

Dakota State University

Madison, SD • 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

108 ▲

/257

▲ 6 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

Dakota State University ranks 108 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings, earning a score of 58, an F speech climate grade. The university earns a “red light” Spotlight rating, despite the South Dakota University System adopting the Chicago Statement, which applies to Dakota State.

Student responses paint a mixed picture. DSU places in the top 25 for both “Administrative Support” and “Disruptive Conduct,” and in the top 50 for “Comfort Expressing Ideas” and “Political Tolerance.” Yet restrictive speech codes continue to drag down the overall score.

DSU could improve by overhauling its policies to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating in alignment with system-wide expectations from the Chicago Statement and by adopting an official commitment to institutional neutrality.

Spotlight Rating

Red



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



26% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



63% 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.

1.05:1

There are roughly 1.05 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

B-

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

C-

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▼ DECREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

D

▲ INCREASE

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▲ INCREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

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DEPLATFORMINGS

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