Southeast Missouri State University

Cape Girardeau, MO • 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
137 ▲
/261
▲ 33 FROM 2025

GRADE
D-
▲ F FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES
0
0 FROM 2026

Overview

Southeast Missouri State University ranks 137 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings. With a score of 60, it climbed 33 places and improved from an F to a D- speech climate grade.

SEMO ranks in the top 25 for "Disruptive Conduct," indicating lower student acceptance of non-peaceful forms of protest. It tumbled 129 places from last year into the bottom 50 for "Political Tolerance" this year, showing reduced student willingness to host controversial speakers. It also lands in the bottom 50 for "Openness," meaning many contentious topics feel off-limits to students.

SEMO earns a "yellow light" Spotlight rating. It should revise student policies to earn a "green light" Spotlight rating, adopt the pro-free speech Chicago Statement, and adopt institutional neutrality. SEMO 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



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



56% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



23% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

1.16 : 1

There are roughly 1.16 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

B

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

D

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

D

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0