Colby College

Waterville, ME • 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
147 ▼
/261
▼ -22 FROM 2025

GRADE
F
▼ D- FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES
0
0 FROM 2026

Overview

Colby College ranks 147 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 59 and an F speech climate grade.

Colby ranks in the top 50 for "Disruptive Conduct," showing lower student acceptance of non-peaceful forms of protest. However, it tumbled 146 places from last year into the bottom 50 for "Comfort Expressing Ideas," meaning students feel constrained sharing views on controversial topics. Its "Self-Censorship" rank also fell 108 places from last year, signaling increased hesitation to speak.

Colby earns 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. Colby 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



42% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



71% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



17% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

7.69 : 1

There are roughly 7.69 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

▼ DECREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

B–

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

C–

— NO CHANGE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0