



Michigan

7 schools ranked



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.



Overview

Seven Michigan schools are ranked in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. The state's average speech-climate grade is D-, compared to a national average of F.

Michigan Technological University ranks 4 overall and is the top-ranked school in the state. It holds a “green light” rating in FIRE’s Spotlight database, meaning its written policies do not seriously threaten student expression. It has also adopted the pro-free speech Chicago Statement. Michigan Tech is one of the top-performing schools on “Political Tolerance,” “Administrative Support,” and “Disruptive Conduct,” suggesting that students are more comfortable with controversial speakers both right and left, trust the administration to protect free speech, and are less likely to disrupt a speaker.

Michigan State University and the University of Michigan rank 60 and 105, respectively. Both schools have adopted the Chicago Statement and a statement on institutional neutrality but still maintain “yellow light” ratings. Western Michigan University ranks 168 and holds a “red light” rating, meaning it maintains at least one policy that clearly and substantially restricts protected expression.

Michigan is home to one of the nation’s highest ranked schools for free speech, but most campuses still restrict expression. Strengthening campus policies and expanding formal commitments to free speech could help raise the rankings of Michigan’s lower-performing schools.

If you have questions, reach out to fire@thefire.org or visit us at <https://rankings.thefire.org/>.

HIGHLIGHTS



40

40% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



71

71% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



32

32% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



2.35 : 1

Across Michigan, there are roughly 2.35 liberal students for every one conservative student.

SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D

▲ INCREASED

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C+

▲ INCREASED

OPENNESS

C-

▲ INCREASED

SELF-CENSORSHIP

D-

▼ DECREASED

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASED

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASED

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

0

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

2

DEPLATFORMINGS

3

HONOR ROLL STATEMENTS

0

ATTEMPTED DISRUPTIONS

0

NEW IN 2025

1