

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Lincoln, NE • 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

74 ▼

/257

▼ 75 FROM 2024

GRADE

D -

— D- FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

University of Nebraska–Lincoln ranks 74 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 61 and a D- speech climate grade. The university earns a “yellow light” Spotlight rating.

Student perceptions place UNL in the top 25 for “Political Tolerance,” indicating broad support for allowing controversial speakers compared to other schools. That strength is offset by serious weaknesses: the school ranks in the bottom 50 for “Comfort Expressing Ideas” and “Openness,” suggesting many hesitate to discuss difficult topics openly.

UNL could make progress by revising its 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.

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

HIGHLIGHTS



48% 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.



21% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

1.5:1

There are roughly 1.50 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D-

▼ DECREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

B-

▼ DECREASE

OPENNESS

D

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▲ INCREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0