Knox College

Galesburg, IL • 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
172
/261
▼ -32 FROM 2025

GRADE
F
F FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES
0
0 FROM 2026

Overview

Knox College ranks 172 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 58 and an F speech climate grade.

It ranks in the top 50 for "Openness," meaning fewer contentious topics feel off-limits to students, and "Comfort Expressing Ideas," indicating students are comfortable sharing views on controversial topics. However, its "Self-Censorship" rank tumbled 226 places from the top 50 last year into the bottom 25 this year, indicating students frequently stay silent.

Knox 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. Knox should clearly and forcefully defend free speech whenever censorship occurs or is demanded. Doing so will demonstrate the college's commitment to free speech and build community trust that the administration will defend expressive rights.

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.



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



33% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

6.67 : 1

There are roughly 6.67 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+

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

C+

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

— NO CHANGE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0