



# California

27 schools ranked



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.

### AVERAGE RANK

173 ▼  
/257

▼ 30 FROM 2024

### AVERAGE GRADE

F

— NO CHANGE

### SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

24

— 6 FROM 2025

## Overview

Twenty-seven California schools are ranked in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. The state’s average speech-climate grade is F, matching the national average.

Claremont McKenna College is not only the top-ranked school in California, but the top-ranked school in the country. Stanford and Chapman follow at 76 and 97, respectively.

Several large or prestigious campuses rank near the bottom — UC Davis (252), Pomona College (247), and University of San Francisco (244). Most California schools hold “yellow light” or “red light” ratings in FIRE’s Spotlight database, meaning their written policies threaten student expression. Only a handful have adopted the pro-free speech Chicago Statement or a statement on institutional neutrality. Closing the gap between top and bottom performers will require policy reform and more visible commitments to free expression.

If you have questions, reach out to [fire@thefire.org](mailto:fire@thefire.org) or visit us at <https://rankings.thefire.org/>.

## HIGHLIGHTS



41% 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.



35% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

4.93:1

Across California, there are roughly 4.93 liberal students for every one conservative student.

## SCORE DEEP DIVE

### COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▲ INCREASED

### DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C

▲ INCREASED

### OPENNESS

C

▲ INCREASED

### SELF-CENSORSHIP

D-

▼ DECREASED

### ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

— NO CHANGE

### POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASED

### SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

2

### STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

4

### DEPLATFORMINGS

18

### HONOR ROLL STATEMENTS

1

### ATTEMPTED DISRUPTIONS

1

### NEW IN 2025

3