



# Iowa

3 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

112 ▲

/257

▲ 53 FROM 2024

### AVERAGE GRADE

F

▼ DECREASED

### SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

## Overview

Three Iowa schools are ranked in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. The state’s average speech-climate grade is D-, compared to a national average of F.

Iowa State University ranks 40 overall and is the top-ranked school in the state. Students at Iowa State give relatively strong marks for “Administrative Support” and “Disruptive Conduct,” suggesting they believe the school will protect free speech and they are less likely to approve of shouting down or blocking a speaker. However, it holds a “yellow light” rating in FIRE’s Spotlight database, meaning at least one written policy threatens student expression.

The University of Iowa ranks 63, followed by Grinnell College at 233 — the lowest ranked school in the state. Grinnell holds a “red light” rating, meaning it maintains at least one policy that clearly and substantially restricts protected speech. The Board of Regents for the State of Iowa affirmed the Chicago Statement, which applies it to both the University of Iowa and Iowa State.

Iowa’s public universities have laid some policy groundwork through statement adoption. Removing remaining speech code restrictions and strengthening institutional commitments would help improve the climate statewide.

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

## HIGHLIGHTS



44% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



66% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



25% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

1.36 : 1

Across Iowa, there are roughly 1.36 liberal students for every one conservative student.

## SCORE DEEP DIVE

### COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▲ INCREASED

### DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

B-

▲ INCREASED

### OPENNESS

C

▲ INCREASED

### SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASED

### ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

D-

▲ INCREASED

### POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASED

### SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

### STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

### DEPLATFORMINGS

0

### HONOR ROLL STATEMENTS

0

### ATTEMPTED DISRUPTIONS

0

### NEW IN 2025

0