

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Lincoln, NE • Public 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

102 ▼

/261

▼ -28 FROM 2025

GRADE

D -

D- FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES

0

0 FROM 2026

Overview

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln ranks 102 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 62 and a D- speech climate grade, dropping 28 places.

It ranks in the top 50 for “Political Tolerance,” showing comparatively greater student willingness to host speakers across the ideological spectrum. However, UNL lands in the bottom 50 for “Openness,” meaning many contentious topics feel off-limits to students.

The University of Nebraska System has affirmed the pro-free speech Chicago Statement, but UNL retains a “yellow light” Spotlight rating. It should revise student codes to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating and adopt institutional neutrality. UNL should respond clearly and forcefully to defend free speech whenever censorship occurs or is demanded. Doing so will demonstrate the university’s commitment to free speech and build community trust that the administration will defend expressive rights.

[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



51% 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.



29% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

1.51 : 1

There are roughly 1.51 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▲ INCREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

B-

— NO CHANGE

OPENNESS

D+

— NO CHANGE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D-

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

DEPLATFORMINGS

O