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Experts: Bush Presidency Is A Failure Little Chance To Improve Ranking

Loudonville, NY – At a time when President Bush’s *public opinion* polls are at an all time low, eight in ten history and political science professors rank President George W. Bush “below average” or “failure,” according to a new *expert opinion* poll by the Siena College Research Institute (SRI) released today. Furthermore, more than two-thirds of those surveyed think the President has no realistic chance of improving his rating.

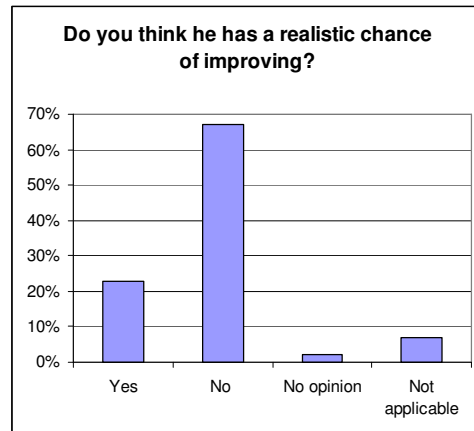
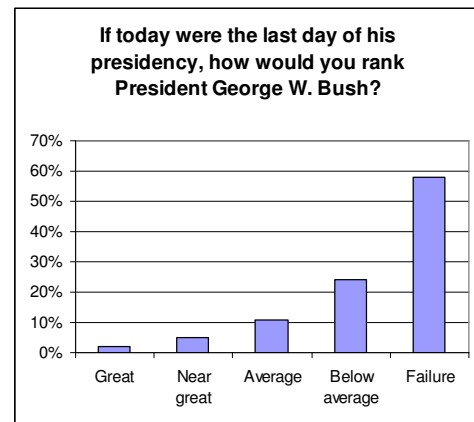
The findings are the result of an *expert opinion* poll, in which SRI asked history and political science professors at colleges and universities across the nation to rank George W. Bush on a common scale for ranking American presidents developed by Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., more than half a century ago.

The Siena survey asked the experts –744 professors responded – this question: “*George W. Bush has just finished five years as President. If today were the last day of his presidency, how would you rank him?*” The responses were: *Great*: 2%; *Near Great*: 5%; *Average*: 11%; *Below Average*: 24%; *Failure*: 58%.”

The experts were also asked, “*In your judgment, do you think he has a realistic chance of improving his rating?*” Two-thirds (67%) responded *no*; less than a quarter (23%) responded *yes*; and 10% chose *no opinion* or *not applicable*.

“While time is needed to fairly and accurately gauge how well any president ranks with his predecessors, George W. Bush starts with a ranking that could hardly be lower,” said Thomas Kelly, professor emeritus of American studies at Siena College.

“President Bush would seem to have small hope for high marks from the current generation of practicing historians and political scientists,” Kelly said. “In this case, current public opinion polls actually seem to cut the President more slack than the experts do.”



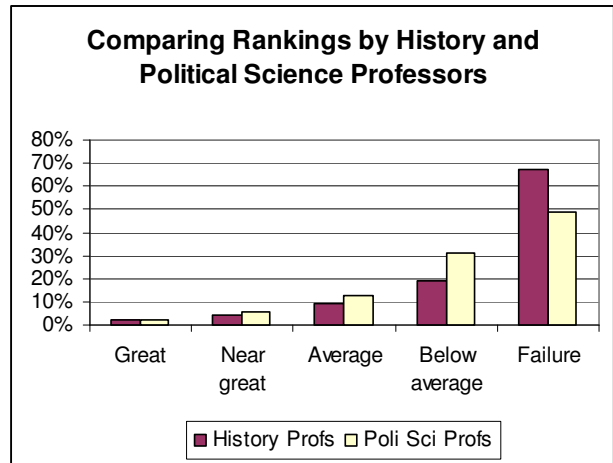
In 1982, SRI developed its own methodology for expert opinion ranking of the U.S. Presidents, and has repeated the survey after the first year of a President’s first term. The results have been reported in *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (a refereed journal published by the Center for the Study of the Presidency) and national, state and local media. SRI has also surveyed historians to rank the First Ladies.

“In our 2002 presidential rating, with a group of experts comparable to this current poll, President Bush ranked 23rd of 42 presidents,” said Dr. Douglas Lonnstrom, Siena College professor of statistics and director of the Siena Research Institute. “That was shortly after 9/11. Clearly, the professors do not think things have gone well for him in the past few years. These are the experts that teach college students today and will write the history of this era tomorrow,” Lonnstrom said.

There was a difference in response to the questions according to the academic discipline of the respondent.

“Two-thirds of history professors rate President Bush a failure while slightly less than half of political science professors do so,” Lonnstrom said. “Bush also scored lower with women and older professors.”

Two-fifths of the respondents provided written comments in addition to completing the survey.



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Siena College is a liberal arts college located in Loudonville, New York, outside the state capital of Albany. Now in its 26th year, the Siena Research Institute (SRI) conducts regional, statewide and national surveys on historical, business, economic, political, voter, social, and academic issues. SRI also surveys experts in various fields for their opinions on a variety of topics..

For more information about SRI, please see www.siena.edu/sri.

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