Axios + Generation Lab Student Poll

Dating

A study on college student views on dating, based on a survey of 978 college students in October 2023

Confidential: The information contained in this transmission may contain privileged and confidential information. It is intended only for the use of the person(s) or entity named above.
The backdrop: College is often thought of as a time of newfound independence and experimentation, especially when it comes to dating and romantic relationships. But is this truly the experience of today’s college students?

The state of play: Changes in cultural beliefs, technology, and the lasting impacts of the pandemic have affected romantic relationships in all stages of life. How are these forces reflected in the dating beliefs and behaviors of college students in 2023?

So: Generation Lab and Axios asked hundreds of college students around the country to explain their dating experiences and beliefs.

Based on a survey of 978 college students, conducted in October 2023.
KEY INSIGHTS

Overall
❖ A majority of respondents are currently in a relationship
❖ Nearly 80% of respondents report having had 3 or fewer relationships in their lives

Dating Apps
❖ 79% of respondents do not use dating apps regularly
❖ Over half of respondents report meeting their current or previous partner through in-person connections

Important Factors
❖ Beliefs and sense of humor were particularly important factors when looking for a partner
❖ More respondents ranked professional goals as an important factor than physical appearance
1. Over half of respondents are partnered up

Q: “Do you have a significant other?”

**Overall**

- **No**: 45%
- **Yes — boyfriend**: 32%
- **Yes — girlfriend**: 21%
- **Yes — non-binary partner**: 2%
2. 61% of students have been on a date within the past 3 months

Q: “When is the last time you were on a date?”

**Overall**

- 30% Within the last week
- 17% Within the last month
- 14% Within the last 3 months
- 24% Within the last year or longer
- 14% Have never been on a date

Prepared for Axios

Generation Lab
3. Nearly half of respondents don’t participate in hookup culture

Q: “When was the last time you “hooked up” with someone?”

**Overall**

- Within the last week: 15%
- Within the last month: 7%
- Within the last 3 months: 7%
- Within the last year or longer: 26%
- Have never "hooked up": 45%
4. Most are not actively using dating apps

Q: “Which of the following apps do you use at least once a month?”

**Overall**

- Hinge: 8%
- Tinder: 12%
- Bumble: 8%
- Grindr: 2%
- Coffee Meets Bagel: 1%
- None: 79%
- Something else: 3%
5. Respondents report personality ranks above looks

Q: “When you consider a possible date or significant other, what is the most important factor for you?”

**Overall**

- Looks (facial appearance): 8%
- Looks (body appearance): 7%
- Beliefs: 37%
- Sense of humor: 34%
- Professional goals: 13%
6. 17% haven’t yet been in a committed relationship

Q: “How many “significant others” (someone you’d call a “boyfriend”, “girlfriend” or “partner”) have you had in your life?”

**Overall**

![Bar chart showing the distribution of significant others](chart.png)
7. Over half of relationships began with in-person connections

Q: “How did you meet your current (or most recent) significant other?”

**Overall**

- Dating app: 15%
- In school: 35%
- In-person (coincidence): 15%
- Online (NOT on a dating app): 7%
- Introduced by a mutual friend: 14%
- Other (Please specify): 14%
This study was conducted in October 2023 from a representative sample of 978 college students nationwide.

- The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percentage points. The Generation Lab conducts polling using a demographically representative sample frame of young people.
The Generation Lab is a polling and research firm studying young people and the trends that shape their world.

- We translate youth views and behavior for media, academia, businesses, government, and the American public. Whether through a one-day snapshot poll, or a multi-year longitudinal study, we pursue youth truth for our clients and the American public.
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