

North Carolina State University

Raleigh, NC • 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

10 

/257

 -3 FROM 2024

GRADE

C

— C FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

North Carolina State University ranks 10 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. NCSU posts a 73 score and a C speech climate grade, while continuing to carry a “green light” Spotlight rating and formal endorsements of both the Chicago Statement and institutional neutrality through the University of North Carolina System adoption.

Student perceptions paint a mixed picture. NC State ranks in the top 50 for “Political Tolerance” toward both liberal and conservative speakers yet ranks in the bottom 25 for “Self-Censorship” — a steep drop from a top-50 showing on that measure last year.

Addressing the gap between policy and practice remains important at NC State. The university ranks 161 in “Openness,” 255 in “Self-Censorship,” and 165 in “Administrative Support,” suggesting that many students are reluctant to speak freely and may lack visible support from campus leadership. NC State can strengthen its speech climate by integrating free expression values into orientation and campus programming while also ensuring university leaders consistently and clearly affirm their commitment to open discourse.

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.

Spotlight Rating

Green 

FIRE’s Spotlight database annually rates regulations on student expression based on the extent to which they restrict free speech.

HIGHLIGHTS



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



74% 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.

1.02:1

There are roughly 1.02 conservative students for every one liberal student.

Institutional Neutrality

ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▲ INCREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C

▼ DECREASE

OPENNESS

C-

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

DEPLATFORMINGS

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