

Central Michigan University

Mount Pleasant, MI • 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.



Overview

Central Michigan University ranks 188 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 55. The university climbed 44 places from last year, has an F speech climate grade, and earns a “yellow light” Spotlight rating, signaling unresolved policy barriers to expression.

Student perceptions remain mixed. CMU ranks in the top 50 on “Disruptive Conduct,” suggesting comparatively low support for shout-downs or blockades. At the same time, the university places in the bottom 50 for “Self-Censorship,” “Political Tolerance,” and “Openness,” indicating that many hesitated to voice opinions and were reluctant to welcome controversial speakers.

CMU 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.

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.

Spotlight Rating

Yellow 

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

HIGHLIGHTS



42% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



67% 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.

4.49:1

There are roughly 4.49 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

D +

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

1

DEPLATFORMINGS

0