

Press Release: Oct. 20, 2010
 Center for the Study of Local Issues
 Anne Arundel Community College
 101 College Parkway, Arnold MD, 21012-1895
 Contact: Dan Nataf 410-777-2733

Anne Arundel County Survey Finds Residents Evenly Divided on Question A

A survey of 415 Anne Arundel County residents conducted Oct. 11-14 by students assisting the Center for the Study of Local Issues (CSLI) at Anne Arundel Community College found the public to be evenly divided when asked how they intended to vote on Question A, a referendum on the County Council’s zoning decision allowing slots at various locations in the county, including Arundel Mills mall and Laurel race track.

Respondents were asked “Will you be voting for or against Question A on the November ballot? A ‘for’ vote would approve the County Council’s zoning decision permitting slots in the county, including at Arundel Mills and Laurel. An ‘against’ vote would leave the county without slots zoning at any location.”

Table 1 shows the overall results, as well as how some voters’ characteristics affected the vote for Question A. As was the case when CSLI polled about support for the petition to put Question A on the ballot last spring, the overall distribution was evenly divided. This fall, there were 42 percent equally “for” and “against” the measure. Table 1 also shows that supporters of this ballot item tended to be less ideological, partisan and interested in the elections overall.

“This is a rare issue in which conservatives and liberals are in agreement opposing Question A, while moderates, independents and those less than ‘very interested’ in the race favor it. Turnout will play a disproportionate role in determining the outcome of this ballot item,” said Dan Nataf, director of the Center for the Study of Local Issues.

Table 1: Question A – Overall and among Various Groups

	Overall	Level of interest in elections			Party registration			Ideology		
		Very	Somewhat	Not very	Dem	Rep	Unaffil.	Liberal	Moderate	Cons.
Favor	42	40	44	44	42	39	49	36	47	38
Oppose	42	47	34	39	42	47	32	49	35	52
Undecided	16	14	23	17	17	14	20	15	18	11
Total*	100	101	101	100	101	100	101	100	100	101

*Numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number; totals may equal slightly more or less than 100 percent.

Summary of Other Findings

A summary of other issues covered by the CSLI survey is presented below.

Perceptions of the economy: A range of questions about perceptions of economic conditions and specific experiences relevant to the economy were included. Many of the indicators experienced only small changes.

Most important problem faced by residents of Anne Arundel County: The economy continued to be the most cited item (36 percent), dwarfing all other items and unchanged from last March.

Right direction/wrong direction: There was a small drop from last spring in the percentage saying that the county was moving in the right direction (from 52 percent to 49 percent).

Quality of life in Anne Arundel County and county government: A plurality (42 percent) felt that county government has left the quality of life unchanged since the last elections in 2006. A slightly larger percentage (28 percent) felt that the quality had been worsened rather than improved (20 percent).

Early voting: Most respondents said that they would be voting on election day (76 percent) rather than early voting (9 percent) or using an absentee ballot (2 percent). When asked why they preferred to vote on election day, most respondents pointed to issues such as tradition, convenience of location, availability of time, and lack of information about early voting.

Interest in the elections: 66 percent indicated that they were very interested in the upcoming elections.

County executive election: When respondents were asked whether they would vote for John Leopold, Joanna Conti or Mike Shay for county executive at this time, a plurality favored Leopold (34 percent) over Conti (21 percent) or Shay (2 percent) with 32 percent undecided, 2 percent planning not to vote for any of the three candidates and 4 percent giving no answer. Eliminating these categories as well as the “undecided” responses changed the results to Leopold 59 percent, Conti 37 percent and Shay 4 percent. Only 15 percent said that they were “well informed” about the candidates’ stands on issues. When asked whether they favored one candidate’s stand on education, taxes or slots, between 55 and 73 percent said that they were either undecided or “didn’t know enough.” When asked which trait or issue was most important, Leopold voters tended to emphasize fiscal concerns while Conti voters gravitated to education. In both cases, large numbers mentioned personal traits such as honesty/integrity or experience and prior record.

O’Malley vs. Ehrlich for governor: When asked whether they would vote for Martin O’Malley or Robert Ehrlich for governor if the election were today, a plurality favored Ehrlich (40 percent) over O’Malley (29 percent) with 22 percent undecided and 3 percent favoring “someone else.” Eliminating the ‘undecided’ and “someone else” responses changed the results to Ehrlich 59 percent and O’Malley 42 percent (see details in the text). About one third (35 percent) said that they were “very informed” about the candidates’ stands on the issues. Ehrlich was especially favored by those concerned with fiscal issues, while O’Malley was favored by those pointing to personal traits, education and other policies.

Obama’s job approval: 42 percent approved, down from 47 percent last spring. A majority now disapproves: 49 percent.

Which party do you trust? The percentage favoring Democrats dropped from last spring from 37 to 34 percent. The Republicans are now favored by a plurality (37 percent) as the percentage saying “neither” decreased from 30 to only 21 percent.

Methodology: The survey polled a random sample of 415 county residents who were at least 18 years old. It was conducted Oct. 11-14, 2010, during evening hours. Phone numbers were derived from a database of listed landline numbers as well as computer chosen, randomly assigned numbers. There was about a 5 percent statistical margin of error for the overall sample; the error rate was higher for subgroups such as “Democrats.” The dataset was weighted by gender and party to better represent the general population. Election questions were generally limited to ‘likely voters.’ College students were trained and used as

telephone interviewers. A copy of the questionnaire with percentages can be found near the end of the press release.

Contact Dan Nataf, Ph.D., center director, for additional comments or questions at 410-777-2733 and ddnataf@aacc.edu. Check the CSLI website for results from previous surveys: www2.aacc.edu/csli.

Perceptions of the Economy, Most Important Problem

Regarding perceptions and experiences related to the economy, the overall picture did not show much change from the spring survey.

The survey began with an open-ended question asking “What is the most important problem facing the residents of Anne Arundel County at the present time?”

Starting in March 2008, CSLI surveys have found an increasing level of concern for the economy, as the percentage citing it as the most important problem nearly tripled from 8 to 23 percent by October of that year. Concern continued as by March 2009, the stock market had reaching its lowest point and public opinion duly reflected heightening concern as the economy was cited by nearly half (48 percent) of all respondents. Over the last year, the percentage citing the economy has held steady at 36 percent (see Table 2).

Another indicator of economic concerns – taxes – rose a bit from 11 earlier this year to 13 percent in October, slightly above the 12 percent average for the period from March 2005 to the present. Other issue areas that have historically been in double digits such as growth and education have fallen into the single digits.

Table 2: “Most Important Problem facing Residents” – Spring 2005 to Fall 2010¹

	Spring '05	Fall '05	Spring '06	Fall '06	Spring '07	Fall '07	Spring '08	Fall '08	Spring '09	Fall '09	Spring '10	Fall '10	Mean
Economy	7	7	15	7	12	8	23	38	48	33	36	36	23
Taxes – too high	13	10	10	9	15	17	16	12	10	12	11	13	12
Growth / development	18	22	16	21	16	16	12	9	5	5	5	2	12
Education / school problems	16	12	13	16	12	12	12	10	8	7	8	9	11
Traffic congestion/problems	9	14	9	12	11	12	7	6	4	5	6	6	8
Crime / drugs	5	6	11	11	9	10	6	4	6	8	6	6	8
Unsure / no answer	11	11	8	7	9	6	9	7	8	10	10	8	9
Other answer	21	18	18	17	16	19	15	14	11	21	17	21	17
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	101	99	101	100

Note: In this and other tables, totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Since March 2002, the CSLI semi-annual survey has asked a benchmark question about the economy: “How would you rate economic conditions in Anne Arundel County – ‘excellent,’ ‘good,’ ‘only fair’ or ‘poor?’ ”

¹ From spring 2007 to spring 2010, surveys’ answer categories for “most important problem” have included “lack of affordable housing” for interviewers to check off. Previously, that answer to the open-ended question would have been categorized under “economy,” a practice that was resumed in fall 2010. The running totals in Table 2 combine both answers into the single “economy” category. Similarly, crime includes those saying “crime” and “illegal drugs.”

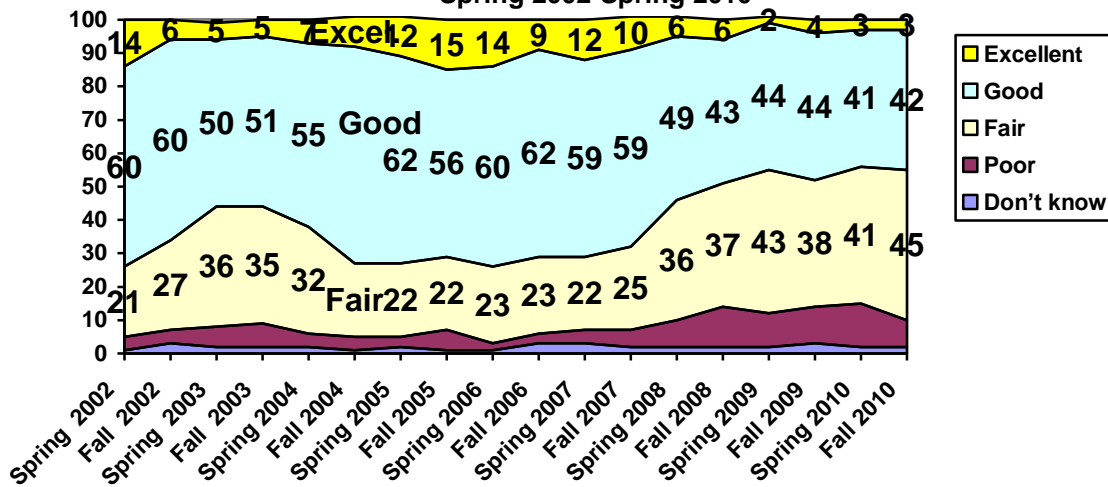
Since spring 2009, the question was extended and asked also about the state of Maryland and the country overall.

For Anne Arundel County, the historical percentage saying that the economy was a combined “excellent” or “good” has averaged 60 percent. As shown on Table 3 and Graph 1, there was a small increase (1 percentage point) in the combined score for a total of 45 percent since last spring. Moreover, there was also a decrease in the percentage saying ”poor” and a corresponding increase in those saying “fair” implying that the gravity of the economic crisis may be lessening somewhat.

Table 3: Perceptions of County Economic Conditions

Condition	Fall 2004	Spring 2005	Fall 2005	Spring 2006	Fall 2006	Spring 2007	Fall 2007	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Mean
Excellent +Good	74	74	71	74	71	71	69	55	49	46	48	44	45	60
Excellent	9	12	15	14	9	12	10	6	6	2	4	3	3	8
Good	65	62	56	60	62	59	59	49	43	44	44	41	42	52
Only Fair	22	22	22	23	23	22	25	36	37	43	38	41	45	31
Poor	4	3	6	2	3	4	5	8	12	10	11	13	8	7
Don't know	1	2	1	1	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2
Total	101	101	100	100	100	100	101	101	100	101	100	100	100	101

**Graph 1: Economic Conditions in Anne Arundel County
Spring 2002-Spring 2010**



Regarding the state of Maryland, respondents seem unchanged from last spring, with only small variations in scores (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Perceptions of State Economy

Condition	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010
Excellent+Good	27	30	31	32
Excellent	1	2	2	1
Good	26	28	29	31
Only Fair	49	45	46	47
Poor	22	21	21	19
Don't know	2	4	2	2
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 4.2: Perceptions of National Economy

Condition	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010
Excellent+Good	5	11	11	11
Excellent	0	1	1	2
Good	5	10	10	9
Only Fair	30	39	42	41
Poor	63	48	46	47
Don't know	1	2	2	1
Total	99	100	101	100

With regard to the country's economy (see Table 4.2), recent Gallup surveys (September 2010) of national samples produced a "poor" score of 47 percent, identical to the CSLI survey results for this fall.²

Nataf said that these results "show that perceptions of the country's economy are nationalized and independent of perceptions of state and local economies. Residents continue to perceive the Anne Arundel County economy to be almost four times healthier than that of the country overall and share perceptions of Americans nationwide regarding the country's economy."

Since spring 2008, CSLI surveys have included a battery of questions focused on specific aspects of economic distress such as inflation, stock/retirement losses, unemployment, house foreclosure, housing affordability, the cost of transportation, and the like.

Respondents were asked: "Thinking about your personal circumstances, please tell me whether any of these economic conditions apply to you or your household." Table 5 shows the results for the last six CSLI surveys.

Table 5: Economic Conditions Applying to Personal Circumstances

Condition	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Fall '10-Spring '10
Significant losses in your stock or retirement accounts	n.a.	71	75	70	56	60	+4
Hard to afford cost of taxes*	47	58	59	59	63	60	-3
Wages or salaries are not rising as fast as the cost of living	56	59	55	55	56	56	0
Hard to afford cost of utilities such as electricity or gas	61	50	53	42	44	43	-1
Delay in making a major purchase such as a home or car	n.a.	n.a.	51	46	47	44	-3
Health care insurance is unavailable, too expensive or inadequate	35	30	29	33	32	34	+2
Facing the possibility of unemployment	11	15	24	24	19	21	+2
Hard to afford cost of transportation	40	32	21	17	21	24	+3
Unable to find affordable housing	21	11	12	13	15	10	-5
Facing the possibility of house foreclosure or loss	6	4	6	8	7	7	0

* The exact wording of this item changed from spring 2008 to fall 2008, partly accounting for the change in percentages since that time.

² See <http://www.gallup.com/poll/143249/Economic-Confidence-Remains-Steady-2010-Low.aspx>

Table 5 shows the evolution of the public’s responses to this set of questions. While overall not much changed since last fall’s survey, there was a small (4 point) rise in the number saying that they had experienced “significant losses in stock or retirement accounts” and a 5 percentage point decline in the percentage “unable to find affordable housing.”

Other Findings

County – Right or Wrong Direction?

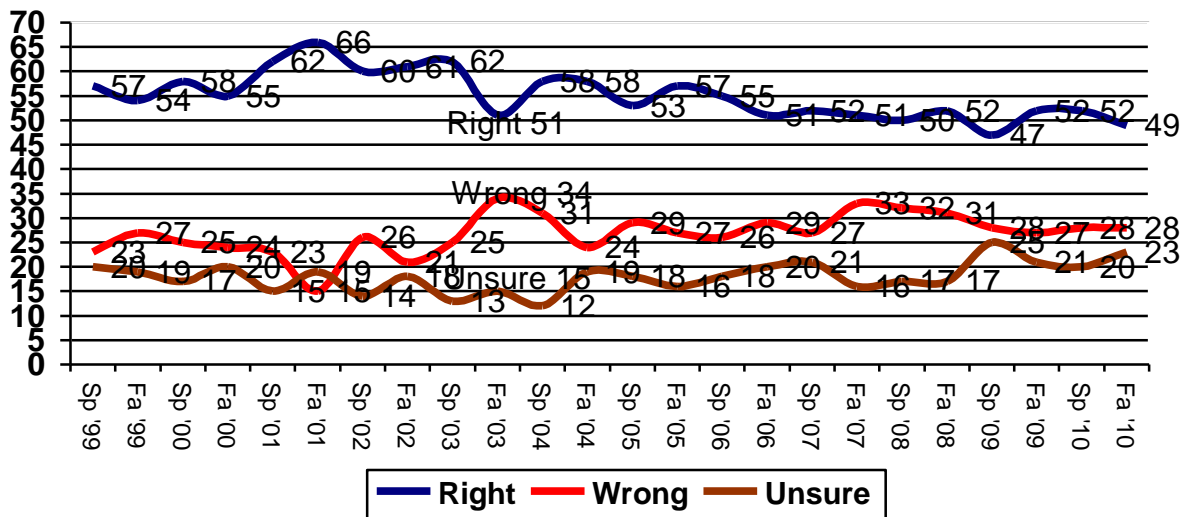
The survey included a CSLI benchmark question whose results are seen on Table 6: “Overall, would you say that the county is headed in the right direction or in the wrong direction?”

Table 6 and Graph 2 show that there was a small decrease in the number saying ‘right direction’ (from 52 to 49 percent), but generally the sentiment of respondents has been unwavering over the last three years.

Table 6: Anne Arundel County - Right vs. Wrong Direction

Response	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010
Right direction	52	52	49
Wrong direction	27	28	28
Unsure	21	20	23
Total	100	100	100

Graph 2: Right/Wrong Direction for Anne Arundel County



How has County Government affected the Quality of Life in Anne Arundel County

The quality of life was a topic in both the spring and fall surveys. The spring 2010 survey asked, “How would you rate the quality of life here in Anne Arundel County: excellent, good, only fair or poor?” Over three-quarters (80 percent) said that the quality of life was excellent or good (see Table 7).

Table 7: Quality of Life in Anne Arundel County (Spring 2010)

Condition	Percentage
Excellent+Good	80
Excellent	17
Good	63
Fair	17
Poor	3
Don't know	0
Total	100

The fall survey also asked about the quality of life, but included a reference to the county government's impact – had it improved, worsened or left unchanged the quality of life since the last elections in 2006 (see Table 8). A plurality found the quality of life unchanged but a slightly larger number (28 percent) said that the quality of life had worsened rather than improved (20 percent).

Table 8: Impact of County Government on Quality of Life in Anne Arundel County (Fall 2010)

Condition	Percentage
Improved	20
Left unchanged	42
Worsened	28
No answer	11
Total	101

County and State Elections

How will voters cast their votes this year; why not vote early?

With the advent of early voting, the fall survey included a question which asked, “Do you think you will be able to get to the polls on election day, vote by early ballot, vote by absentee ballot or will you probably not vote at all? As seen on Table 9, about three-quarters of all respondents said that they would be voting on election day (76 percent). Another 9 percent was inclined to use early voting, while only 2 percent would avail themselves of an absentee ballot.

Table 9 also shows a statistically significant relationship between education and propensity to vote. While about one-third of those with a high school diploma or less were not likely to vote, those with more formal education had a much higher propensity to vote. “It seems fair to say that with more formal education, people are more likely to be attuned to the political process and feel politically efficacious,” Nataf said.

Table 9: Likelihood to Vote, Preferred Method and Relationship with Education

	Overall	less than a high school diploma	a high school diploma	some college	completed a two-year associate college degree	Completed a four year bachelor's degree	postgraduate work
Vote on Nov. 2	76	71	54	74	78	78	82
Early vote	9	0	7	8	7	13	11
Absentee vote	2	0	5	2	9	1	1
Probably not vote	11	29	32	15	4	7	5
Unsure	1	0	2	1	2	1	2
Total	99	100	100	100	100	100	101

Those who said that they would be voting on election day were asked a follow up question: “You mentioned that you plan to vote on Nov. 2 – is there a reason why you will not cast your vote earlier at one of the five places available within Anne Arundel County?”

As seen on Table 10, one quarter either said “tradition” or “just prefer” in response to this question: combined total of 25 percent. A relatively large number were opposed to early voting or said there was “no need” for it: 17 percent combined. Some mentioned the convenience (16 percent) of just voting on election day, or the fact that polling locations were closer to them (7 percent). Some (5 percent) did not trust the vote counts generated by early voting. Nearly one-fifth were not informed about early voting, with some saying that having been alerted to this option, they might do it after all. Ideally, the largest segment of the electorate likely to use early voting – even with perfect information about locations and times – would be about 25 percent – combining the 9 percent of the total electorate who intend to use it with the 18 percent of the total currently choosing to vote on election (76 percent) but claiming they lacked information about early voting.

Table 10: Reasons for Not Voting Early

Reason	Percentage
Uninformed	18
Logistics, convenience	16
Tradition	15
Prefer election day	10
Better locations on election day	7
Have the time to vote on election day	5
No need	5
Opposes	12
Don't trust vote counts	5
Other reason	5
More exciting to vote on election day	2
Total	100

Voter Interest in this Election

This section deals with elections and thus limits itself to those who are considered “likely voters” – those who indicated that they would be voting using some method this election cycle. These likely voters are used to calculate all subsequent percentages presented in this press release.

Likely voters were asked about their level of interest in these elections: interest varied from two-thirds who considered the election “very interesting” to the rest who were only “somewhat” or “not very interested” (see Table 11).

Table 11: Level of Interest in Elections

Level of interest	Percentage
Very	66
Somewhat	27
Not very	7
No answer	0
Total	100

The Race for County Executive

The survey first asked respondents how informed they felt using this question: “Turning now to the race for county executive between Democrat Joanna Conti, Republican John Leopold, and Green Party candidate Mike Shay, how well informed do you think you are about the candidates’ stands on such issues as managing growth or balancing the county budget – very informed, somewhat or not very informed?”

Table 12: Voters’ Information Levels regarding Candidates’ Stands

How informed?	Percentage
Very	15
Somewhat	36
Not very	49
Total	100

As shown on Table 12, about half of the respondents were not very informed (49 percent). Only 15 percent were very informed.

Table 13 shows the degree to which respondents said they were likely to vote for any of the three candidates at this time. While incumbent John Leopold maintains a sizable lead over Democratic challenger Joanna Conti, about one-third remained “undecided.” The lead grows from 13 to 22 percentage points as categories are eliminated and the undecided voters are removed. “Clearly for Joanna Conti to catch John Leopold, the undecided vote would have to break dramatically in her favor. In addition, she also faces the challenge of having some anti-Leopold votes taken by Mike Shay,” Nataf said.

Table 13: Likely County Executive Vote

Candidate	Including all categories	Excluding some categories but with undecided	Excluding some categories but without undecided
Joanna Conti	21	24	37
John Leopold	34	38	59
Mike Shay	2	3	4
Undecided	32	35	--
Won't vote for any	2	--	--
Won't say, no answer	10	--	--
Total	101	100	100

When asked which issue or candidate trait has the greatest importance upon the choice of county executive candidate, a wide variety of specific answers were offered from “believes in the free market” to “health care access” and “ethics.” Table 14 summarizes the major categories of responses.

Table 14: Issues and Traits that Influence Voters' Choice for County Executive

Category	Overall	Conti	Leopold	Shay	Undecided
Fiscal concerns (taxes, budget)	16	13	22	0	12
Economy (jobs, general)	9	13	9	0	8
Party	9	13	14	0	0
Ethics/morality/honesty/integrity/trustworthy	23	20	24	29	24
Personal traits (likeable, experience, previous record, good speaker)	21	22	22	29	14
Education	8	9	2	29	14
Other policies (crime, growth, environment, transportation, slots)	10	7	5	14	22
Anything else	4	4	1	0	6
Total	100	101	99	101	100

To a greater degree than for the race for governor, the county executive race has focused on characteristics of the individuals involved: ethics and other personal traits made up 44 percent of all items mentioned as important elements. “This may reflect the low overall level of information about the candidates’ stands on policies, as suggested by the fact that nearly half of the sample considered itself ‘not very informed’ in this regard,” Nataf said.

Conti voters seemed largely concerned with education and the economy; Leopold voters were more focused on fiscal matters – budgets, taxes and spending. While the Shay voters are shown, the lack of sufficient cases makes any inferences unreliable. Undecided voters seemed to focus on policy over personal traits, with higher than average scores for education and “other policies.”

The final attempt to identify issues that were especially salient to voters was based on a closed-ended presentation of several areas of possible concern, asking respondents to indicate which candidate’s stand they favored.

As shown on Table 15, the “undecided:” and “don’t know enough” categories overwhelmed all others, again suggesting that the race hinges more on individual characteristics of the candidates such as name recognition, experience, and reputation rather than voters’ understanding of any specific plans for education, the environment or transportation.

Table 15 also shows that Conti’s stands are perceived as less determined than Leopold’s since her scores vary so little (low of 10 percent, high of 17 percent). Leopold is more of a known quantity, with a

greater variance in scores (low of 17 percent, high of 32). Indeed, the incumbent scores his highest score (32 percent) for “having the right experience” combined with other traditional Republican emphases: “keeping taxes low” (30 percent) and “encouraging economic development” (31 percent). Conti’s highest score was associated with “maintaining high ethical standards.” Shay’s highest scores were associated with “preserving the environment” which seems related to his profile as an environmental activist.

“What seems particularly surprising is that the only specific policy position mentioned in the list was ‘allowing slots at Arundel Mills mall’ which resulted in the highest combined ‘undecided/don’t know enough’ score (73 percent). This suggests that either the candidates have not done a good job publicizing their views, or the views that have been publicized have not been clear to the public,” Nataf suggested.

Table 15: Voters’ Choice of Candidates’ Approaches to Various Issues

	On this issue are you more favorable to Conti or Leopold, or Shay?					
	Conti	Leopold	Shay	Undecided	Don’t know enough	Undec.+ don’t know enough
Allowing slots at Arundel Mills mall	10	17	1	27	46	73
Improving transportation	13	20	1	21	45	66
Protecting the needs of vulnerable populations in the county budget	16	18	1	21	44	65
Maintaining high ethical standards?	17	17	3	24	39	63
Improving public schools	13	24	1	19	43	62
Keeping neighborhoods safe	13	24	1	21	41	62
Making County government more efficient	12	29	2	21	37	58
Preserving the environment	15	21	7	18	39	57
Managing growth	13	29	2	18	38	56
Having the right experience for the job?	11	32	1	21	35	56
Keeping taxes low	14	30	1	19	36	55
Encouraging economic development	13	31	1	18	37	55

The Race for Governor

As was the case in March 2010, the CSLI semi-annual survey again asked respondents to indicate whether they would be more likely to vote for Gov. Martin O’Malley or former Gov. Bob Ehrlich at this time. Table 16 shows that in both surveys, Ehrlich’s margin over O’Malley was around a dozen percentage points – 12 in spring, and 11 in fall.

The fall survey asked more directly whether a voter was still ‘undecided’ – with nearly one quarter (24 percent) being found in that category when other categories of voters – those voting for other candidates or for neither – were excluded. This resulted in a 13 percentage point Ehrlich advantage; removing all the undecided voters increased the advantage to 17 percentage points.

Ehrlich’s margin of victory in Anne Arundel County in 2006 was 14.9 percentage points, though still losing statewide by over 6 points. These results show that the electorate has not changed much since last March and indeed since 2006, unless the sizable pool of undecided voters move to one side or the other decisively by the time all the votes are cast on Nov. 2.

Table 16: O'Malley vs. Ehrlich for Governor in November

Candidate	Spring 2010		Fall 2010		
	Including all categories	Excluding some categories	Including all categories	Excluding some categories but with undecided	Excluding some categories but without undecided
O'Malley	35	43	29	32	42
Ehrlich	47	57	40	45	59
Someone else	3	--	2	--	--
Undecided	--	--	22	24	--
Neither	5	--	1	--	--
Unsure, Don't know	10	--	5	--	--
Total	100	100	99	101	101

As with the county executive race, the survey also asked voters to indicate how informed they felt about the candidates' stands on issues as well as the one issue or candidate trait that was most important in shaping the choice of candidate for governor.

Regarding how informed voters felt, Table 17 makes it clear that voters perceived themselves as having a better understanding of the stands claimed by gubernatorial candidates than was the case with county executive candidates.

Table 17: How Informed are Voters about Candidates' Stands – County Executive vs. Governor

How informed	County Executive	Governor
Very	15	36
Somewhat	36	47
Not very	49	16
Total	100	99

As indicated on Table 17, the “not very informed” score was 32 percentage points lower when referring to the race for governor: while nearly half of the respondents were not well informed among those pondering the county executive race, less than a fifth appeared equally uninformed regarding the gubernatorial race.

“This points to the difficulty of down-ballot candidates trying to compete with very well financed campaigns at the very top of the ticket. The former are drowned by the endless commercials focusing on Ehrlich vs. O'Malley, or, in this cycle, Andy Harris vs. Frank Kratovil in the first congressional district. One can only imagine the paucity of information held by voters for offices even less well covered by the free and paid media – such as county council, delegates, sheriff, or register of wills. When an incumbent is running in these races, clearly there is the immediate benefit of name recognition, often making undecided voters lean towards the slightly more well-known incumbent,” Nataf said.

As shown on Table 18, Ehrlich voters were nearly four times more likely to be concerned with the fiscal condition of the state than O'Malley voters. By contrast, the latter were twice as likely to favor the incumbent governor based on personal traits (which includes experience and record) and on education policy. They tended to be more inclined to favor the governor if they were concerned with other policies as well. Undecided voters are mostly distinguishable by policy concerns such as education and the economy.

Table 18: Issues and Traits that Influence Voters' Choice for Governor

Category	Overall	O'Malley	Ehrlich	Undecided
Fiscal concerns (taxes, budget)	21	9	32	15
Ethics/morality/honesty/integrity/trustworthy	21	21	23	21
Personal traits (likeable, experience, previous record, good speaker)	14	18	9	13
Economy (jobs, general)	13	13	12	15
Education	13	16	8	23
Party	9	13	11	0
Other policies (crime, growth, environment, transportation, slots)	9	11	6	10
Anything else	1	0	0	4
Total	101	101	101	101

President Obama – Job Approval

Since fall 2006, CSLI polls have closely tracked national presidential job approval trends as indicated by Gallup surveys.³ President Barack Obama's job approval has been trending downwards, both in national and CSLI local polling. A point of convergence was reached last spring when Gallup and CSLI polls both registered an approval score of 47 percent.

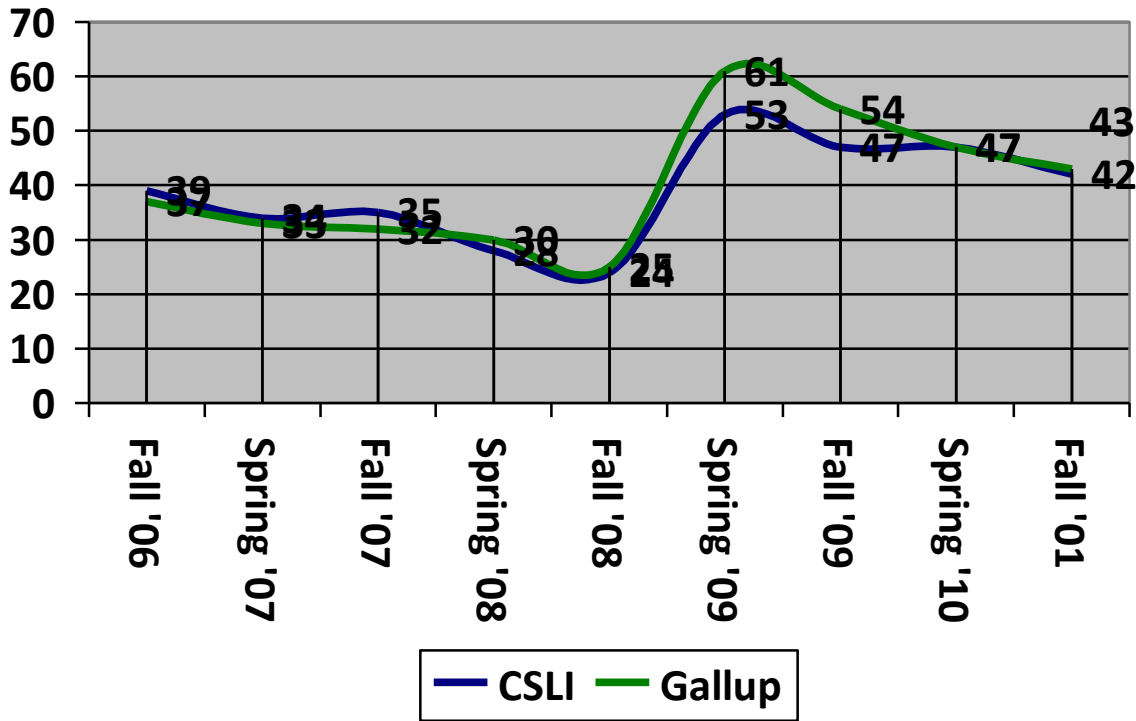
This fall, Obama's job approval shrunk to 42 percent in the CSLI poll, again nearly matching exactly Gallup's 43 percent for the period Oct. 13-15. Thus, it seems that his ratings in the county paralleled that found nationally.

Table 19: Job Approval for Presidents Bush and Obama

Issue	Fall 2005	Spring 2006	Fall 2006	Spring 2007	Fall 2007	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010
Approve	45	37	39	34	35	28	24	53	47	47	42
Disapprove	48	54	55	58	57	62	69	31	42	45	49
No answer	7	8	7	7	9	10	8	16	11	8	10
Total	100	99	101	99	101	100	101	100	100	100	101

³ See <http://www.gallup.com/poll/113980/gallup-daily-obama-job-approval.aspx>

**Graph 3: Presidential Job Approval –
CSLI and Selected Gallup 2006-2010**



As seen on Table 20, Obama’s popularity among Democrats has continued to decline, experiencing an 18 percentage point drop in approval during the last year and one half. His score was essentially unchanged among Republicans but exhibited a very sharp 20 point drop among unaffiliated voters over the last six months.

Table 20: Presidential Job Approval by Partisan Affiliation

	Overall Obama				Democrats				Republicans				Unaffiliated			
	Sp '09	Fall '09	Sp '10	Fall '10	Sp '09	Fall '09	Sp '10	Fall '10	Sp '09	Fall '09	Sp '10	Fall '10	Sp '09	Fall '09	Sp '10	Fall '10
Approve	53	47	47	42	79	72	70	61	25	17	24	24	53	54	53	33
Disapprove	31	42	45	49	11	19	24	29	55	72	67	70	30	38	42	45
No opinion	16	11	8	10	11	9	7	10	20	11	9	6	16	9	5	21
Total	100	100	100	101	101	100	101	100	100	100	100	100	99	101	100	99

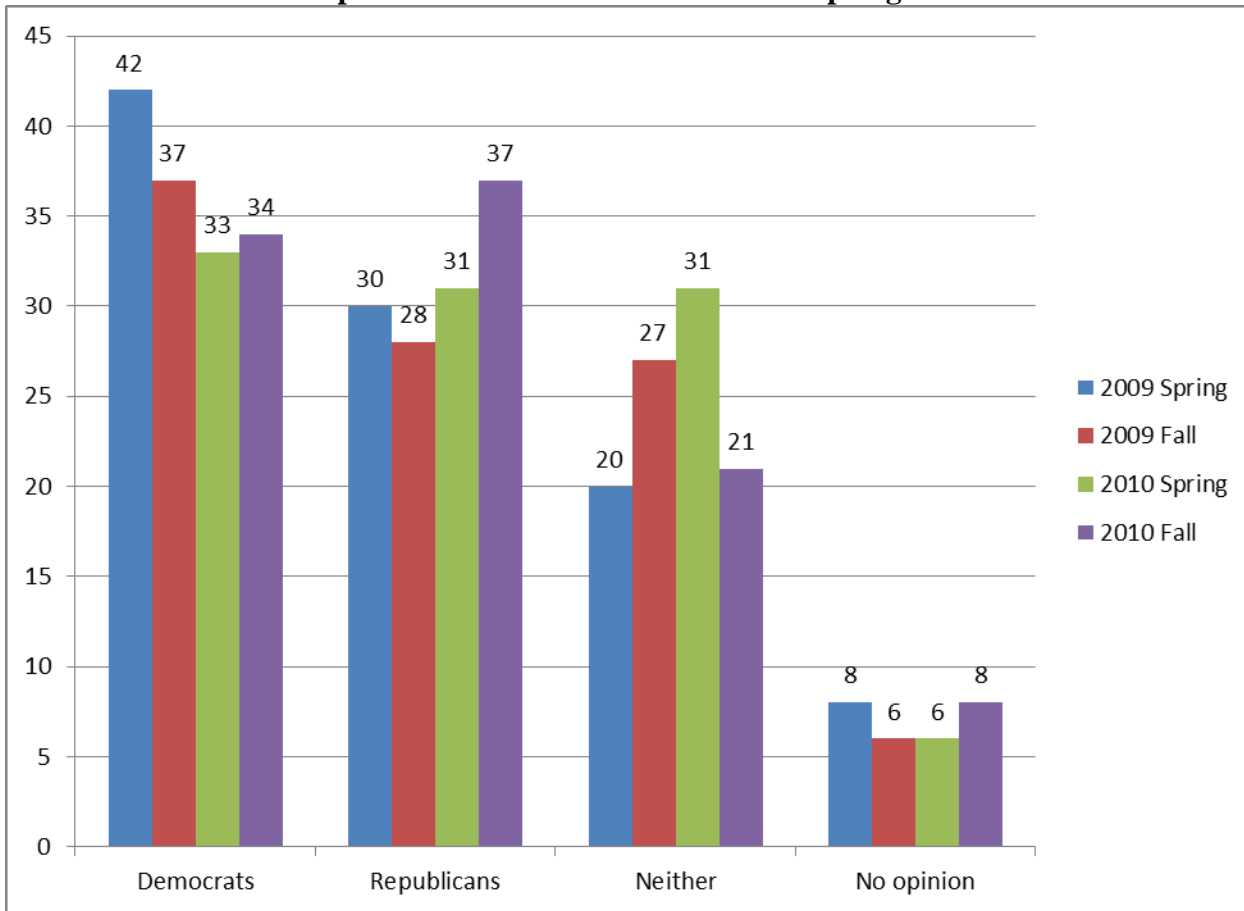
Trust in Political Parties

Both last spring as well as this fall, the CSLI survey asked which party “do you trust to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years.” Table 21 shows that Democrats have experienced a decline in trust, dropping 8 points to 34 percent during the last year and one half, although there was a slight rise from spring to fall 2010. The rise in trust in the Republican Party increased from 30 to 37 percent during the same period. The “neither” position dropped dramatically over the last six months from 31 to 21 percent, perhaps moving over largely to the Republican camp.

Table 21: Which Party do you Trust?

	2009		2010	
	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall
Democrats	42	37	33	34
Republicans	30	28	31	37
Neither	20	27	31	21
No answer	8	6	6	8
Total	100	98	101	100

Graph 4: Trust in the Political Parties Spring 2009-Fall 2010



Methodology

The survey polled a random sample of 415 county residents who were at least 18 years old. It was conducted Oct. 11-14, 2010 during evening hours. Phone numbers were derived from a database of listed landline numbers as well as computer chosen, randomly assigned numbers. There was about a 5 percent statistical margin of error for the overall sample; the error rate was higher for subgroups such as “Democrats.” The dataset was weighted by gender and political party to better represent the general population. All explicitly ‘electoral’ questions were also filtered by choosing only those who expressed the intention of voting in the coming elections. College students were trained and used as telephone interviewers.

Contact Dan Nataf, Ph.D., center director, for additional comments or questions at 410-777-2733 and ddnataf@acc.edu. Check the CSLI Web site for results from previous surveys: www2.aacc.edu/csl.

CSLI Semi-Annual Survey – Fall, 2010

1. What do you think is the most important problem facing the residents of Anne Arundel County at the present time? (DON'T READ THE LIST! Have them *volunteer* an answer)

Problem	Circle one
Crime/Drugs	6
Economy – (e.g., no jobs, high cost of living, business closing or losses)	36
Education, problems with schools	9
Environment (e.g., air or water pollution, saving the Bay)	5
Government – corrupt, unethical	2
Government – inefficient, wasteful	1
Government – lacks resources for roads, schools, services	2
Growth/overpopulation- too much development	2
Healthcare (cost, access)	1
Slots	7
Taxes – too high	13
Transportation problems/traffic congestion	6
Other answer (write in:	3
Unsure/No Answer	8
Total	101

2. Overall, would you say that the County is headed in the right direction or in the wrong direction?

- (1) **Right** direction 49%
- (2) **Wrong** direction 28%
- (0) **Unsure** or don't know 23%

3. Next I would like to know how you would rate economic conditions in Anne Arundel County, in Maryland, and in the United States generally. First how would you rate economic conditions in Anne Arundel COUNTY -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

- (1) Excellent 3% (2) Good 42% (3) Only Fair 45% (4) Poor 8% (0) DK, NA 2%

3.1 How about economic conditions in Maryland?

- (1) Excellent 1% (2) Good 31% (3) Only Fair 47% (4) Poor 19% (0) DK, NA 2%

3.2 How about economic conditions in the United States?

- (1) Excellent 2% (2) Good 9% (3) Only Fair 41% (4) Poor 47% (0) DK, NA 1%

4. Thinking now about your personal circumstances, please tell me whether any of these economic conditions apply to you or your household.

	Applies	Doesn't apply	Unsure, no answer
4.1 Wages or salaries are not rising as fast as the cost of living	56	41	3
4.2 Facing the possibility of unemployment	21	77	2
4.3 Significant losses in your stock or retirement accounts	60	39	2
4.4 Facing the possibility of house foreclosure or loss	7	92	1
4.5 Unable to find affordable housing	10	89	1
4.6 Hard to afford the cost of transportation	24	74	2
4.7 Hard to afford the cost of utilities such as electricity or gas	43	55	2
4.8 Delay in making a major purchase such as a home or car	44	54	2
4.9 Health care insurance is unavailable, too expensive or inadequate	34	62	4
4.10 Taxes are too high in relation to government services provided	60	35	5

The next few questions deal with the upcoming elections for state and local offices on November 2nd.

5. Do you think you will be able to get to the polls that day, vote by early ballot, vote by absentee ballot or will you probably not vote at all?

- (1) Vote that day - **(Go to Question 6)** 76%
- (2) Vote early ballot 9%
- (3) Vote by absentee ballot 2%
- (4) Probably not vote 11%
- (5) Unsure (volunteered) 1%
- (0) No answer 0%

6. You mentioned that you plan to vote on Nov. 2 – is there a reason why you will not cast your vote earlier at one of the five places available within Anne Arundel County?

_____ See Table 10 on page 8

6.1 How interested are you in these upcoming elections – very, somewhat or not very interested?

- (1) Very 66%
- (2) Somewhat 27%
- (3) Not very interested 7%
- (0) No Answer 0%

6.1a Will you be voting for or against Question A on the November ballot? A "for" vote would approve the County Council's zoning decision permitting slots in the county, including at Arundel Mills and Laurel. An 'against' vote would leave the county without slots zoning at any location.

- (1) For 42%
- (2) Against 42%
- (3) Unsure 16% (excluding 'no answer')

(0) No answer (these were 4%; if included - the other scores would lower to 40.2%, 40.6% and 15.6%)

6.2 Thinking about the governor’s race between Democrat Martin O’Malley and Republican Robert Ehrlich, how well informed do you think you are about the candidates’ stands on such issues as education, health care, or ways to balance the state’s budget – very informed, somewhat or not very informed?

(1) Very 36% (2) Somewhat 47% (3) Not very informed 16%

(0) No answer (these were 4%; if included - the other scores would lower to 35%, 45% and 16%)

6.3 Which issue or candidate trait has the greatest importance to you in deciding for whom to vote for governor?

_____See Table 18 on page 13_____

7. At this time, would you say you are more likely to vote for Mr. O’Malley, Mr. Ehrlich, someone else, or are you undecided or just unlikely to vote for any candidate?

Choices	Circle one
Vote for O’Malley	29
Vote for Ehrlich	40
Someone else	3
Undecided (volunteered)	22
Won’t vote for any candidate	1
Won’t say, no answer	5
Total	100

See Table 14 on page 11 for other calculations

8. Turning now to the race for County Executive between Democrat Joanna Conti, Republican John Leopold, and Green Party candidate Mike Shay, how well informed do you think you are about the candidates’ stands on such issues as managing growth or balancing the county budget – very informed, somewhat or not very informed?

(1) Very 15% (2) Somewhat 36% (3) Not very informed 49% (0) No Answer 0%

9. When I mention an issue, tell me if you are more favorable to the approaches of the Democrat Joanna Conti, Republican John Leopold, or the Green Party’s Mike Shay. If you are undecided or just don’t know enough, please say so.

	On this issue are you more favorable to Conti or Leopold, or Shay?				
	Conti	Leopold	Shay	Undecided	Don’t know enough
9.1 Managing growth	13	29	2	18	38
9.2 Improving transportation	13	20	1	21	45
9.3 Making County government more efficient	12	29	2	21	37
9.4 Improving public schools	13	24	1	19	43
9.5 Keeping taxes low	14	30	1	19	36
9.6 Encouraging economic development	13	31	1	18	37
9.7 Protecting the needs of vulnerable populations in the county budget	16	18	1	21	44
9.8 Preserving the environment	15	21	7	18	39
9.9 Keeping neighborhoods safe	13	24	1	21	41
9.10 Allowing slots at Arundel Mills mall	10	17	1	27	46
9.11 Maintaining high ethical standards?	17	17	3	24	39
9.12 Having the right experience for the job?	11	32	1	21	35

10. Which issue or candidate trait has the greatest importance to you in deciding for whom to vote for county executive?

See Table 14 on page 10

11. At this time, would you say you are more likely to vote for Democrat Joanna Conti, Republican John Leopold, or the Green Party’s Mike Shay or are you undecided or just unlikely to vote for any candidate?

Choices	Circle one
Vote for Joanna Conti	21
Vote for John Leopold	34
Vote for Mike Shay	2
Undecided	32
Won’t vote for any	2
Won’t say, no answer	4
Total	99

12. Thinking about the four years since the last election, do you think that county government has improved, worsened or left unchanged the quality of life in our county?

(1) Improved 20% (2) Worsened 28% (3) Left unchanged 42% (0) No answer 11%

13. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?

(1) Approve 42% (2) Disapprove 49% (0) No answer 10%

14. Overall, which party, the (Democrats) or the (Republicans), do you trust to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years?

(1) Democrats 34% (2) Republicans 37% (3) Neither 21% (4) Other 0% (0) No answer 8%

We are almost done. The last few questions will help us to better understand your responses.

15. With which political party, if any, are you registered? (The likely voter scores are bolded, the scores including other categories are not. These are weighted scores.)

(1) Democratic **42%** 36% (4) None 3%
 (2) Republican **44%** 38% (5) Other (e.g., Green Party) 1%
 (3) Unaffiliated (or “independent”) **14%** 11% (0) No Answer 3%

15.1 If respondents say Democrat or Republican, ask:

Do you consider yourself to be a strong, weak or independent (name of party – Democrat/Republican)?

(1) Strong 43% (2) Weak 8% (3) Independent 43% (0) No answer 5%

15.2 If respondents say “unaffiliated” ask: At this time do you find yourself leaning more towards the Democratic or Republican candidates?

(1) Democratic 29% (2) Republican 39% (3) Neither 12% (4) Other answer 9% (0) No answer 11%

16. Which of the following best describes your political beliefs: Conservative, Moderate or Liberal?

(1) Conservative 33% (2) Moderate 51% (3) Liberal 13% (0) Other, No Answer 3%

17. What is your age? _____ (0) No Answer

Age groupings	Percentage
18-30	10
31-40	14
41-50	23
51-60	17
61-65	13
66+	20
No answer	4
Total	101

18. I am going to read some categories relating to education. Please stop me when I reach the category in which the highest level of your formal education falls.

(1) less than a high school diploma 2%	(5) Completed a 4 year bachelor's degree 24%
(2) a high school diploma 12%	(6) post graduate work 28 %
(3) some college 22%	(0) No Answer 1%
(4) Completed a 2 year associate college degree 12%	

19. I am going to read some categories relating to income. Please stop me when I reach the category in which your household income falls.

- (1) Less than \$30,000 7%
- (2) \$30,000 to \$50,000 11%
- (3) \$50,001 to \$75,000 13%
- (4) \$75,001-\$100,000 17%
- (5) \$100,001-\$150,000 15%
- (6) Over \$150,000 15%
- (0) No Answer 18%

20. Stop me when I reach the employment category that best describes your situation. If you have retired and re-entered the workforce then indicate retired and as well as your current employment category.

Employment category	Percentage
Retired	26
Self employed	10
Employed full time for a company in the private sector	25
Employed full time for government in a non-defense related activity such as education, public works or public safety	15
Employed full time in a defense related activity	3
Employed in a private non-profit organization	1
Employed part time	4
Student	3
Unemployed and seeking a job	2
Unemployed and not seeking a job	2
No answer, other answer	9
Total	100

21. Regarding race, how would you describe yourself?

- (1) White 82%
- (2) Black or African American 10%
- (3) Hispanic or Latino 1%
- (4) Asian 1%
- (5) Other 3%
- (0) No answer 2%

22. Regarding religion, how would you describe yourself?

- (1) None 6%
- (2) Non-practicing 8%
- (3) Evangelical or born again Christian (possibly Baptist, Pentecostal) 13%
- (4) Catholic 31%
- (5) Jewish 3%
- (6) Protestant (possibly Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterian, Anglican, Episcopalian) 19%
- (7) Some other Christian 7%
- (8) A 'spiritual person' not associated with an organized religion 5%
- (9) Other 5%
- (0) No Answer 4%

23. What is your current marital status?

- (1) Single 16% (2) Married 71%
- (3) Separated/divorced 6% (4) Widowed 5% (5) Other 1% (0) No answer 1%

24. Which social networking site do you use the most, if any? (*respondent volunteers an answer*)

- (0) None 54% (1) Facebook 40% (2) MySpace 1% (3) Twitter 2% (4) LinkedIn 2% (5) Other _____ 2% _____

25. I have one last request: In an attempt to provide students with more opportunities to survey the public, the Center is asking respondents if they would like to be contacted no more than once a month by email to participate in short surveys taking no more than a couple of minutes to complete. Can we count on your help?

- (1) Yes 34% (2) No 66%

25.1 IF YES: What email address shall we use to contact you?

(CLEAR SPELLING/HANDWRITING PLEASE!)

SAY: That concludes our survey, thanks for participating.

Once the respondent hangs up, make sure to enter GENDER and ZIP CODE

26. Gender of respondent to whom you were speaking: (1) Male 49% (2) Female 51% (weighted)

27. Zip code _____

20711	.2
20724	1.1
20733	.7
20751	.4
20755	.6
20758	.2
20764	1.9
20776	.2
20778	.4
20779	.4
21012	6.0
21022	.2
21032	1.7
21035	2.4
21037	4.0
21054	2.7
21060	4.8
21061	8.0
21071	.2
21076	1.7
21077	.2
21090	1.2
21108	3.6
21113	4.7
21114	3.3
21122	11.7
21140	.3
21144	7.3
21146	8.8
21226	.7
21401	8.4
21402	1.0
21403	5.7
21405	.2
21409	4.9
Total	100.0