

Swarthmore College

Swarthmore, PA • 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

199 ▼

/257

▼ -139 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

Swarthmore College ranks 199 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 54, an F speech climate grade. The college still earns a “yellow light” Spotlight rating while lacking both the Chicago Statement and an official commitment to institutional neutrality,

Student perceptions place Swarthmore in the top 25 for “Openness,” a marked improvement over last year’s showing, yet serious weaknesses remain. The college ranks in the bottom 50 for “Comfort Expressing Ideas,” in the bottom 10 for “Administrative Support,” and the bottom 25 for “Political Tolerance,” underscoring persistent concerns about institutional backing and viewpoint diversity.

Swarthmore could bolster its free-speech environment by revising 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



53% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



75% 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.

12.96:1

There are roughly 12.96 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

B-

▲ 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