

Carleton College

Northfield, MN • 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

116 ▲

/257

▲ -31 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

Carleton College ranks 116 in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 58, an F speech climate grade. Its written policies still earn a “yellow light” Spotlight rating, and the college has yet to endorse the Chicago Statement or adopt an official commitment to institutional neutrality.

Carleton ranks best in the nation in “Self-Censorship” — and in the top 25 for “Openness,” signaling readiness for frank discussion. But the college ranks in the bottom 25 for “Political Tolerance,” indicating many would bar controversial speakers, undermining those gains.

Carleton could improve by revising its written speech policies 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



37% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



73% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



35% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

9.61:1

There are roughly 9.61 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

B-

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D+

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0