

4131 Spicewood Springs Road
Suite O-2
Austin, TX 78759

Office: 512-345-9720
Fax: 512-345-9740
email: mattg@baselice.com

TEXAS VOTER SURVEY

Baselice & Associates, Inc. was retained for the purposes of studying attitudes and opinions regarding higher education in Texas. The following are key findings from a telephone survey among N=800 randomly selected registered voters in Texas conducted on November 7-9, 2010. The margin of error for a sample of this size is $\pm 3.5\%$ at the .95 test level.

- Eight in ten voters (80%) think public colleges and universities in Texas can [Version X: be run more efficiently / Version Y: manage the money they have more wisely], while five percent do not think so and 15% are unsure. Note: half of the respondents were read the Version X language and the other half were presented with the Version Y phrasing. There was no statistically significant difference in the responses to the Version X and Version Y language.
- Just over seven in ten voters (71%) believe public colleges and universities in Texas can improve upon how they teach students while reducing operating costs (13% do not believe this and 17% are unsure).
- When combining first and second choices, a majority of respondents favor reducing administrative overhead (53%) if Texas public universities have less revenues because of the state budget shortfall. This choice was followed by delaying new facilities (37%), requiring professors to teach more students and do less research (30%), increasing class size (22%), freezing faculty pay (17%), raising taxes (10%), and raising tuition (6%).
- When asked to choose between the two, 87% select “educating students to prepare them for fruitful careers” as the most important purpose of universities while six percent choose “conducting research led by professors to create new knowledge” (seven percent are unsure).
- Nine out of ten (90%) respondents agree that there should be measurements in place to determine the effectiveness of the education delivered and material learned by students at colleges and universities (seven percent disagree and three percent are unsure).
- Eighty-five percent (85%) of respondents said that if they were a college student, they would be capable of judging [Version X: the job the professor did at teaching them / Version Y: whether or not they learned the material presented to them] (10% percent said they would not and five percent are unsure). There was no difference in the responses to the Version X and Version Y language.
- Nearly three-quarters (73%) of respondents agree that professors should be paid based on how much work they do, especially how many students they teach (23% percent disagree and four percent are unsure).
- Eighty-seven percent (87%) of respondents agree that college professors should be required to teach in the classroom at least six hours per week (nine percent disagree and four percent are unsure).
- Just over eight out of ten (81%) respondents agree that tuition dollars should be used to teach students, not to subsidize academic research (14% disagree and five percent are unsure).
- Eighty-eight percent (88%) of respondents agree Texas public universities should be required to conduct performance audits like most other state agencies and commissions do (eight percent disagree and four percent are unsure).