

Montana State University

Bozeman, MT • 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

106 ▼
/257

▼ -22 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

▼ D- FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

Montana State University ranks 106 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. The university records a score of 59, and its speech climate grade is an F.

Student perceptions place MSU in the top 25 for “Political Tolerance” of controversial liberal and conservative speakers and in the top 50 for rejecting disruptive protest tactics (“Disruptive Conduct”). However, the campus ranks in the bottom 25 for “Self-Censorship,” suggesting many students feel unable to share their views openly.

MSU 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



34% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



66% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



29% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

1.2:1

There are roughly 1.20 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

B-

▼ DECREASE

OPENNESS

C-

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

DEPLATFORMINGS

O