



Maryland

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

97 ▼
/257

▼ 27 FROM 2024

AVERAGE GRADE

D-

— NO CHANGE

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

5

— 1 FROM 2025

Overview

Three Maryland 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.

The University of Maryland–College Park ranks 44 overall and is the top-ranked school in the state. UMD holds a “green light” rating in FIRE’s Spotlight database, meaning its written policies do not seriously threaten student expression. The University System of Maryland Board of Regents has adopted the pro-free speech Chicago Statement, applying to both UMD and Towson University.

Towson ranks 104 and holds a “yellow light” rating. Johns Hopkins University follows at 144 and has independently adopted both the Chicago Statement and a statement on institutional neutrality. It also holds a “yellow light” rating.

Maryland has made policy progress at both the system and campus levels. Ensuring that reforms are reflected in written policies — and adopted more broadly — would help improve the state’s overall climate for speech.

If you have questions, reach out to 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.



77% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



37% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

2.36 : 1

Across Maryland, there are roughly 2.36 liberal students for every one conservative student.

SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D-

▼ DECREASED

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C

▲ INCREASED

OPENNESS

C

▼ DECREASED

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D-

▼ DECREASED

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASED

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▲ INCREASED

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

1

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

1

DEPLATFORMINGS

3

HONOR ROLL STATEMENTS

0

ATTEMPTED DISRUPTIONS

0

NEW IN 2025

2