

Amherst College

Amherst, MA • 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

70 ▲

/257

▲ 54 FROM 2024

GRADE

D -

▲ F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

Amherst College ranks 70 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. Its score is 61, a D- speech climate grade and a 5-point gain from last year. The rise came from improved student sentiment even though Amherst still earns a “yellow light” Spotlight rating.

Student scores improved across the board from last year. Amherst places in the top 25 for “Self-Censorship,” “Administrative Support,” and “Openness,” suggesting greater willingness to voice views and more confidence in the administration’s support for free expression.

Amherst could continue its upward trajectory by revising its restrictive speech codes to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating as well as adopting the Chicago Statement and 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.

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

HIGHLIGHTS



33% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



74% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



25% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

7.09:1

There are roughly 7.09 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

NOT ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▲ INCREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C+

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

B-

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

D

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▲ INCREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0