

Washington University in St. Louis

St. Louis, MO • Private School



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

56 ▲

/261

▲ 16 FROM 2025

GRADE

D

D FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES

0

0 FROM 2026

Overview

Washington University in St. Louis ranks 56 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 66 and a D speech climate grade.

WUSTL ranks in the top 25 for “Self-Censorship” and the top 50 for “Openness,” meaning students report less hesitancy to speak and fewer contentious topics feel off-limits. However, it lands in the bottom 50 for “Administrative Support,” indicating students doubt the administration will defend free speech.

WUSTL’s faculty senate has affirmed the pro-free speech Chicago Statement and the university’s board has adopted an official commitment to institutional neutrality, but the campus retains a “yellow light” Spotlight rating. WUSTL should revise its student policies to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating. Given its weak showing on “Administrative Support,” administrators should respond clearly and forcefully to defend free speech whenever censorship occurs or is demanded.

[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.

Spotlight Rating

Yellow



FIRE’s Spotlight database annually rates regulations on student expression based on the extent to which they restrict free speech.

HIGHLIGHTS



34% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



74% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



26% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

7.78 : 1

There are roughly 7.78 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

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+

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

DEPLATFORMINGS

O