

Davidson College

Davidson, NC • 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

78 ▲
/257

▲ 49 FROM 2024

GRADE

D -

▲ F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

1

— 1 FROM 2025

Overview

Davidson College ranks 78 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 60, earning a D- speech climate grade. The college received a penalty for investigating the campus chapter of Young Americans for Freedom. Davidson has adopted the Chicago Statement yet still earns a “yellow light” Spotlight rating.

Student perceptions place Davidson in the top 50 for “Administrative Support,” indicating comparably more students feel the administration will back expressive rights.

Davidson could boost its standing by revising restrictive policies to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating and by 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.



65% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



26% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

2.27:1

There are roughly 2.27 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D-

▲ INCREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C+

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

C

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D-

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

D-

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▲ INCREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

1

DEPLATFORMINGS

0