The George Washington University

Washington, DC • Private 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
197 ▼
/261
▼ -61 FROM 2025

GRADE
F
F FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES
1
1 FROM 2026

Overview

The George Washington University ranks 197 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 57 and an F speech climate grade. It was penalized after a campus event was disrupted with stink bombs.

GWU ranks in the top 50 for "Openness," meaning fewer contentious topics feel off-limits to students. Its "Comfort Expressing Ideas" rank jumped 118 places, showing greater student comfort sharing views. It lands in the bottom 25 for "Disruptive Conduct" and the bottom 50 for "Administrative Support," showing student acceptance of non-peaceful forms of protest and little trust in officials.

GWU has adopted the pro-free speech Chicago Statement, but it earns a "yellow light" Spotlight rating. It should revise student codes to earn a "green light" Spotlight rating and adopt institutional neutrality. Administrators should clearly and forcefully 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



39% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



79% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



34% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

8.32 : 1

There are roughly 8.32 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▲ INCREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C

— NO CHANGE

OPENNESS

C+

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▲ INCREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

1