



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **National Student Survey: Hillsdale College Leads on Free Speech, Expression of Ideas**

*Students give Hillsdale College high marks in Comfort Expressing Ideas; Tolerance for Speakers Expressing Ideas; Confidence in Administration Supporting Free Speech; and 97% of Hillsdale students feel “comfortable” expressing their views in class.*

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College ranks among the top institutions for free speech according to a national survey conducted by the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) and College Pulse. The survey evaluated 257 colleges and universities across the country.

“Our understanding here at Hillsdale College is very old: ‘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,’” said Hillsdale College President Larry P. Arnn. “The result of our understanding is two-fold. The first is positive: we are able to learn together, which is what human beings are made to do. The second is that we do not have students roaming our campus, screaming venom at each other. Our classes continue with intensity and good order.”

The FIRE/College Pulse report highlighted that Hillsdale College experienced no instances of deplatforming, disruptions of speakers, or sanctions against students or faculty members for their views.

“As an institution of liberal learning, Hillsdale College encourages honest conversation, thoughtful inquiry, and respectful debate,” said Provost Christopher VanOrman. “Since its founding, the College has recognized civil and religious liberty as inestimable blessings, and we seek to maintain these blessings in an atmosphere of civility and academic rigor.”

Hillsdale ranked among the highest in the nation in several key areas:

- **Tolerance for Speakers:** 81% of Hillsdale students believe it is wrong to prevent others from attending a campus speech, compared to a national average of 48%.

- **Comfort Expressing Ideas:** 97% of Hillsdale students feel very or somewhat comfortable discussing controversial topics in public campus spaces, far exceeding the national average of 50%.
- **Administrative Support for Free Speech:** 84% of Hillsdale students find the college's protection of free speech extremely or very clear, well above the national average of 34%.
- **Community Engagement:** 90% of Hillsdale students report feeling lonely "never, or less than half the time," far surpassing every result from Ivy League schools.

"The data makes clear that Hillsdale College students feel confident in their freedom to express their views and connected to their community," said VanOrman. "They don't have to fear retaliation from their professors or the administration for their beliefs, and they can trust that even fellow students who disagree with them must do so in a civil and thoughtful way."

In a Wall Street Journal commentary, Dr. Arnn remarked "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."

For a comparative view of FIRE's student survey results, click [here](#). To view all of FIRE's survey results, click [here](#).

For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale College student life, click [here](#). For headshots of Dr. Arnn or Dr. VanOrman, 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 6.6 million. For more information, visit [hillsdale.edu](http://hillsdale.edu).

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