



North Carolina

10 schools ranked



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.

AVERAGE RANK

43

/261

0 FROM 2025

AVERAGE GRADE

C-

▲ INCREASED

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

7

— 3 IN 2026

Overview

Ten North Carolina schools are ranked in the 2027 College Free Speech Rankings. The state's average speech climate grade is C-, compared to the national average of D-.

Appalachian State University ranks 8 overall and is the state's top-ranked school. ASU is part of the University of North Carolina System, whose board has affirmed the pro-free speech Chicago Statement and a statement on institutional neutrality for all seven ranked system campuses. Six of these hold "green light" ratings in FIRE's Spotlight database. Four other system campuses rank in the top 25.

Duke University (50) holds a green light rating but has not adopted either major policy statement. North Carolina A&T State University, Davidson College, and Wake Forest University trail with "yellow light" ratings. Adopting these public statements at Duke and Wake Forest, and revising restrictive student policies elsewhere, would help improve these schools' speech climates.

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



HIGHLIGHTS



41% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



71% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



33% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

3.29:1

Across North Carolina, there are roughly 3.29 liberal students for every one conservative student.

SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D+

▲ INCREASED

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C+

▲ INCREASED

OPENNESS

C-

▼ DECREASED

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

▲ INCREASED

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

D-

▲ INCREASED

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

— NO CHANGE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

3

DEPLATFORMINGS

4

HONOR ROLL STATEMENTS

3

ATTEMPTED DISRUPTIONS

0

NEW IN 2026

3