

University of Colorado Boulder

Boulder, CO • Public School



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.

OVERALL RANK

5
/257

▲ 24 FROM 2024

GRADE

C

▲ C- FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

University of Colorado Boulder ranks 5 in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 74, earning a C speech climate grade. The climb from the prior year's rank coincides with the university's new statement on institutional neutrality, which complements its longstanding "green light" Spotlight rating and the University of Colorado System's adoption of the Chicago Statement, which applies to the Boulder campus.

Policy commitments aside, student perceptions are above average but not stellar in any area. Maintaining its top-tier overall rank will require translating strong written policies into everyday campus culture.

Spotlight Rating

Green



FIRE's Spotlight database annually rates regulations on student expression based on the extent to which they restrict free speech.

If you are a school administrator and would like to discuss your rating, reach out to speechcodes@thefire.org.

Visit our website: <https://rankings.thefire.org/> for more information.

HIGHLIGHTS



33% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



68% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



28% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

3.44:1

There are roughly 3.44 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▲ INCREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C+

▼ DECREASE

OPENNESS

C

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D-

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

DEPLATFORMINGS

O