

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Troy, 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

126 ▲

/261

▲ 11 FROM 2025

GRADE

D -

▲ F FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES

0

0 FROM 2026

Overview

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute ranks 126 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 60 and a D- speech climate grade.

RPI ranks in the top 25 for “Openness,” “Comfort Expressing Ideas,” and “Self-Censorship,” meaning fewer contentious topics feel off-limits to students, students are comfortable sharing views on controversial topics, and students are less hesitant to speak. However, it lands in the bottom 50 for “Administrative Support,” showing little student trust in officials to defend speech.

RPI maintains a “yellow light” Spotlight rating. It should revise its student policies to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating and adopt the pro-free speech Chicago Statement and institutional neutrality. Especially 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



33% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



73% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



36% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

4.2:1

There are roughly 4.2 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

C+

▼ DECREASE

OPENNESS

B-

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D+

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

— NO CHANGE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▲ INCREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0