

University of Rochester

Rochester, NY • 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

214 ▼

/257

▼ -77 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

The University of Rochester ranks 214 out of 257 in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 53 and an F speech climate grade. The university holds a “yellow light” Spotlight rating and fell 77 places from last year, marking a sharp slide in its overall standing.

Student perceptions place Rochester in the bottom 25 for both “Comfort Expressing Ideas” and perceived “Administrative Support,” and in the bottom 50 for “Political Tolerance” toward speakers.

Rochester could begin improving its free speech climate by overhauling restrictive policies to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating, as well as formally adopting the Chicago Statement and 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



51% 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.



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

7.79:1

There are roughly 7.79 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-

▼ DECREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C+

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

C-

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D-

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▼ DECREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

DEPLATFORMINGS

O