College of Charleston

Charleston, SC • 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
199
/261
▼ -21 FROM 2025

GRADE
F
F FROM 2025

CONTROVERSIES
0
0 FROM 2026

Overview

College of Charleston ranks 199 out of 261 schools in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 57 and an F speech climate grade.

Charleston lands in the bottom 25 for "Self-Censorship," indicating students frequently stay silent, and "Openness," meaning many contentious topics feel off-limits. The data shows no counterbalancing top 50 strengths.

The campus maintains a "yellow light" Spotlight rating. Charleston should revise its student policies to earn a "green light" Spotlight rating and adopt the pro-free speech Chicago Statement and an official commitment to institutional neutrality. It should respond clearly and forcefully to defend free speech whenever censorship occurs or is demanded. Doing so will demonstrate the college's commitment to free speech and build community trust that the administration will defend expressive rights.

View the Full Spotlight Rating

Spotlight Rating
Yellow



FIRE's Spotlight database annually rates regulations on student expression based on the extent to which they restrict free speech.

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



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



65% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



28% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

1.16 : 1

There are roughly 1.16 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–

▼ DECREASE

OPENNESS

D

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▲ INCREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

0