

# American University

Washington, DC • Private School



The most comprehensive guide to free speech on campus — anywhere

*Because a true university education requires freedom of expression.*

The College Free Speech Rankings are based on student surveys, campus policies, and recent speech-related controversies.

## OVERALL RANK

118 ▲

/257

▲ 119 FROM 2024

## GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

## SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

## Overview

American University ranks 118 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 58, holding on to an F speech climate grade and a “yellow light” Spotlight rating.

American places in the bottom 25 for “Self-Censorship” and in the bottom 50 for “Political Tolerance,” indicating that many silence themselves and hesitate to host controversial speakers. The university’s adoption of the Chicago Statement offers a solid foundation, but broader cultural change has yet to take root.

American could build on recent momentum by revising its written speech policies to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating and by adopting an official commitment to institutional neutrality.

### Spotlight Rating

Yellow

FIRE’s Spotlight database annually rates regulations on student expression based on the extent to which they restrict free speech.

If you are a school administrator and would like to discuss your rating, reach out to [speechcodes@thefire.org](mailto:speechcodes@thefire.org).

Visit our website: <https://rankings.thefire.org/> for more information.

## HIGHLIGHTS



52% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



77% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



32% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

5.45:1

There are roughly 5.45 liberal students for every one conservative student.

### Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



### Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



## SCORE DEEP DIVE

### COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▲ INCREASE

### DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C

▼ DECREASE

### OPENNESS

C-

▲ INCREASE

### SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

### ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

### POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▲ INCREASE

### SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

### STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

### DEPLATFORMINGS

O