

Rutgers University

New Brunswick, NJ • 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

236 ▼

/257

▼ -38 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

2

1 FROM 2025

Overview

Rutgers University–New Brunswick ranks 236 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings, earning a score of 51 and an F speech climate grade. The university dropped 38 places, a decline that may be attributed to a penalty for canceling a virtual mini-conference on historically black colleges and universities. Rutgers still earns a “yellow light” Spotlight rating and has yet to adopt the Chicago Statement or an official commitment to institutional neutrality.

Student perceptions remain bleak. Rutgers ranks in the bottom 50 for “Self-Censorship,” signaling frequent pressure to stay silent. No area places the school inside the top 50, underscoring the breadth of the challenge.

Rutgers could begin to reverse course by revising its 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



50% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



72% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



37% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

3.43:1

There are roughly 3.43 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

C-

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

2