

Cornell University

Ithaca, NY • 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

219 ▲

/261

▲ 8 FROM 2025

GRADE

F

F FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES

2

0 FROM 2026

Overview

Cornell University ranks 219 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 55 and an F speech climate grade.

Cornell lands in the bottom 25 for “Comfort Expressing Ideas,” meaning students feel constrained sharing views on controversial topics, and “Administrative Support,” showing little student trust in officials to defend speech. Its “Self-Censorship” rank jumped 131 places from last year, indicating students are less hesitant to speak. The data shows no top 50 strengths.

Cornell 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 a statement on institutional neutrality. 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



50% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



77% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



32% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

5.56 : 1

There are roughly 5.56 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 -

— NO CHANGE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C +

— NO CHANGE

OPENNESS

C

— NO CHANGE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

2