Montana State University

Bozeman, MT • 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
107
/261
▼ -1 FROM 2025

GRADE
D-
D- FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES
0
0 FROM 2026

Overview

Montana State University ranks 107 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 62 and a D- speech climate grade.

The campus ranks in the top 25 for "Political Tolerance" and "Disruptive Conduct," showing comparatively greater student willingness to host controversial speakers and lower acceptance of non-peaceful forms of protest. It also ranks in the top 50 for "Administrative Support." However, Montana State lands in the bottom 50 for "Self-Censorship," indicating students frequently stay silent.

The university maintains 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 an official commitment to institutional neutrality. MSU should also 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



43% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



55% 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.

1.28 : 1

There are roughly 1.28 conservative students for every one liberal 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

C–

— NO CHANGE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D–

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

D–

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

— NO CHANGE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0