

The Future of the First Amendment III

**A study commissioned by the
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**

**Conducted by:
Kenneth Dautrich and David Yalof
University of Connecticut**

September 2007

HIGH SCHOOL FACULTY SURVEY – 2004, 2006 & 2007

1. Which of the following sources do you consider your main source of news?

	2007
Newspapers in print form	39%
Newspapers online	15%
Radio news broadcasts	23%
Television news broadcasts	59%
Television on-line websites	5%
Internet server provider websites such as Google	17%
Blogs	2%
Entertainment programs featuring current events	3%

2. During the past year, have you taught any classes that dealt primarily with journalism skills?

	2004	2006	2007
Yes	7%	8%	12%
No	93%	92%	88%

3. During the past year, have you taught any classes that dealt with the First Amendment?

	2004	2006	2007
Yes	24%	29%	26%
No	76%	71%	74%

4. During the past year, have you taught any classes that discuss the role of media in society?

	2004	2006	2007
Yes	42%	44%	44%
No	58%	56%	56%

5. During the past year, have you required as an assignment that your students read a newspaper or watch the television news, and if so, how often were they required to do so?

	2004	2006	2007
Never	44%	45%	38%
Once per year	12%	11%	19%
On a quarterly basis	17%	16%	20%
On a monthly basis	12%	11%	11%
On a weekly basis	14%	17%	12%

6. If you did require that students read a newspaper or watch the television news, which (if any) of the following activities did you require as part of that class assignment?

	2004	2006	2007
Students wrote reports	48%	26%	33%
Students wrote a letter to the editor/station manager	8%	3%	9%
Students gave oral presentations to the class	39%	21%	33%
No activities required	9%	8%	34%
Other _____	34%	21%	21%

7. During the past year, how often did you require as part of an assignment that your students do research using the World Wide Web or the Internet?

	2006	2007
Never	14%	17%
Once per year	14%	18%
On a quarterly basis	34%	29%
On a monthly basis	26%	25%
On a weekly basis	12%	11%

8. If you did require that students do research using the World Wide Web or the Internet, which (if any) of the following activities did you require as part of that class assignment?

	2007
Students wrote reports	65%
Students wrote a letter to the Internet site editor	4%
Students gave oral presentations to the class	52%
No activities required	16%
Other _____	16%

9. How important do you feel it is that ALL students be taught as part of the curriculum how to distinguish news from entertainment or other types of information that may be disseminated to the public?

2007

Very important	75%
Somewhat important	21%
Not too important	2%
Not important at all	1%
Don't know	2%

10. The First Amendment became part of the U.S. Constitution more than 200 years ago. This is what it says:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

Based on your own feelings about the First Amendment, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: The First Amendment goes too far in the rights it guarantees.

2004 2006 2007

Strongly agree	9%	12%	8%
Mildly agree	20%	21%	20%
Mildly disagree	16%	12%	20%
Strongly disagree	50%	50%	43%
Don't know	5%	5%	8%

11. Overall, how would you rate the job that the American educational system does in teaching students about First Amendment freedoms?

2004 2006 2007

Excellent	7%	6%	7%
Good	46%	42%	40%
Fair	29%	33%	36%
Poor	7%	9%	8%
Don't know	11%	10%	9%

12. Overall, do you think the press in America has too much freedom to do what it wants, too little freedom to do what it wants, or is the amount of freedom the press has about right?

	2004	2006	2007
Too much freedom	38%	29%	41%
Too little freedom	8%	10%	7%
About right	49%	55%	46%
Don't know	6%	6%	6%

13. People should be allowed to express unpopular opinions.

	2004	2006	2007
Strongly agree	72%	75%	62%
Mildly agree	25%	21%	32%
Mildly disagree	2%	3%	3%
Strongly disagree	1%	1%	2%
Don't Know	1%	0%	2%

14. People should be allowed to burn or deface the American flag as a political statement.

	2004	2006	2007
Strongly agree	15%	16%	12%
Mildly agree	13%	13%	12%
Mildly disagree	11%	11%	11%
Strongly disagree	59%	58%	61%
Don't know	2%	2%	3%

15. Musicians should be allowed to sing songs with lyrics that others might find offensive.

	2004	2006	2007
Strongly agree	28%	35%	25%
Mildly agree	30%	29%	30%
Mildly disagree	19%	19%	21%
Strongly disagree	21%	15%	22%
Don't know	2%	2%	3%

16. Newspapers should be allowed to publish freely without government approval of a story.

	2004	2006	2007
Strongly agree	53%	57%	49%
Mildly agree	27%	22%	28%
Mildly disagree	12%	13%	15%
Strongly disagree	6%	7%	5%
Don't know	2%	1%	3%

17. High school students should be allowed to report controversial issues in their student newspapers without the approval of school authorities.

	2004	2006	2007
Strongly agree	13%	13%	12%
Mildly agree	26%	27%	23%
Mildly disagree	27%	28%	24%
Strongly disagree	33%	31%	38%
Don't know	1%	1%	3%

18. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: "To be an American means, at least in part, to accept the responsibility to guard the rights of others, even those with whom we deeply disagree."

	2007
Strongly agree	59%
Mildly agree	35%
Mildly disagree	5%
Strongly disagree	2%

19. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Americans don't appreciate the First Amendment the way they ought to."

	2004	2006	2007
Strongly agree	30%	32%	40%
Mildly agree	43%	47%	40%
Mildly disagree	14%	12%	10%
Strongly disagree	5%	4%	4%
Don't know	7%	5%	7%

20. Are the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment something you personally think about or are they something you take for granted?

	2004	2006	2007
Personally think about	50%	49%	49%
Take for granted	46%	47%	47%
Don't know	4%	4%	5%

21. What about most people in the United States – do you think the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment are something people specifically think about or are they something they take for granted?

	2004	2006	2007
Personally think about	7%	5%	8%
Take for granted	86%	89%	85%
Don't know	7%	6%	7%

22. Below is a list of some stories that have appeared in the news recently. Please indicate, with the corresponding number in the space provided, whether you think the story is:

- a. Britney Spears shaving her head

	2007
Extremely important	1%
Very important	0%
Somewhat important	3%
Not that important	96%

- b. A presidential candidate giving a speech on tax policy

	2007
Extremely important	35%
Very important	45%
Somewhat important	20%
Not that important	1%

c. The latest bombing in Iraq that killed U.S. military personnel

2007

Extremely important	48%
Very important	36%
Somewhat important	14%
Not that important	1%

d. Recent declines in the Dow Jones Industrial stock average

2007

Extremely important	17%
Very important	45%
Somewhat important	34%
Not that important	3%

e. Highlights of the latest round of the NBA basketball playoffs

2007

Extremely important	3%
Very important	8%
Somewhat important	38%
Not that important	52%

23. Now I'd like you to go back through the list of stories. Please indicate, with the corresponding number in the space provided, how interested you are in each story:

a. Britney Spears shaving her head

2007

Extremely interested	1%
Very interested	2%
Somewhat interested	11%
Not that interested	87%

b. A presidential candidate giving a speech on tax policy

2007

Extremely interested	22%
Very interested	30%
Somewhat interested	33%
Not that interested	15%

c. The latest bombing in Iraq that killed U.S. military personnel

2007

Extremely interested	38%
Very interested	31%
Somewhat interested	28%
Not that interested	3%

d. Recent declines in the Dow Jones Industrial stock average

2007

Extremely interested	14%
Very interested	29%
Somewhat interested	37%
Not that interested	21%

e. Highlights of the latest round of the NBA basketball playoffs

2007

Extremely interested	7%
Very interested	15%
Somewhat interested	23%
Not that interested	55%

24. How important do you feel it is that ALL students be allowed to freely post material to blogs within the school itself during breaks in classroom instruction or other free periods?

2007

Very important	3%
Somewhat important	11%
Not too important	21%
Not important at all	58%
Don't know	7%

25. How much, if at all, does the following statement apply to your school: "My school has made specific efforts to promote the First Amendment principles through school activities, conversations and/or policies."

2007

A lot	8%
Some	55%
Only a little	29%
Not at all	9%

26. Have you ever received any formal instruction in the First Amendment?

	2004	2006	2007
Yes	51%	57%	58%
No	49%	43%	42%