

Clemson University

Clemson, SC • 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.

OVERALL RANK

13 ▼
/257

▼ 8 FROM 2024

GRADE

C-

▼ C FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

Clemson University ranks 13 in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. The school earns a score of 72, a C- speech climate grade. Clemson earns a “green light” Spotlight rating and has adopted the Chicago Statement, giving it a solid policy framework for protecting expression.

Students offer some mixed assessments. Clemson places in the top 25 for “Administrative Support,” indicating higher student confidence in the leadership’s commitment to free speech. Clemson ranks in the bottom 50 for “Self-Censorship,” indicating many students feel uneasy sharing their views on campus.

Clemson could rise further by adopting an official commitment to institutional neutrality.

Spotlight Rating

Green



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



41% 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.



31% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

1.64:1

There are roughly 1.64 conservative students for every one liberal student.

Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▼ DECREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

B-

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

C

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

D-

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

DEPLATFORMINGS

O