University of California, Santa Cruz

Santa Cruz, CA • *Public School*

College Free Speech RANKINGS

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

154 ▲

/261

▲ 22 **FROM 2025**

GRADE

F

F FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES

0

0 FROM 2026

Overview

University of California, Santa Cruz ranks 154 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 59 and an F speech climate grade.

UCSC ranks in the top 25 for "Openness," meaning fewer contentious topics feel off-limits to students. It lands in the bottom 25 for "Disruptive Conduct," signaling student acceptance of non-peaceful forms of protest, and in the bottom 50 for "Political Tolerance," showing reduced student willingness to host controversial speakers.

UCSC retains a "yellow light" Spotlight rating. It should revise student policies to earn a "green light" Spotlight rating and adopt the pro-free speech Chicago Statement and institutional neutrality. UCSC should respond clearly and forcefully to defend free speech whenever censorship occurs or is demanded.

Spotlight Rating

Yellow



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

View the Full Spotlight Rating

If you are a school administrator and would like to discuss your rating, reach out to speechcodes@fire.org.

Visit our website, rankings.fire.org, for more information.

HIGHLIGHTS



38% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



77% 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.

13.43 : 1

There are roughly 13.43 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

B–

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D+

— NO CHANGE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0