

Williams College

Williamstown, MA • Private 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

166 ▲

/257

▲ -10 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

1

0 FROM 2025

Overview

Williams College ranks 166 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings, earning a score of 56 and an F speech climate grade. The college continues to operate under a “yellow light” Spotlight rating.

Student perceptions place Williams in the top 25 on “Disruptive Conduct,” signaling greater opposition to tactics that shut down speakers compared to other schools. The ranking for “Comfort Expressing Ideas” also improved enough to move out of last year’s bottom 50.

Williams could improve by revising its written speech policies to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating, adopting a free speech statement based on the Chicago Statement, and adopting an official commitment to institutional neutrality.

Spotlight Rating

Yellow

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



48% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



64% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



23% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

3.54:1

There are roughly 3.54 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

NOT ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D-

▲ INCREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

B-

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

C-

▼ DECREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D-

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▲ INCREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

0

DEPLATFORMINGS

1