



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

159 ▲

/261

▲ 14 FROM 2025

AVERAGE GRADE

F

— NO CHANGE

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

25

— 10 IN 2026

Overview

Twenty-seven California schools are ranked in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings. The state's average speech climate grade is F, below the national average of D-.

Claremont McKenna College ranks 2 overall and is the top-ranked school in the state. It holds a “green light” rating in FIRE’s Spotlight database and ranks in the top 10 for “Comfort Expressing Ideas” and “Administrative Support,” suggesting students can speak freely and trust administrators to defend speech. CMC has adopted both the pro-free speech Chicago Statement and a statement on institutional neutrality.

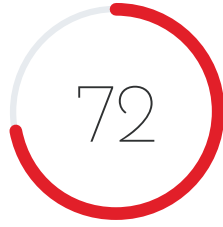
UC Davis and Stanford University follow at ranks 24 and 55, respectively. Most other schools in the state hold “yellow light” ratings. Santa Clara University, the University of San Francisco, and California State University, Fresno hold “red light” ratings and rank near the bottom. Reforming written student policies would help improve these campuses’ speech climates.

If you have questions, reach out to fire@fire.org or visit us at rankings.fire.org/.

HIGHLIGHTS



37% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



72% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



34% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

5.46:1

Across California, there are roughly 5.46 liberal students for every one conservative student.

SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▲ INCREASED

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C

— NO CHANGE

OPENNESS

C

▲ INCREASED

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

▲ INCREASED

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASED

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASED

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

1

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

6

DEPLATFORMINGS

18

HONOR ROLL STATEMENTS

7

ATTEMPTED DISRUPTIONS

3

NEW IN 2026

10