

# Harvard Faculty Survey Reveals Striking Ideological Bias

As a mom of two teenagers who will be forging their pathways to adulthood in the coming years, I am particularly interested in new models of higher education. While college admission certainly isn't a requirement for my children, I hope that if they choose to pursue a Bachelor's degree or beyond, the experience is engaging and enlightening, exposing them to a variety of ideas and perspectives.

On too many college campuses today, ideas are muffled and perspectives are one-sided.

At Harvard University, for example, new data reveal that the faculty's ideological leanings are growing increasingly skewed to the left. Results from *The Harvard Crimson's* annual spring faculty [survey](#) show that 37 percent of the 1,100 professors polled indicate that their political views are "very liberal" – an increase of eight percent since last year. Forty-five percent of respondents characterize their political views as "liberal," while only one percent indicate that their views are "conservative" and no faculty identify as "very conservative." Moreover, only 16 percent of Harvard faculty members classify their political views as "moderate."

Harvard is hardly alone in its political bias. University faculty identifying as "liberal" consistently [outnumber](#) their "conservative" colleagues. This trend has accelerated in recent years, with left-leaning professors rapidly displacing their right-leaning counterparts on college campuses nationwide.

The recent Harvard survey findings show just how incongruous the views of many university professors are compared to the

American public at large. Gallup polling results [released](#) earlier this year found that most Americans identify as “moderate” (37 percent) or “conservative” (36 percent), while only one-quarter of Americans identify as “liberal.” Unlike university faculty members that continue to skew further to the ideological left, the political leanings of most Americans have remained largely unchanged in recent years.

Efforts to push back on creeping ideological bias on college campuses have been gaining traction. *The Washington Post* [reported](#) earlier this week about the growing influence of college alumni groups advocating for broader viewpoint diversity and freedom of expression in higher education.

Attempting to alter higher education from within is one strategy. Another is to build a competitive parallel system.

The latter is what the founders of the new University of Austin (UATX) are attempting to do. Plans for this new university were [announced](#) last fall, as founding members such as Bari Weiss, Niall Ferguson, Heather Heying, Arthur Brooks, as well as many others, came together to build a new model of higher education that would reclaim classically liberal values of free speech and tolerance of diverse viewpoints while pursuing truth through a rigorous, balanced curriculum.

Plans for the University of Austin’s first class of undergraduates are underway and expected by 2024, but in the meantime, the new university is hosting a variety of programs including its “Forbidden Courses” series that kicked off last month with college students from across the country. Taught by esteemed faculty, including the university’s [founders](#) along with Deirdre McCloskey, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Thomas Chatterton-Williams, and others, the series was intended to explore topics and prompt discussions that are often ignored or silenced on many college campuses today.

I reached out to the University of Austin to hear how the

inaugural series went, and was treated to sample student evaluations of the program. The attendees appreciated the academic atmosphere of free exchange of ideas and viewpoint diversity and debate.

"I've always been interested in different school models, and I think there are a lot of problems with K-12 education and higher education right now," wrote one attendee. "The past week at UATX has been really refreshing. The other program participants [and] the workshop leaders have all been willing to hear what each person has to say, they're willing to lend a lot of credibility to each person's ideas, and there's an atmosphere of humility that, I think, makes UATX stand out from my other experiences in high school and in higher education."

According to another attendee: "I really wanted to have my beliefs challenged and, first of all, be able to talk about them.... [UATX was] a space where you could take classes that were 'forbidden' and be with other students who actually wanted to talk about things and not just take in what the teacher was saying and what social media was saying. We challenged each other, and we're all still friends."

Still other participants appreciated the mission of UATX to create a new model for higher education, rather than simply criticize the status quo. "So many people have expressed discontent with the way universities are now run, but not many people have come forward with a solution. And so UATX is doing exactly that, which I find compelling," wrote one summer attendee.

With faculty ideological bias becoming even more skewed on college campuses, and students forced to self-silence or self-censor to avoid conflict or cancellation, the University of Austin is a bright spot. For parents like me who are wondering what higher education might look like for our children, it is encouraging to see new university models emerge that value

free expression of ideas and encourage an array of perspectives.

The Nobel Prize-winning economist F.A. Hayek wrote in *The Road to Serfdom*: “Our freedom of choice in a competitive society rests on the fact that, if one person refuses to satisfy our wishes, we can turn to another.”

As viewpoints on college campuses become increasingly disconnected from those of most Americans, parents and students will demand more higher education choice and variety. The University of Austin is a prime example of entrepreneurial efforts to compete with incumbents and satisfy this mounting demand.

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