

Southern Illinois University - Carbondale

Carbondale, IL • Public 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

223 ▼

/257

▼ -85 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

Southern Illinois University-Carbondale ranks 223 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 52, an F speech climate grade. The campus dropped 85 places from last year as students’ “Political Tolerance” for speakers nosedived and acceptance of “Disruptive Conduct” increased. SIU still earns a “red light” Spotlight rating, lacking both the Chicago Statement and a statement on institutional neutrality.

Student perceptions place SIU in the top 50 for “Comfort Expressing Ideas.” Yet the school ranks in the bottom 50 for both “Disruptive Conduct” — indicating broad support for shout-downs — and the bottom 50 for “Openness” to certain hot-button topics.

SIU could improve by revising its written speech policies to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating, adopting a free speech statement based on the Chicago Statement, and adopting an official commitment to institutional neutrality.

Spotlight Rating

Red



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



44% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



71% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



39% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

1.81:1

There are roughly 1.81 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

▼ DECREASE

OPENNESS

D+

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

DEPLATFORMINGS

O