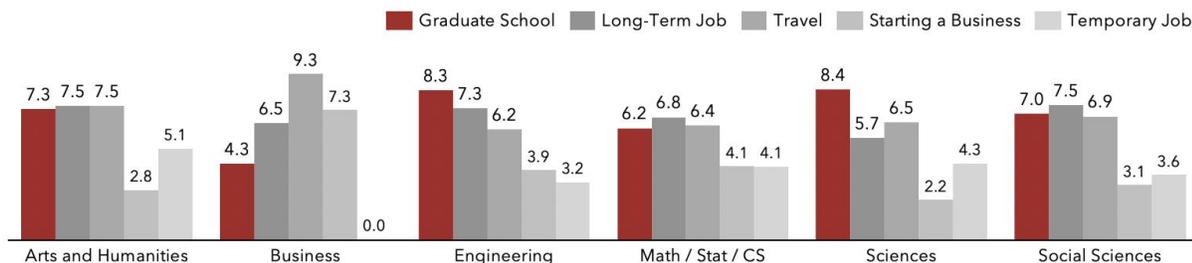
Many college students are about to enter the workforce. Today's college students have grown up in a world that is revolutionized by technology and where social issues such as diversity and inclusion are forefront. While the former has undoubtedly influenced what college students have chosen to study, the latter suggests that companies must embody certain values to recruit and retain talent. Companies must also be able to communicate their values to college students via the right channels. In today's competitive talent market, this is something companies need to get right to succeed in the 21st century.

II. After Graduation

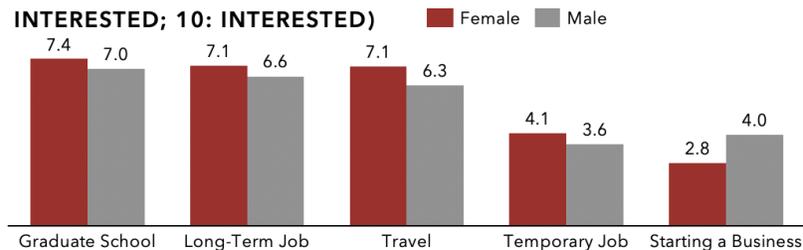
Across cohorts of grade level, gender, and field of study, graduate school is the most popular post-graduate option in the HCCG College Student Consumer Survey (on a scale of 1-10: 7.25/10). A focus group participant who plans on attending graduate school upon graduation reasoned that "a bachelor's degree can barely get you any job in this economy." Long-term jobs (6.9/10) and travelling (6.78/10) were also highly rated options. Other participants noted that their desire to travel was to take a break between school and forge experiences they wouldn't otherwise get the chance to.

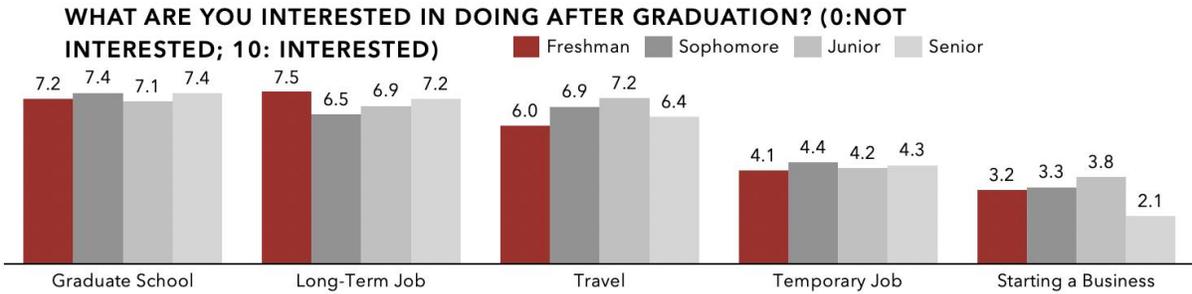
As the graph below shows, students of the sciences are most interested in graduate school, but not very interested in travelling, starting a business, or entering a long-term job upon graduation.

WHAT ARE YOU INTERESTED IN DOING AFTER GRADUATION? (0: NOT INTERESTED; 10: INTERESTED)



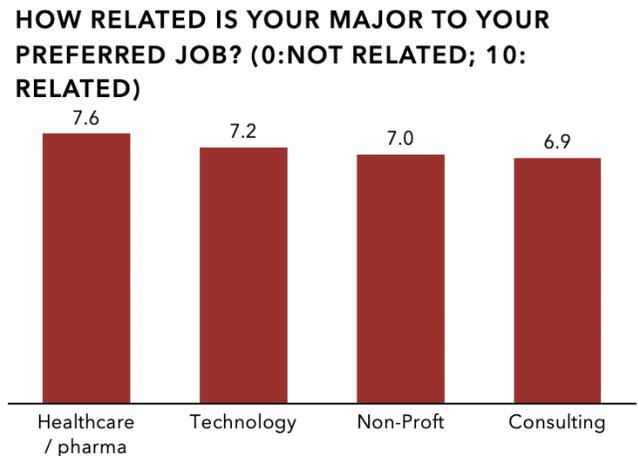
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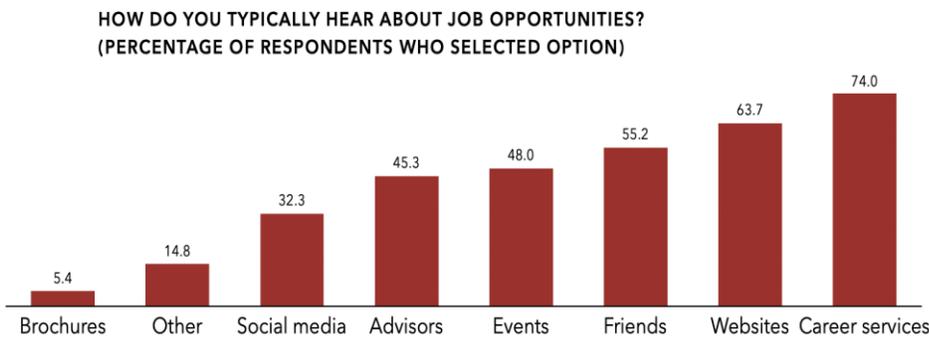


Additionally, men are more interested in starting a business than women. Juniors also are most interested in starting a business across the grade levels, especially compared to seniors due to the fact that they are likely to have landed full time jobs. Those who were opposed to starting their own business in focus groups said that start-ups are too risky or not feasible in their preferred line of work.

On the other hand, while most people’s ideal jobs aligned with their major, we found that those interested in consulting and non-profits think that their majors are the least related to their preferred job in terms of subject matter.



III. Recruiting:

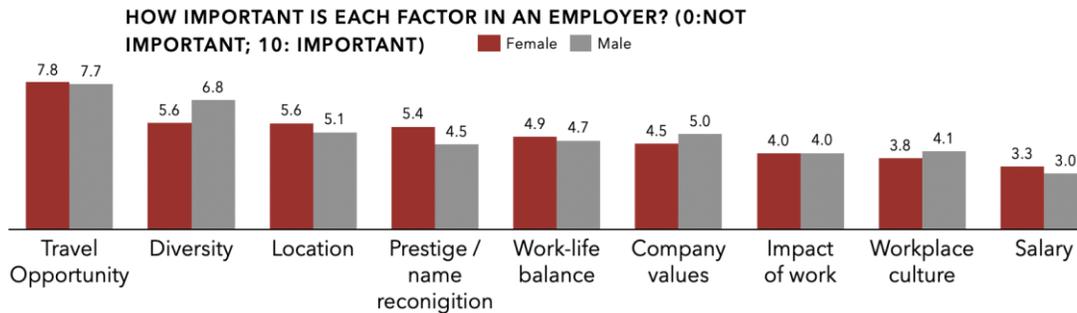


In both the HCCG College Student Consumer Survey and our focus groups, participants generally said that they prioritized broader methods of searching for jobs (websites, school’s job services, and Google searching) because it helps to identify many different positions to apply to all at once.

Most people are also more likely to find it difficult to allocate time for individual companies’ on-campus events, preferring to attend more general events, like job fairs. Indeed, one focus group participant said, “Job hunting can become an extra class-worth of work. That’s why it’s hard to find the time to attend in-



person events, like coffee chats or job fairs, and easier to cast a wide net online.” However, a minority of respondents still preferred more intimate interactions; one focus group participant said that forming a personal connection with someone in a coffee chat or information session would best convince him / her to work at a certain company if that person vouches for the experience.

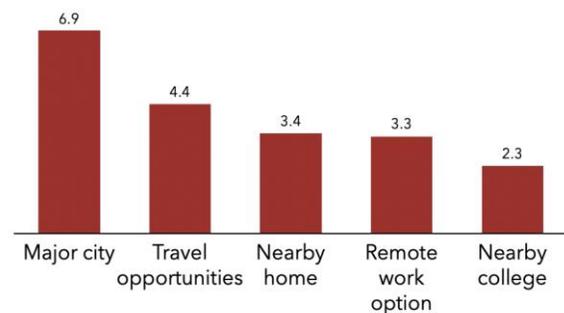


Furthermore, the opportunity for travel, diversity, and location were the three most important factors in choosing an employer for

survey respondents. Surprisingly, salary was the least important to college students. This is abetted by findings in other reports, including one published by [BusinessWire](#) that found that 60% of Gen-Z would give up a higher salary for better benefits or other perks. On the other hand, female respondents rated prestige, salary, and location more importantly than male respondents, while male respondents rated workplace culture and company values more importantly.

In terms of location, the most important factors for survey respondents were being in a major city (New York, SF, Boston) and travel opportunities. Focus group participants explained that the importance of the former lies in having access to peers from college who will be working in the same area as well as being closer to other career opportunities.

IN TERMS OF TRAVEL AND LOCATION, HOW IMPORTANT IS EACH FACTOR IN SEARCHING FOR A JOB? (0:NOT IMPORTANT; 10: IMPORTANT)



Most focus group participants see remote jobs as not preferable, citing their desire for a more immersive, in-person work experience. However, many said that their experience taking college classes online has prepared them well for an online job if needed: “If I can do Zoom school, I can do Zoom anything.”

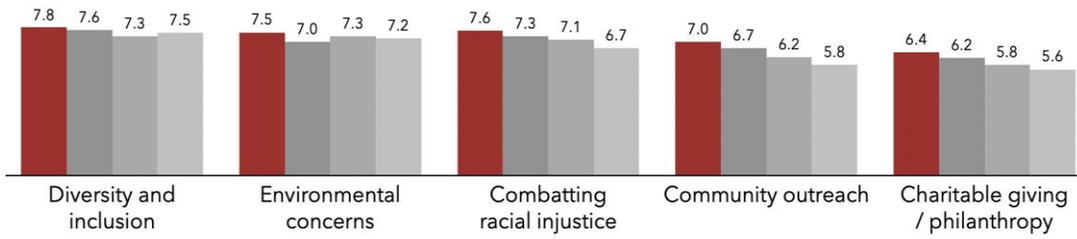
Finally, diversity & inclusion and addressing environmental concerns were the most important ethical values for employers to hold based on our survey. After cutting responses based on the industries respondents said they were interested in working in, those interested in working in nonprofits rated all five concerns more importantly than students interested in healthcare, tech, or consulting. Indeed, a focus group participant interested in tech said that, although they personally consider many of these values to be important, they do not have an impact on their job selection.



HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOUR EMPLOYER TO HOLD THESE VALUES?

(0: NOT IMPORTANT; 10: IMPORTANT)

■ Non-profit ■ Healthcare and pharma ■ Consulting ■ Tech



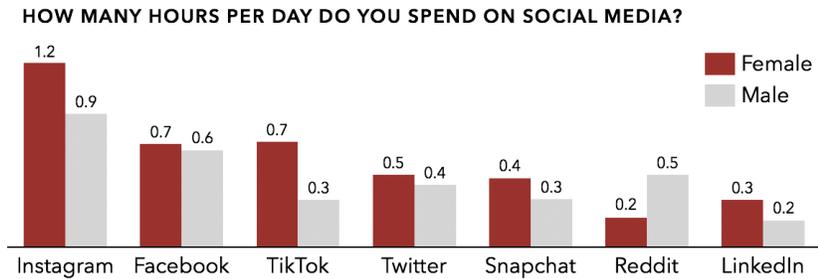
2. College Students and Entertainment

I. Introduction

The past year has brought with it a host of dramatic changes to the entertainment industry. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced everyone to quarantine at home, increasing the importance of both social media sites for individuals to keep in contact with one another and at-home entertainment while movie theaters have been closed. The social media / content creation hybrid platform TikTok has shown enormous success, being one of the favorite platforms among college students despite its relative infancy. Additionally, several major streaming services launched this year, such as HBO Max, or late last year, like Disney+. Although they've shown promising launches, these sites have been unable to dethrone older streaming services like Netflix for college students.

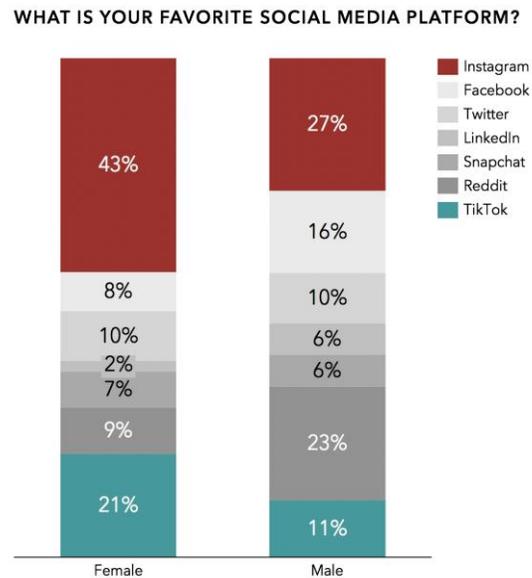
I. Social Media

The HCCG College Student Consumer Survey found that, out of all the social media platforms, college students spend the most time on Instagram by a wide margin. After Instagram, college students often frequent Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, and Snapchat.

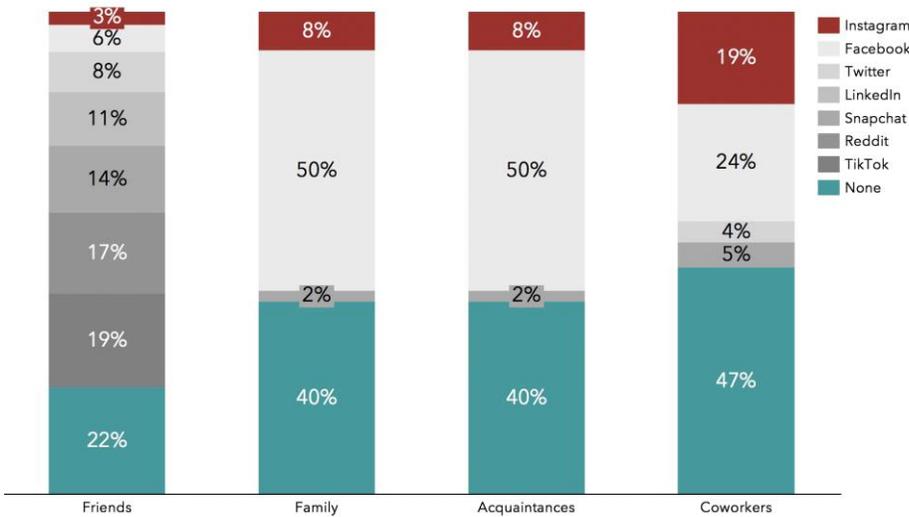


Focus group participants said they spend the most time on Instagram because of how many people in their life actively post to the platform. One participant said, "With TikTok or Twitter, I can scroll for however long I want, but for Instagram I have to keep scrolling until I've seen all of my friends posts - otherwise, I feel like I'm missing out." Another participant said, "Honestly, Instagram kind of feels like a chore."

TikTok was the second favorite platform among females and the fourth among males. Those who did say Instagram was their preferred social media outlet cited its stories feature and the concentration of other college students on the platform as positive factors.



WHAT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM DO YOU USE TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH...



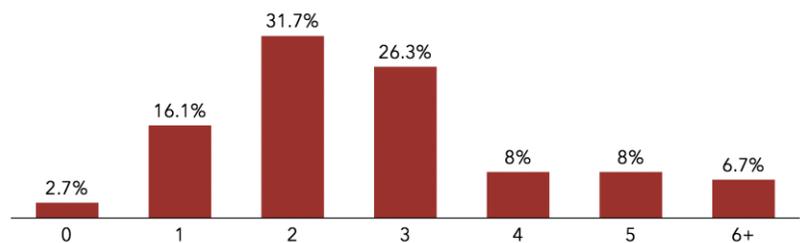
Despite being the favored platform, Instagram wasn't the primary platform for college students to keep in touch with any specific subgroup - friends, family, acquaintances, or coworkers. Facebook is the primary platform to keep in touch with family, acquaintances, and coworkers. Focus group participants said that they used Facebook to keep in touch with older

individuals - from Millennial coworkers to Baby Boomer aunts and uncles - because of their concentration on the website. The platforms used to keep in touch with friends were fairly evenly distributed, with a slight edge to TikTok.

II. Streaming

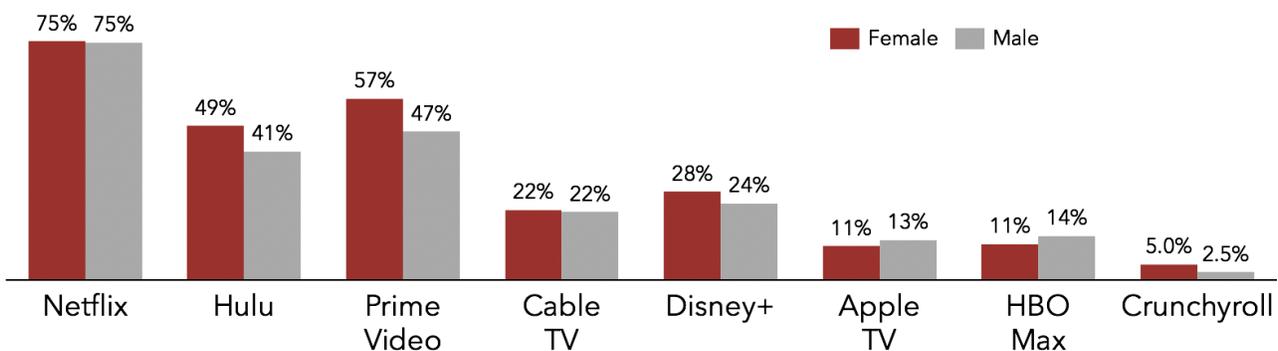
The majority of survey respondents said that they would subscribe to a maximum of 2 or 3 different content streaming services. The rates of subscription across males and females were fairly similar, with Netflix, Hulu, and Prime Video being the most popular.

WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF STREAMING SERVICES YOU WOULD SUBSCRIBE TO



The majority of focus group participants said Netflix was their preferred streaming service for a host of reasons: the high-quality original content, ease of use, comfortability with the interface, and an impressive

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CONTENT STREAMING PLATFORMS ARE YOU SUBSCRIBED TO



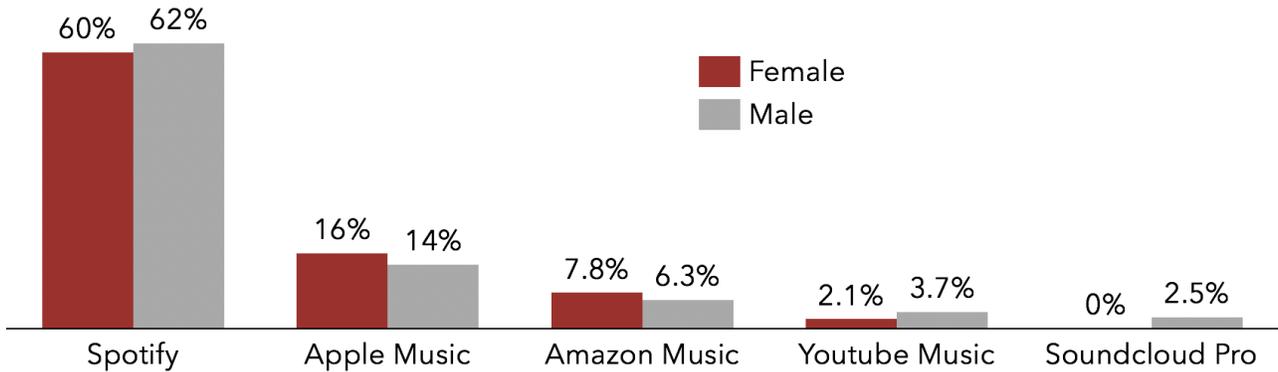
catalog of older titles. Netflix has also benefited from being around the longest: college students said that they had Netflix subscriptions prior to the arrival of Disney+, HBO Max, and the numerous other streaming



services that have emerged in recent years. Focus group participants indicated that newer streaming services generally serve as an additive to – rather than a replacement for – older platforms like Netflix.

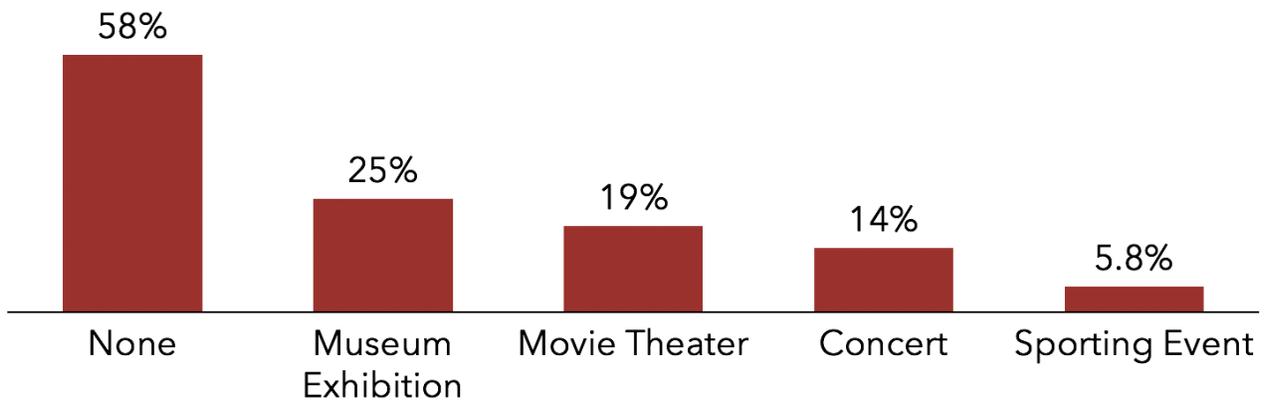
Additionally, Spotify reigned supreme when it came to college students’ preferred music streaming service, with Apple Music trailing by about 45% points for both males and females.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING MUSIC STREAMING PLATFORMS ARE YOU SUBSCRIBED TO



III. In-Person Entertainment

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD YOU ATTEND IN THE NEXT MONTH?



The majority of respondents said that they do not see themselves attending any in-person entertainment in November due to the ongoing pandemic. Museum exhibitions were the most warmly received, likely due to the ability to socially distance in a spacious museum. Less than a fifth of respondents were open to seeing a movie in the next month, despite many studios attempting to safely show movies in theaters.

Most focus group respondents said that they want to wait until they are vaccinated or at least partially distributed to others in the population before attending a concert, sporting event, or movie theater. One focus group respondent said that he doesn’t plan on attending a movie theater even after the pandemic subsides: “I barely went to movies before COVID -19. They were already on the decline. I don’t see that industry surviving the pandemic. I feel like this sentiment is shared among the rest of Gen-Z as well.”

3. College Students and Nonprofits

I. Introduction:

As today's college students ages into the workforce, it is going to become more important for nonprofits to appeal to this demographic. Today's college students have grown up exposed to social issues and social media, creating a desire for efficient social change. Many have a distrust of corporations; one sophomore in a focus group stated: "Even when corporations donate, I see it as virtue signaling." Thus, it is essential for nonprofits to earn the trust of its college student donors. If nonprofits want college students to get involved with a cause, nonprofits must focus on generating authentic, original, and creative engagement, utilizing optimal communication channels, and leveraging analytics to improve message targeting.

II. Do College Students trust nonprofits?

According to the HCCG College Student Consumer Survey, we asked participants to rate on a scale of 0 (untrustworthy) to 10 (trustworthy) how much they trust nonprofits and corporate philanthropy. Overall, college students trust nonprofits and distrusts corporate philanthropy; the average respondent responded with a 7.0/10 and 3.9/10 respectively. Interestingly, females trust nonprofits more than males (7.2/10 vs 6.6/10 respectively) but trust corporate philanthropy less than males (3.8/10 vs 4.1/10 respectively).

In our focus groups, those who trust nonprofits say:

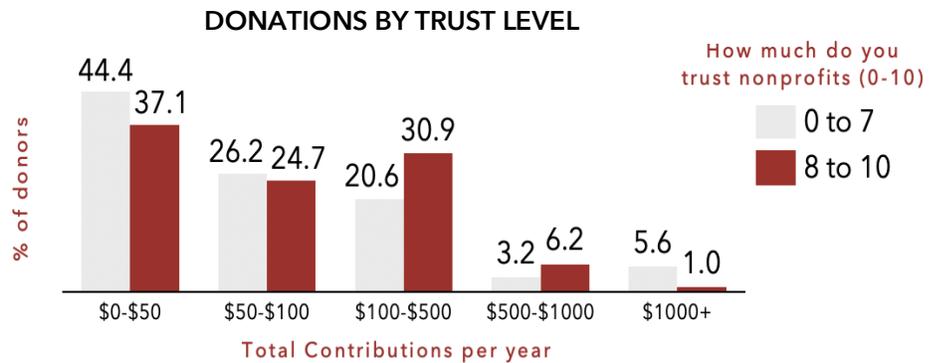
"I trust nonprofits. After working with a few, some are more competent than others. They all have very good hearts that genuinely care about what they are doing. Even if they are not the best at operating. It's so hard to stay in the nonprofit space. There is so little predictability. Pay is less than literally anywhere else; you gotta love the outcome." - Sophomore

"I trust nonprofits. There is a rigorous way in the US to see whether or not a nonprofit is legit."
- Sophomore

While those who do not say:

"I don't trust nonprofits. Many of them are used to launder money and evade taxes. Unless they are showing exactly where every dollar is going, how do you know they are actually making an impact?" - Junior

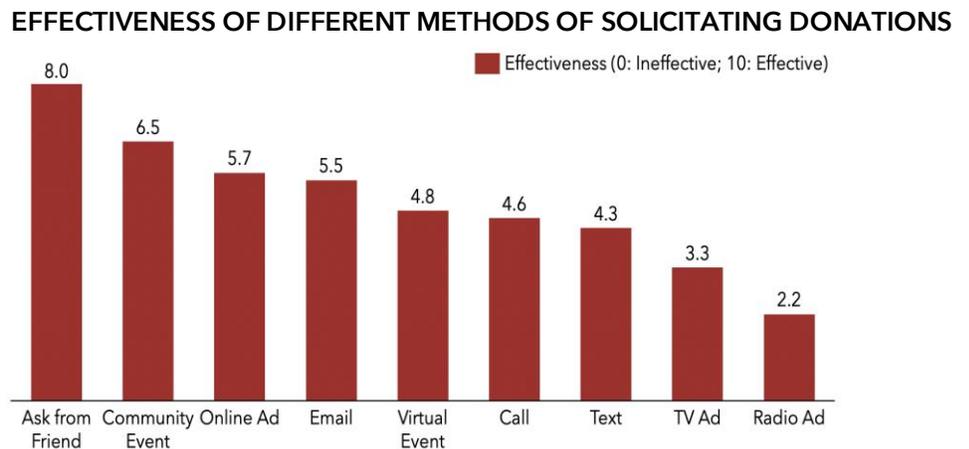
Our data shows that those who trust nonprofits contribute more. As the graph on the right demonstrates, those who have a trust level higher than the median trust level (8-10) are more likely to contribute \$100-\$500 or \$500-\$1000 (a higher amount) than those who have a trust level below or at the median trust level (0-7).



Thus, nonprofits must work on building trust with college students in order to solicit donations. One tangible way nonprofits can do this is to work to improve their nonprofit ratings (Charity Navigator, GivesWell, etc). 52% of respondents say they look up charity ratings before donating and that it contributes to whether or not they contribute. Those who look up charity ratings also contribute more, according to our survey data.

III. Motivating Donations

In today's age, there are so many ways nonprofits can leverage technology to communicate with college students. Despite this, college students still appreciate a personal touch, preferring to be asked by a friend to donate to an organization or to attend a community event (as shown by the graph on the right).



This fact is further corroborated by our focus groups:

“Social pressure is pretty big when a friend calls. If someone I know vouches for a nonprofit, I assume they have vetted them. I will contribute.” - Sophomore

On the other hand, the college students expects nonprofits to follow up with information on the impact created:

“They have to follow up so I know what’s going on. If it is black box, then I won’t donate anymore.” - Junior



In contrary, one sophomore who has experience working in nonprofits commented that while following up is necessary, it actually reduces the impact that nonprofits can have:

“While following up is absolutely necessary to maintain donors, it is actually bad practice because it siphons money away from the actual impact.” - Sophomore

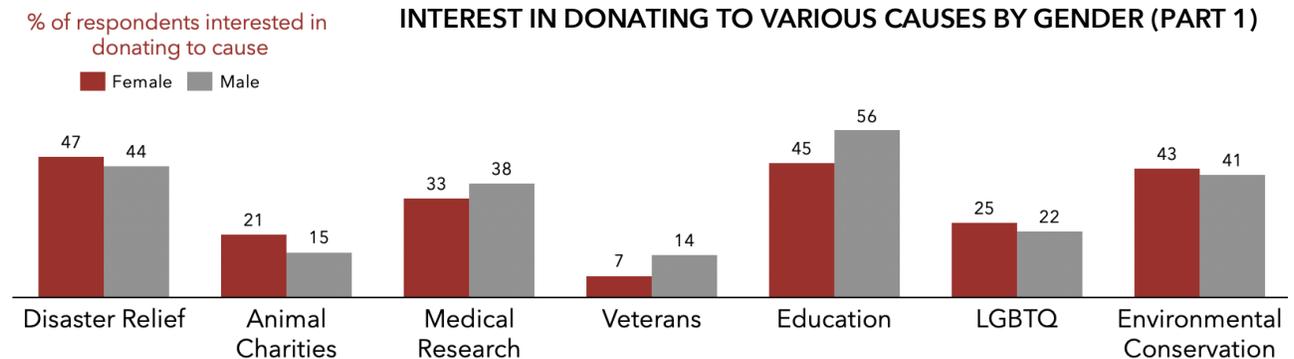
IV. How much are people donating / volunteering?

Irrespective of the cause the nonprofit is advocating for, it is essential that nonprofits target donors who have a personal connection to the cause. Indeed, our focus group participants reveal how important it is for nonprofits to tell its story in order to connect with donors:

“I donate to education nonprofits because my dad runs a tutoring center. I have gone there and helped out and worked every weekday since I was in the 6th grade. I also did a lot of speech and debate coaching as well.” - Sophomore

“I like the Robinhood foundation. I like its story. The founder wrote a book. I listened to a fireside chat and liked how he started from nothing and now is able to make a large impact.”
- Junior

Just as important as communicating a story is using analytics to target the messages to the right audience. Effective ways to segment donors are by gender and age. Segmenting by gender, we see that women are more likely to donate to civil rights, children causes, women’s rights, and hunger relief than men while men are more likely to donate to veterans causes and education than women.



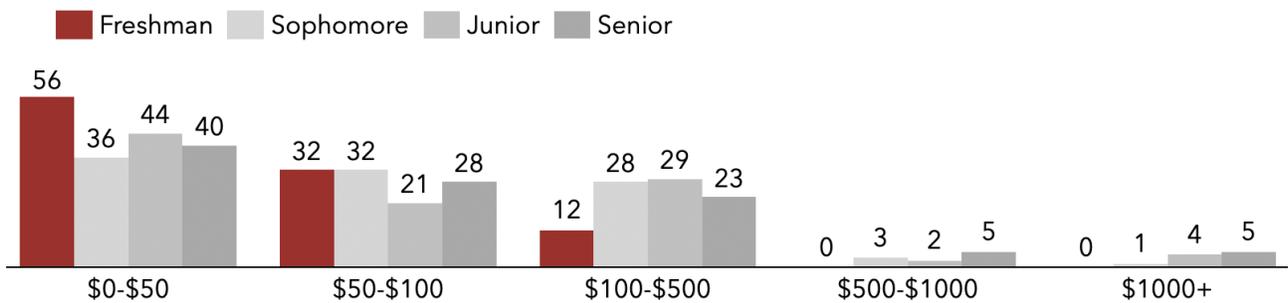
% of respondents interested in donating to cause

INTEREST IN DONATING TO VARIOUS CAUSES BY GENDER (PART 2)



On the other hand, those who are older (measured by class year in college) are more likely to donate more. As the graph shows below, freshman are more likely to donate between \$0-\$50 and less likely to donate over \$100 compared to upperclassmen (Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors).

DONATION BY CLASS YEAR



While freshmen donate less than upperclassmen, largely due to having less employment history, they are more likely to give back through volunteering; 60% of freshman volunteered 10+ more times last year while this is the case for only 25%, 15%, and 28% of sophomores, juniors, and seniors respectively. Female students are also more likely to volunteer than males and all survey participants have found volunteering difficult in the COVID-19 era.

To encourage people to volunteer, nonprofits should target freshmen (or younger college students). Another strategy is to make the volunteering activity more appealing for future career prospects; 41% of survey respondents said that building their resumes motivates them to go to a volunteering event.



Miroslav Bergam

Originally from New Jersey, Miroslav is a Government concentrator with an interest in data science. Miro currently serves as an associate for HCCG and a course assistant for Gov50: Data. His previous experience on HCCG includes helping develop a national expansion plan for a Fortune 500 medical devices manufacturer.



Albert Mao

Originally from Boston, Albert studies Statistics at Harvard. He interned at McKinsey & Company in the NY office and will be returning full time next year. He has previous experience working in investment banking, venture capital, equity research, and hedge funds. His previous experience in HCCG ranges from leading a case developing distribution center transition plans for a multinational confectionary company to market entry and growth strategy for Snapchat.

