

2026 College Free Speech Rankings

Columbia University

256

OVERALL
RANK

F

SPEECH
CLIMATE

YELLOW

SPOTLIGHT
RATING



FIRE

Foundation for Individual
Rights and Expression

Executive Summary

THE COLLEGE FREE SPEECH RANKINGS are the most comprehensive comparison of free speech climates at U.S. colleges and universities. Developed by the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, the rankings combine student survey data, written speech policies, and school responses to recent speech-related controversies to evaluate how well institutions uphold free expression. Schools earn higher scores when they protect open debate and viewpoint diversity and lose points when they restrict it.

To understand the student experience of free speech on campus, our survey partner, College Pulse, surveyed 68,510 student respondents from 257 colleges and universities from Jan. 3 through June 5, 2025. The College Free Speech Rankings are available online (rankings.thefire.org) for easy comparison between institutions.

We surveyed 169 Columbia University undergraduates. Key findings include:

- Columbia University ranks 256 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. The university earned a score of 42.9 and received a speech climate grade of F.
- Columbia students were more politically tolerant than students elsewhere, ranking 27 on this component.
- Despite some students' attempted shoutdowns at campus events, Columbia students overall were opposed to disruptive conduct, especially violence.
- Columbia students have become less comfortable expressing ideas and are more likely to self-censor than in previous years. Students expressed fears of repercussions from the administration for their speech.
- Students are able to have open conversations on controversial topics with the exception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- Students at Columbia do not trust the administration to protect speech, even less so in the last two years.
- Columbia continues to maintain five speech policies that earn a "yellow light" Spotlight rating. Had Columbia earned a "green light" rating, it would have ranked 212 instead of 256.
- Columbia has been penalized for a number of free speech controversies on campus involving deplatforming, investigations, censorship, suspension of students, and termination of faculty.

Executive Summary	1
Columbia student perceptions of free speech	3
More politically tolerant, compared to other campuses	3
Columbia students were more strongly opposed to violence than students nationally	4
Students are able to have open conversations on controversial topics with the exception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict	5
Students report discomfort expressing their views	7
Self-censorship is high among students at Columbia	9
Students do not trust their school's administration	10
A 'yellow light' school with a Chicago Statement	12
Columbia's speech controversies	12
Two deplatforming incidents	12
Termination of staff and investigation of scholars	13
Students, including student journalists, disciplined and censored	14
How can Columbia improve?	14
Topline Results	16

Columbia University ranks 256 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. The university earned a score of 42.9 and a speech climate grade of F.¹ It does particularly poorly on the components of “Administrative Support,” “Comfort Expressing Ideas,” and “Self-Censorship.” However, its performance on the “Political Tolerance” component is considerably stronger.

Columbia lost 14 points in the rankings for its handling of speech controversies, including five that occurred just this year. It also continues to maintain speech policies that earn a “yellow light” Spotlight rating from FIRE, costing it another five points.

The following report highlights where Columbia has improved or done well and where it is performing poorly. In addition, it discusses Columbia’s speech policies and statements, its speech controversies, and what Columbia can do to improve its free speech climate.

COLUMBIA STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF FREE SPEECH

More politically tolerant, compared to other campuses

Columbia University ranks 27 on “Political Tolerance.” Columbia’s score in this component has consistently improved since 2022. This is impressive and suggests that speakers from across the ideological spectrum are welcome at Columbia.

Still, Columbia students did have a fairly strong bias in favor of allowing liberal speakers on campus. While 74% of Columbia students would allow the liberal speaker who said “children should be able to transition without parental consent,” only 40% would allow the conservative speaker who said “transgender people have a mental disorder.”

¹ The detailed methodology can be found at rankings.thefire.org/methodology.

FIGURE 1: Students Who Would Allow Each Conservative Speaker on Campus (%)

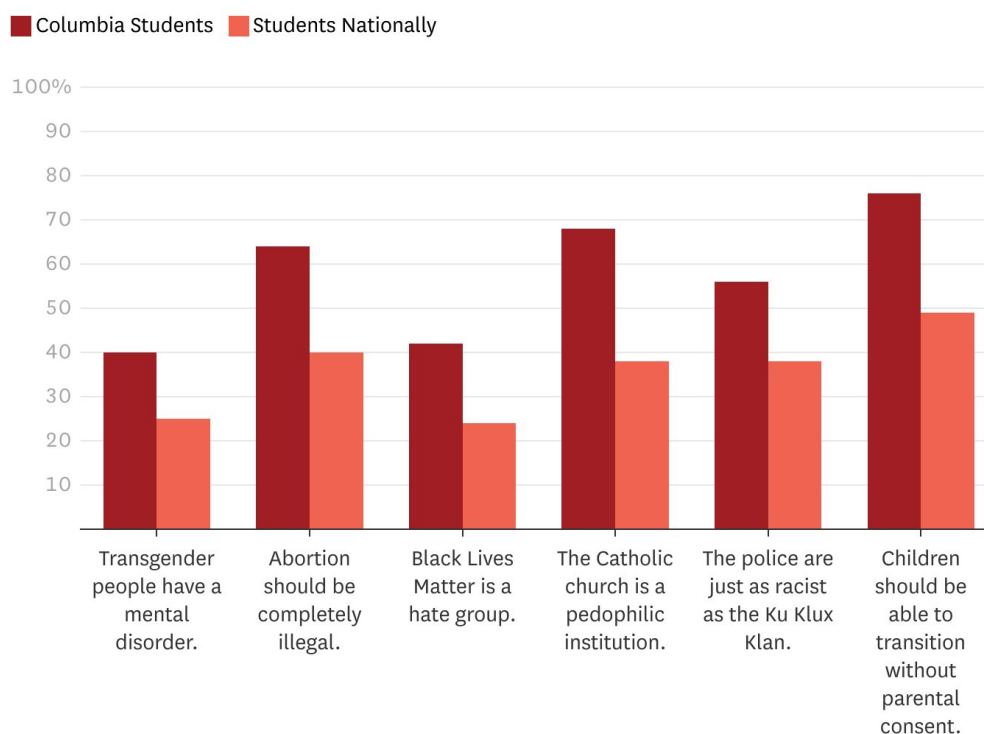


Chart: Emily Nayyer • Source: FIRE/ College Pulse

Columbia students were more strongly opposed to violence than students nationally

Columbia ranks 129 for “Disruptive Conduct.” Columbia students expressed similar rates of opposition to disruptive conduct as their peers nationally.

- 26% of Columbia students responded “never” when asked if it would be acceptable to shout down a speaker to prevent their speaking on campus versus 28% of students nationally.
- 44% of Columbia students responded “never” when asked if it would be acceptable to block other students from attending a campus speech versus 46% of students nationally.

Columbia students were more strongly opposed to violence, with 74% responding that the use of violence to stop a campus speech would “never” be acceptable versus 66% of students nationally.

Columbia has experienced two instances of disruption, one in 2024 and one in 2025. In both instances, pro-Palestinian protestors attempted shoutdowns, one of an event and one of a class. The attempted event shoutdown led to a penalty for Columbia, discussed below. The attempted class shoutdown did not lead to a penalty for the university as administrators reacted appropriately to protect free speech and academic freedom.

FIGURE 2: Students Who Said a Type of Disruptive Conduct Was Never Acceptable (%)

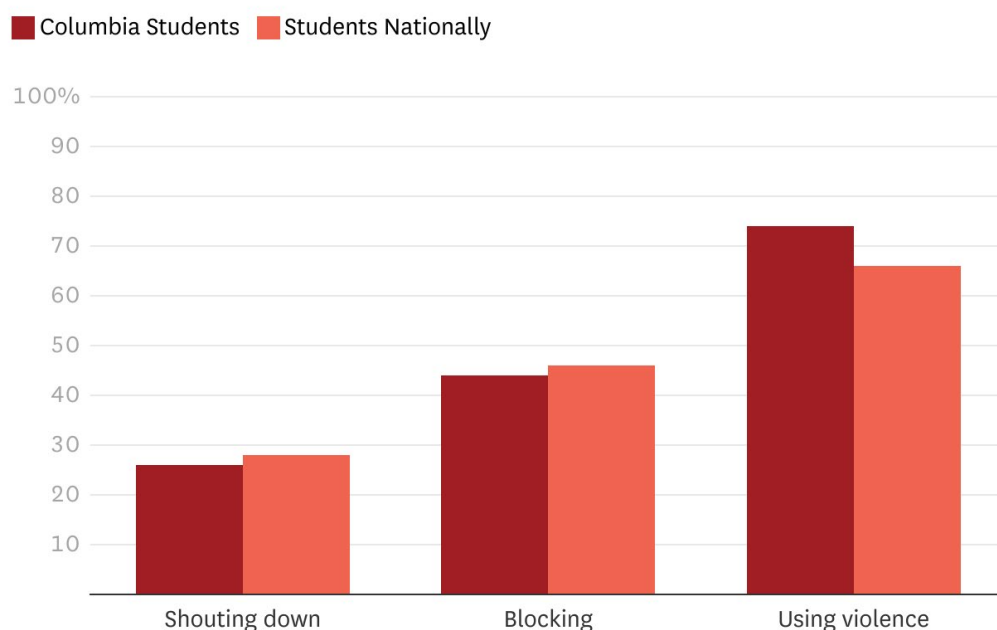


Chart: Emily Nayyer · Source: FIRE/ College Pulse

Students are able to have open conversations on controversial topics with the exception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Columbia ranks 131 for “Openness.” The majority of students responded that it would not be difficult to have an open and honest conversation on campus about the majority of topics presented.

- Large percentages of students said it was not difficult to have an open and honest conversation about gay rights, climate change, crime, gender inequality, China, the U.S. Supreme Court, immigration, abortion, gun control, sexual assault, hate speech, the presidential election, and racial inequality.
- Smaller majorities of students said that it would not be difficult to discuss free speech, affirmative action, police misconduct, economic inequality, religion, and transgender rights.

FIGURE 3: Students Who Have Difficulty Talking About Each Topic (%)

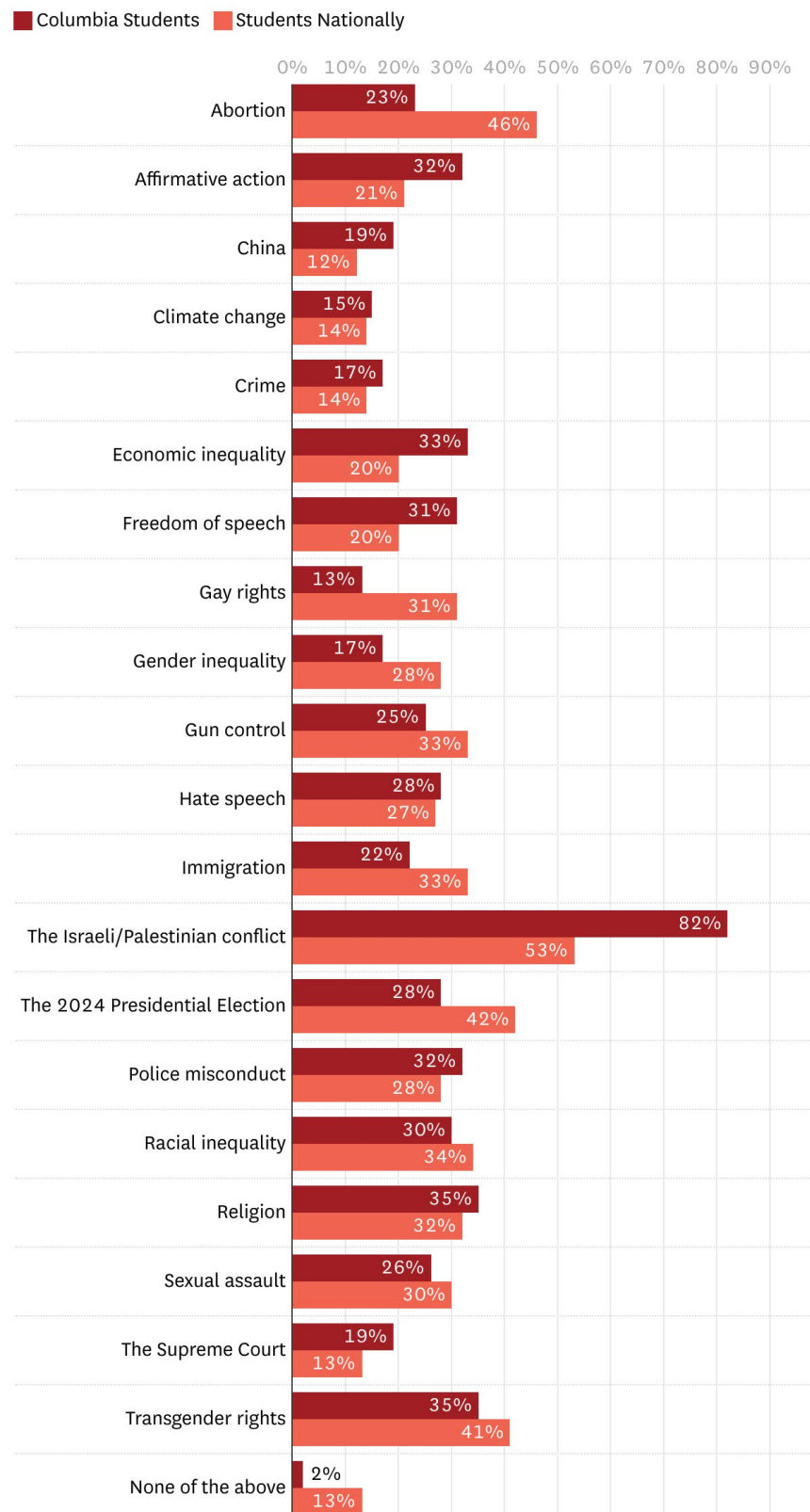


Chart: Emily Nayyer • Source: FIRE/ College Pulse

The exception to Columbia's general openness was the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A large majority of students, 82%, said it would be difficult to have open and honest conversations about this issue on campus. In contrast, 53% of students nationally responded the same, indicating that while the topic is generally regarded as difficult, it is substantially more so for Columbia students. Student quotes further illustrate the discomfort with this topic.

- "I always avoid expressing my opinion on the Israeli Palestinian conflict in any setting other than with my close friends." - class of 2025
- "I wanted to express an opinion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but I was worried other students would jump to conclusions." – class of 2026

In addition, a larger percentage of Columbia students (31%) than students nationally (20%) indicated that free speech would be a difficult topic to discuss on campus. The perceived difficulty discussing both the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and free speech are likely reflective of the tense atmosphere surrounding encampment protests and the administration's actions to restrict speech, particularly on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in response.

Students report discomfort expressing their views

Columbia performed poorly on the "Comfort Expressing Ideas" component. The school's ranking on this component has dramatically declined from 140 in 2023 to 234 in 2024 and has continued to drop further, to 254 in 2025. Students at Columbia reported high levels of discomfort in all areas, especially when it came to sharing ideas with professors and on social media.

- 75% of Columbia students were at least "somewhat uncomfortable" disagreeing publicly with a professor, versus 59% of students nationally.
- 64% of Columbia students were at least "somewhat uncomfortable" disagreeing with a professor in a written assignment, versus 50% of students nationally.
- 58% of Columbia students were at least "somewhat uncomfortable" expressing their views in an in-class discussion, versus 52% of students nationally.
- 61% of Columbia students were at least "somewhat uncomfortable" expressing their views in a discussion on campus with other students, versus 48% of students nationally.
- 79% of Columbia students were at least "somewhat uncomfortable" expressing their views to other students on social media, versus 66% of students nationally.

Not only do students not feel comfortable expressing their ideas, they also fear repercussions for doing so at higher levels than their peers nationally.

- 63% of Columbia students felt at least "occasionally" that they could not express an opinion because of how other students, professors, or the administration might respond, versus 43% of students nationally.
- 49% of Columbia students said it was "likely" or "very likely" that a student would be reported to the administration for saying something controversial, versus 26% of students nationally.

- 49% Columbia students felt it was “likely” or “very likely” that a professor would be reported to the administration by a student for saying something controversial, versus 32% of students nationally.

FIGURE 4: Students Who Felt At Least Somewhat Uncomfortable by Context (%)

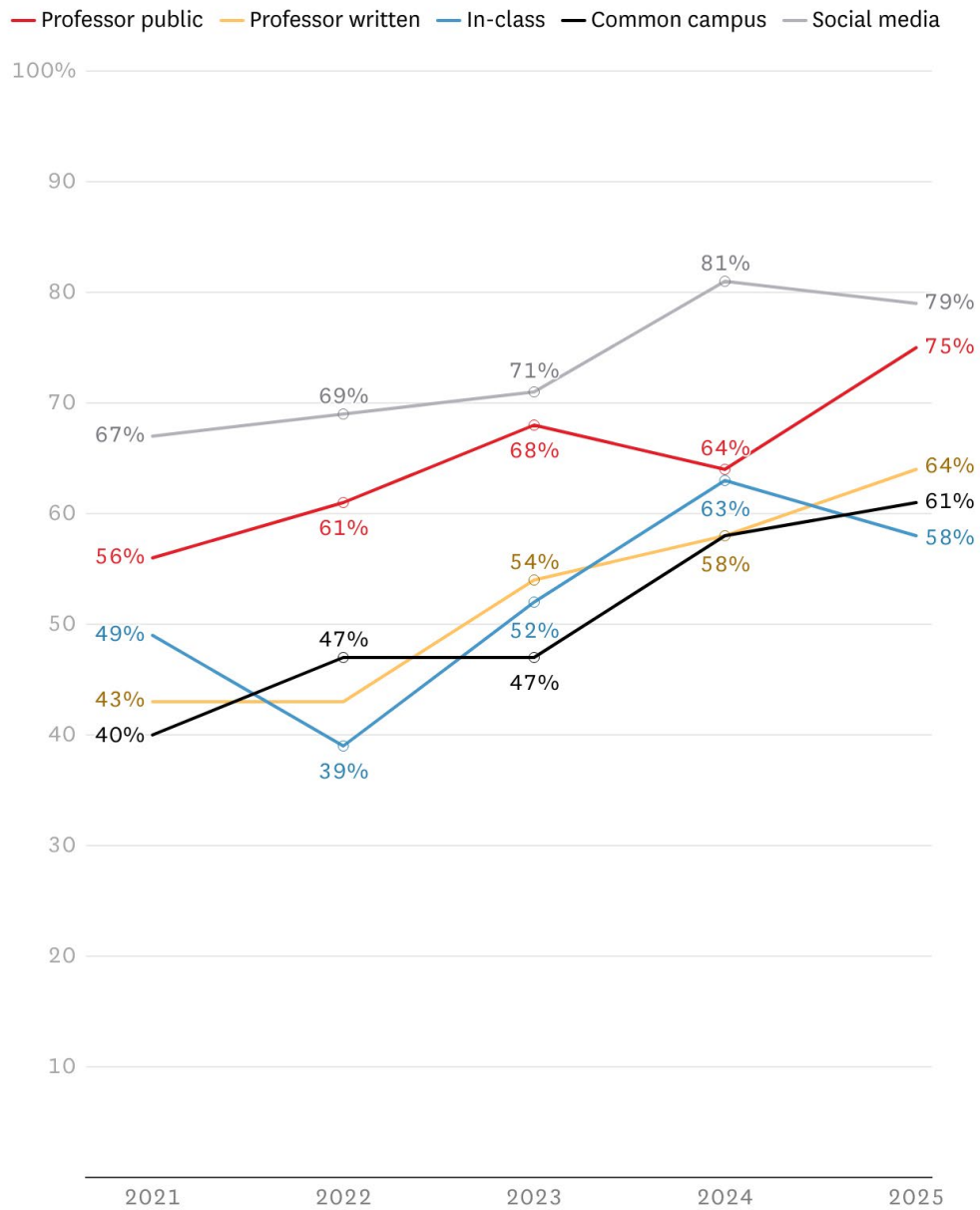


Chart: Emily Nayyer • Source: FIRE/ College Pulse

Comfort expressing ideas has steadily declined at Columbia since 2021, with the most dramatic drop occurring between 2023 and 2024, likely at least partially driven by administrative actions and associated fears of repercussions for speech.

Self-censorship is high among students at Columbia

In line with its low scores on “Comfort Expressing Ideas,” Columbia also scored poorly on the “Self-Censorship” component, ranking 226. We gave students the following definition of self-censorship:

“Refraining from sharing certain views because you fear social (e.g., exclusion from social events), professional (e.g., losing job or promotion), legal (e.g., prosecution or fine), or violent (e.g., assault) consequences, whether in person or remotely (e.g., by phone or online), and whether the consequences come from state or non-state sources.”

We then asked about the frequency with which they self-censor in three campus contexts. Columbia students were more likely to have engaged in at least occasional (once or twice a month) self-censorship than their peers nationally. When asked how frequently they self-censored:

- 70% of Columbia students said they self-censored at least “occasionally” in conversations with other students, versus 59% of students nationally.
- 69% of Columbia students said they self-censored at least “occasionally” during in class discussions, versus 65% of students nationally.
- 67% of Columbia students said they self-censored at least “occasionally” in conversations with professors, versus 61% of students nationally.
- 38% of Columbia students said they have hidden their political beliefs from their professors at least “occasionally” in an attempt to get a better grade, versus 34% of students nationally.

FIGURE 5: Columbia Students Who Engage In Self-Censorship At Least Occasionally

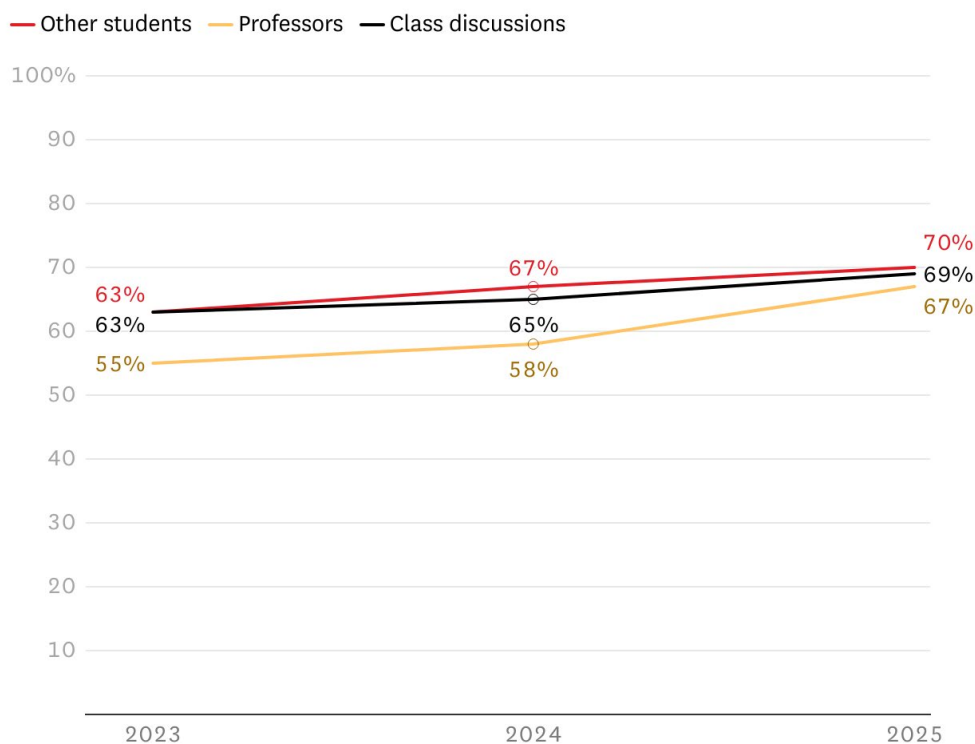


Chart: Emily Nayyer • Source: FIRE/ College Pulse

Students do not trust their school's administration

Columbia received an F on “Administrative Support,” ranking second to last, above only its sister school, Barnard College. The school’s score is two standard deviations below the average for this component. “Administrative Support” at Columbia has been in decline since 2021, dropping from 34 to 256, with the biggest drops in the last two years, likely in response to the administration’s handling of protests about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

FIGURE 6: Student Perspectives in Columbia's Administrative Support

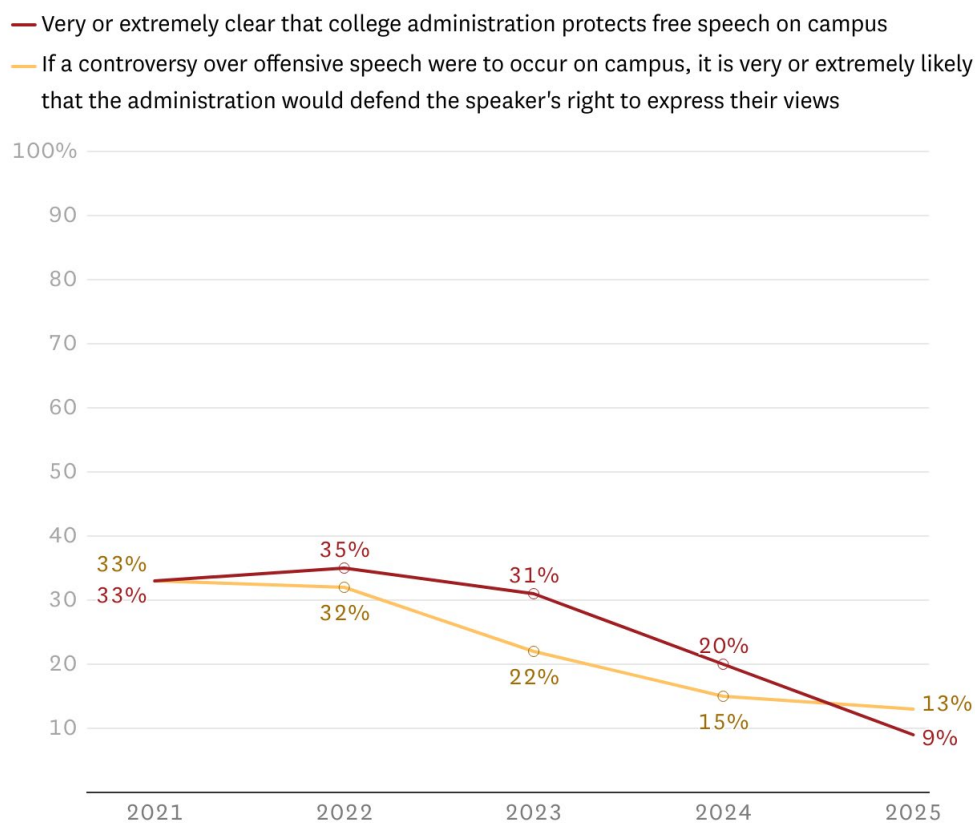


Chart: Emily Nayyer · Source: FIRE/ College Pulse

Columbia students have very little trust in their administration's support for and willingness to defend free speech on campus. When compared to students nationally, the level of distrust becomes even more dramatic.

- Only 9% of Columbia students said that it was “very” or “extremely” clear that the administration protects free speech, versus 36% of students nationally.
- The majority of Columbia students, 64%, responded that it was “not at all” or “not very” clear that their administration protects free speech on campus, versus 21% of students nationally.
- 13% of Columbia students said that it was “very” or “extremely” likely that their administration would defend a speaker's rights during a controversy, versus 24% of students nationally.
- 59% of Columbia students said that it was “not at all” or “not very” likely that their administration would defend a speaker's rights during a controversy, versus 27% of students nationally.

A ‘YELLOW LIGHT’ SCHOOL WITH A CHICAGO STATEMENT

Columbia University has adopted the “Chicago Statement” or another similar statement of commitment to freedom of expression but lacks any policies on institutional neutrality.

Columbia earns an overall “yellow light” rating for its written policies governing student expression. The university maintains five yellow light policies and two “green light” policies. Two of the university’s harassment policies fail to meet the legal standard for peer hostile environment harassment in an educational setting, putting protected speech at risk. The university also encourages students to report “bias related incidents” while conflating this concept with harassment and discrimination. This makes potentially unpopular but protected expressions punishable by the administration. The university should instead focus its resources on reports of discrimination and harassment and refrain from soliciting reports of subjective bias. Columbia also requires “a reservation and advance approval” for protests and demonstrations, with a general expectation of “ten working days” notice. This impermissibly bans spontaneous expression.

Lastly, Columbia’s internet usage policy prohibits “nuisance email or other online messages such as chain letters” without defining the terms or specifying that such activity must disrupt others’ use of the system. This provision could potentially subject a wide range of protected expression to punishment.

COLUMBIA’S SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

Columbia University was penalized 14 points for 11 speech controversies, five of which occurred in 2025, including deplatformings, terminations of faculty, and suspension, investigation, and censorship of students. Many of those who faced consequences were punished for speech related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, likely influencing student views on “Openness” regarding this topic.

Two deplatforming incidents

Columbia has been the site of two campus deplatformings in recent history. In 2023, administrators announced that a film screening planned by student group LionLez would not proceed following controversial statements made during the event’s promotion. In an email promoting the screening, LionLez’s president said that “THE HOLOCAUST WASN’T SPECIAL” and “F*CK ISRAEL,” while a flyer for the event included an addendum at the bottom reading, “It’s FREE PALESTINE over here. Zionists aren’t welcome.” A university spokesperson said: “As we have reiterated many times over the past few weeks, antisemitism or any other form of hate will never be tolerated in our community... The event organized by LionLez is not proceeding on Friday and is being reviewed.” The same day that statement was issued, LionLez distributed another flyer—this one without the previous addendum—announcing the event had been rescheduled and that “Due to many threats from a genocidal group of people,” they would be adding security to the event. Administrators then announced that “the event has not been rescheduled” and that “University leadership has demanded that LionLez leadership remove their post about the event being rescheduled.” The film screening was ultimately cancelled.

Another deplatforming incident occurred in 2024. The university’s School of International and Public Affairs invited Hillary Clinton and Linda Thomas-Greenfield, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, to speak at an event titled “Preventing and Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence.” As Clinton was speaking, a heckler began shouting over her calling her a “war criminal” and was

subsequently escorted out by security. A second heckler then began to shout over Clinton, who paused her speech for a minute before resuming and completing her remarks. As Thomas-Greenfield was speaking, protesters began shouting over her and calling for attendees to walk out. Some attendees stood up, chanted “Free, free Palestine,” and blocked the entrance before leaving. Thomas-Greenfield finished her remarks.

Termination of staff and investigation of scholars

Columbia had four instances of “Scholars Under Fire,” including the termination of two faculty members in connection with speech related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Abdul Kayum Ahmed, a professor at the university’s Mailman School of Public Health (SPH), was accused of “pro-Palestinian indoctrination” in a Wall Street Journal article that highlighted Ahmed’s references to Israel as a “colonial settler state” and his teachings on the health impacts of displacement among Palestinians. Following the article’s publication, university administrators took several actions. Ahmed was informed by the director of SPH’s Core Curriculum that he was being removed from the Core Curriculum teaching team, citing concerns about his approach to teaching about Palestine. The interim chair of the Department of Population and Family Health then notified Ahmed that he would not be permitted to teach his Health and Human Rights Advocacy course. Finally, Ahmed received a letter from the dean of the SPH stating that his appointment would not be renewed. The non-renewal of Ahmed’s appointment was finalized, ending his time at the university.

In another incident, Mohamed Abdou, the Arcapita Visiting Assistant Professor in Modern Arab Studies at the university, posted on Facebook: “Yes, I’m with the muqawamah (the resistance) be it Hamas and Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad but up to a point—given ultimate differences over our ethical political commitments; that’s the difference between a strategy and tactic too.” In April 2024, the university’s president testified before the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce, stating that Abdou “will never work at Columbia again.” Abdou contested this assertion, clarifying that his contract was set to conclude on May 30, 2024, and that he had not been formally terminated prior to its natural end.

Additionally, a Ph.D. student in economics, Daniel Di Martino, was investigated for his social media comments on transgenderism and its conflict with his Catholic faith. Following complaints, Columbia’s Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) investigated him for “conduct that could constitute discriminatory harassment.” During a subsequent meeting with OIE officials, Di Martino was presented with screenshots of his posts, including statements like “God does not teach us that we can change our gender” and comments supporting politicians who oppose gender-transition procedures for minors. The officials suggested that such posts could create a “hostile environment” for other students. Di Martino defended his posts as expressions of his religious beliefs and argued that the investigation infringed upon his First Amendment rights. He also highlighted that the OIE’s actions seemed to target conservative and religious viewpoints under the guise of promoting inclusivity.

A fourth “Scholar Under Fire” controversy involved the disruption of history professor Avi Shilon’s graduate-level course titled “History of Modern Israel.” FIRE took into account the university’s appropriate response and did not penalize this incident. On the first day of the spring semester, Shilon’s class was disrupted by masked protesters who entered the classroom, accused the course of promoting “Zionist and imperialist” narratives, and distributed flyers depicting violent imagery, including a boot poised to crush a Star of David with the caption “Crush Zionism.” The university administration condemned the disruption, stating that such actions violated campus rules and were unacceptable. A swift investigation led to the suspension of one university student involved, pending a full disciplinary

process. Additionally, two external participants were identified and banned from campus, with their respective institutions notified for further action.

Students, including student journalists, disciplined and censored

Columbia was penalized for five instances of “Students Under Fire.” Multiple students and student groups faced disciplinary action, including suspension, for their on-campus speech activities.

In 2024, student coalition Columbia University Apartheid Divest organized an event featuring pro-Palestinian speakers Charlotte Kates, Khaled Barakat, and Nerdeen Kiswani. After a Ph.D student complained to the administration, the group claims they were forced to change rooms and then cancel the event. Some members of the student group ultimately held the event virtually. Columbia administrators later called the event “unsanctioned” and, after an investigation of the group and the event, suspended six students and evicted them from campus housing. The university would, however, reverse the sanctions for two of those students, but not for the other four.

In 2025, protests about the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict took place at Columbia’s library. Columbia’s president eventually authorized NYPD to “assist in securing the building,” resulting in 78 arrests. Sawyer Huckabee, a student journalist with the Columbia Spector student newspaper, was present at the library to report on the protests. Before leaving the area, Huckabee had identified himself to Public Safety as a member of the student press. Shortly after the protests were cleared, Columbia’s Rules Administrator, Gregory Wawro, reportedly notified Huckabee that he was being placed on an interim suspension for his alleged involvement in the disruptive protest. The suspension was ultimately lifted a few hours later. The acting president, Claire Shipman, put out a statement on the events of the night which included language about the school’s valuing of free speech.

Also in 2025, the OIE investigated Maryam Alwan for alleged discriminatory harassment after writing an op-ed in the campus newspaper calling for divestment from Israel. In an email sent by the Office, Alwan was told she may have subjected other students to “unwelcome conduct” based on their religion, military service, or national origin. In addition, a master’s student known only as “Layla” alleged she too was investigated by the Office for an op-ed she denied writing.

The OIE also reportedly investigated an unnamed student for co-hosting an art exhibition focusing on last spring’s occupation of campus buildings by pro-Palestinian protesters. The two-story exhibit, housed in a private building belonging to the school’s Alpha Delta Phi fraternity chapter, features work from artists around the world.

HOW CAN COLUMBIA IMPROVE?

Columbia University has a long way to go to rebuild trust in the administration’s support for free speech. The last two years of investigations and censorship have shown that the administration is unwilling to defend free expression. This has contributed to a hostile speech climate in which students feel they cannot speak their mind for fear of repercussions, especially on hot button issues like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

To begin reversing course, Columbia should revise its speech codes to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating. Had Columbia earned a green light, it would have ranked 212 instead of 256. Columbia should

formally adopt an official commitment to institutional neutrality and devote itself to limiting administrative investigations to conduct that clearly falls outside the bounds of protected speech. Policy changes to protect speakers and prevent repetition of the poor handling of recent speech incidents, in addition to clear and decisive action to support speech when incidents occur going forward, will be necessary to demonstrate that the school recognizes and has learned from its prior mistakes. In order to rebuild the broken trust, the administration will also need to acknowledge and address these recent harms.

Columbia's leadership should more clearly and proactively articulate the value of expressive rights, particularly during moments of controversy, by publicly defending student and faculty expression and clearly communicating the value of free speech in a university setting. Additionally, to improve campus culture surrounding free speech, the university should incorporate robust First Amendment education into first-year orientation to help students understand not only their rights but also what constitutes protected or unprotected conduct. Including faculty in these training sessions may help students feel more comfortable expressing ideas in class assignments and to professors. Training could also include specific lessons on how to engage in discussions on controversial topics and how to disagree, potentially further supporting students to feel more comfortable expressing conflicting views and reducing self-censorship.

These changes would improve not only their policy and controversy scores but also, with time, the university's poor "Administrative Support" (256) ranking. Such changes may also build more trust between students and faculty, and likely help to improve Columbia's "Comfort Expressing Ideas" (254) and "Self-Censorship" (226) rankings, as the school's low scores in these areas could be in part attributed to fears of retribution for speech deemed not to be in alignment with Columbia's values and accepted positions.

Columbia's 2026 College Free Speech Rankings Scores by Component

COMPONENT	COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY	NATIONAL AVERAGE	MINIMUM VALUE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Comfort Expressing Ideas	8.65	9.53	5	15
Self-Censorship	11.57	12.12	3	20
Disruptive Conduct	15.45	15.50	3	20
Administrative Support	8.37	11.32	2	20
Openness	7.19	7.19	0	10
Political Tolerance	7.66	6.44	3	15
Chicago Statement	3 (Yes)	-	0 (No)	3 (Yes)
Institutional Neutrality	0 (No)	-	0 (No)	3 (Yes)
Spotlight Rating	-5 (Yellow)	-	-10 (Red)	5 (Green)
Campus Deplatformings	-2	-	∞ Penalties	∞ Bonuses
Scholars Under Fire	-5	-	∞ Penalties	∞ Bonuses
Students Under Fire	-7	-	∞ Penalties	∞ Bonuses
Overall score	42.89	58.63		

Topline Results

How clear is it to you that your college administration protects free speech on campus?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Not at all clear	30	18
Not very clear	78	46
Somewhat clear	45	27
Very clear	5	3
Extremely clear	10	6

If a controversy over offensive speech were to occur on your campus, how likely is it that the administration would defend the speaker's right to express their views?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Not at all likely	20	12
Not very likely	79	47
Somewhat likely	49	29
Very likely	11	7
Extremely likely	11	6

How comfortable would you feel doing the following on your campus? [Presented in randomized order]

Publicly disagreeing with a professor about a controversial political topic.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very uncomfortable	69	41
Somewhat uncomfortable	57	34
Somewhat comfortable	32	19
Very comfortable	11	7

Expressing disagreement with one of your professors about a controversial political topic in a written assignment.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very uncomfortable	44	26
Somewhat uncomfortable	63	38
Somewhat comfortable	45	26
Very comfortable	17	10

Expressing your views on a controversial political topic during an in-class discussion.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very uncomfortable	36	22
Somewhat uncomfortable	61	36
Somewhat comfortable	60	36
Very comfortable	11	6

Expressing your views on a controversial political topic to other students during a discussion in a common campus space such as a quad, dining hall, or lounge.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very uncomfortable	47	28
Somewhat uncomfortable	56	33
Somewhat comfortable	36	21
Very comfortable	31	18

Expressing an unpopular political opinion to your fellow students on a social media account tied to your name.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very uncomfortable	84	50
Somewhat uncomfortable	49	29
Somewhat comfortable	24	14
Very comfortable	12	7

This next series of questions asks you about self-censorship in different settings. For the purpose of these questions, self-censorship is defined as follows:

Refraining from sharing certain views because you fear social (e.g., exclusion from social events), professional (e.g., losing job or promotion), legal (e.g., prosecution or fine), or violent (e.g., assault) consequences, whether in person or remotely (e.g., by phone or online), and whether the consequences come from state or non-state sources. [Presented in randomized order]

How often do you self-censor during conversations with other students on campus?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Never	16	9
Rarely	36	21
Occasionally, once or twice a month	69	41
Fairly often, a couple of times a week	39	23
Very often, nearly every day	10	6

How often do you self-censor during conversations with your professors?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Never	12	7
Rarely	43	25
Occasionally, once or twice a month	68	40
Fairly often, a couple of times a week	31	18
Very often, nearly every day	15	9

How often do you self-censor during classroom discussions?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Never	6	4
Rarely	46	28
Occasionally, once or twice a month	63	37
Fairly often, a couple of times a week	40	24
Very often, nearly every day	13	8

How acceptable would you say it is for students to engage in the following action to protest a campus speaker?
[Presented in randomized order]

Shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Always acceptable	8	5
Sometimes acceptable	60	36
Rarely acceptable	57	34
Never acceptable	44	26

Blocking other students from attending a campus speech.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Always acceptable	7	4
Sometimes acceptable	28	16
Rarely acceptable	60	35
Never acceptable	75	44

Using violence to stop a campus speech.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Always acceptable	4	3
Sometimes acceptable	16	10
Rarely acceptable	24	14
Never acceptable	124	74

Student groups often invite speakers to campus to express their views on a range of topics. Regardless of your own views on the topic, should your school **ALLOW** or **NOT ALLOW** a speaker on campus who promotes the following idea? [Presented in randomized order]

Transgender people have a mental disorder.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Definitely should not allow this speaker	49	29
Probably should not allow this speaker	53	31
Probably should allow this speaker	51	30
Definitely should allow this speaker	16	10

Abortion should be completely illegal.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Definitely should not allow this speaker	26	16
Probably should not allow this speaker	35	21
Probably should allow this speaker	89	53
Definitely should allow this speaker	18	11

Black Lives Matter is a hate group.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Definitely should not allow this speaker	42	25
Probably should not allow this speaker	56	33
Probably should allow this speaker	54	32
Definitely should allow this speaker	17	10

The Catholic church is a pedophilic institution.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Definitely should not allow this speaker	13	7
Probably should not allow this speaker	42	25
Probably should allow this speaker	86	51
Definitely should allow this speaker	29	17

The police are just as racist as the Ku Klux Klan.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Definitely should not allow this speaker	24	14
Probably should not allow this speaker	51	30
Probably should allow this speaker	71	42
Definitely should allow this speaker	23	14

Children should be able to transition without parental consent.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Definitely should not allow this speaker	9	6
Probably should not allow this speaker	31	18
Probably should allow this speaker	98	58
Definitely should allow this speaker	31	18

Some students say it can be difficult to have conversations about certain issues on campus. Which of the following issues, if any, would you say are difficult to have an open and honest conversation about on your campus? [Presented in randomized order with none of the above always listed last]

Abortion

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	130	77
Yes	39	23

Affirmative action

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	116	68
Yes	53	32

China

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	136	81
Yes	32	19

Climate change

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	144	85
Yes	25	15

Crime

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	140	83
Yes	29	17

Economic inequality

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	114	67
Yes	55	33

Freedom of speech

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	116	69
Yes	53	31

Gay rights

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	147	87
Yes	22	13

Gender inequality

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	140	83
Yes	29	17

Gun control

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	127	75
Yes	42	25

Hate speech

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	122	72
Yes	47	28

Immigration

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	132	78
Yes	37	22

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	30	18
Yes	138	82

The Presidential Election

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	121	72
Yes	48	28

Police misconduct

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	116	68
Yes	53	32

Racial inequality

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	119	70
Yes	50	30

Religion

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	109	65
Yes	60	35

Sexual assault

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	126	74
Yes	43	26

The Supreme Court

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	136	81
Yes	33	19

Transgender rights

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	109	65
Yes	60	35

None of the above

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	165	98
Yes	4	2

On your campus, how often have you felt that you could not express your opinion on a subject because of how students, a professor, or the administration would respond?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Never	9	5
Rarely	53	31
Occasionally, once or twice a month	66	39
Fairly often, a couple of times a week	34	20
Very often, nearly every day	7	4

Have you ever been disciplined by your college's administration for expression on campus?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes, I have been disciplined.	0	0
No, but I have been threatened with discipline.	18	11
I have not been disciplined nor threatened with discipline.	150	89

How often, if at all, do you hide your political beliefs from your professors in an attempt to get a better grade?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Never	37	22
Rarely	67	40
Occasionally, once or twice a month	35	21
Fairly often, a couple times a week	14	9
Very often, nearly every day	14	8

How likely or unlikely is it that a student on campus would be reported to the administration by another student for saying something controversial?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very unlikely	3	2
Unlikely	32	19
Neither likely or unlikely	51	30
Likely	54	32
Very likely	28	17

How likely or unlikely is it that a professor on campus would be reported to the administration by a student for saying something controversial?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very unlikely	4	2
Unlikely	34	20
Neither likely or unlikely	47	28
Likely	50	29
Very likely	34	20

Have you or anyone you know filed a Title IX complaint?

Response	Frequency	Percent
I have filed a Title IX complaint.	1	1
I both know someone who has and have myself filed a Title IX complaint.	2	1
I have not but I know someone who has filed a Title IX complaint.	39	23
I have neither filed a Title IX complaint, nor know anyone who has.”)	125	74

Has a Title IX complaint ever been filed against you or someone you know?

Response	Frequency	Percent
A Title IX complaint was filed against me and someone I know.	2	1
A Title IX complaint was filed against someone I know, but not me.	17	10
A Title IX complaint has never been filed against me or someone I know.”)	150	89

How often do you attend church or religious services?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Never	60	35
Less than once a year	30	18
Once or twice a year	24	14
Several times a year	28	16
Once a month	8	5
2-3 times a month	6	4
About weekly	3	2
Weekly	6	4
Several times a week	4	3

Are you currently a member of the armed services?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	1	1
No	167	99

Are you a veteran of the armed services?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	0	0	0
No	168	99	100

How often would you say that you feel anxious?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Never	1	1	3
Less than half the time	18	11	62
About half the time	6	4	21
Most of the time, nearly every day	2	1	7
Always	2	1	6

How often would you say that you feel lonely or isolated?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Never	6	4	27
Less than half the time	11	6	48
About half the time	5	3	23
Always	0	0	2

How often would you say that you feel like you have no time for yourself?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Never	6	3	14
Less than half the time	6	4	15
About half the time	22	13	53
Most of the time, nearly every day	4	2	9
Always	4	2	10

How often would you say that you feel depressed?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Never	16	10	50
Less than half the time	9	5	27
About half the time	7	4	21
Most of the time, nearly every day	0	0	1
Always	0	0	1

How often would you say that you feel stressed, frustrated, or overwhelmed?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Never	2	1	5
Less than half the time	15	9	35
About half the time	9	6	22
Most of the time, nearly every day	11	6	25
Always	5	3	12



FIRE

Foundation for Individual
Rights and Expression

510 Walnut Street
Suite 900
Philadelphia, PA 19106
T: 215.717.3473
www.thefire.org

DOWNLOAD THE 2025 COLLEGE
FREE SPEECH RANKINGS REPORT

rankings.thefire.org



@thefireorg