

Wake Forest University

Winston-Salem, NC • 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

159 ▲

/261

▲ 27 FROM 2025

GRADE

F

F FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES

1

0 FROM 2026

Overview

Wake Forest University ranks 159 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 59 and an F speech climate grade, climbing 27 places from last year.

The data shows no top 50 strengths or bottom 50 weaknesses. However, its rank for “Comfort Expressing Ideas” jumped 114 places from the bottom 50 last year, indicating students feel increasingly comfortable sharing views on controversial topics.

Wake Forest retains 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 a statement on institutional neutrality. The university should respond clearly and forcefully whenever censorship occurs or is demanded. Doing so will demonstrate its commitment to free expression and help 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



39% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



62% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



27% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

2.78 : 1

There are roughly 2.78 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

B-

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

C

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▲ INCREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

1