University of South Florida

Tampa, FL • 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

22 ▲

/261

▲ 2 FROM 2025

GRADE

C

▲ C- FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES

0

0 FROM 2026

Overview

University of South Florida ranks 22 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 73 and a C speech climate grade.

USF tumbled 108 places from the top 25 last year for "Political Tolerance," showing reduced student willingness to host controversial speakers. However, it leapt 103 places from the bottom 50 last year for "Administrative Support," suggesting greater student trust in officials to defend speech. Its "Disruptive Conduct" rank also jumped 112 places, showing lower student acceptance of non-peaceful forms of protest.

USF is part of the State University System of Florida, which has affirmed the pro-free speech Chicago Statement. The campus earns a "green light" Spotlight rating but should still adopt an official commitment to institutional neutrality. USF should respond clearly and forcefully to defend free speech whenever censorship occurs or is demanded.

Spotlight Rating

Green



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



37% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



66% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



30% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

1.73 : 1

There are roughly 1.73 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

B–

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

C

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

— NO CHANGE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0