



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 19, 2025

Harrison Keller
President
University of North Texas
1155 Union Circle #311425
Denton, TX 76203

Laura Smith
Dean of Students
University of North Texas
1155 Union Circle #305358
Denton, TX 76203

Dear President Keller and Dean Smith:

On September 10, 2025, national hero Charlie Kirk was assassinated during a campus event at Utah Valley University (“UVU”) while promoting freedom of speech by engaging in civil discourse and respectful debate. Since his assassination, radical leftists across the country have celebrated Charlie’s death, continued to promote political violence, and expressed support for the death of other conservative leaders. Unfortunately, Texas has not been immune to this shameful and dangerous conduct. Indeed, on the day of Charlie’s assassination, a student at your university chronicled the vile reactions of her classmates on social media, posting a video of other students celebrating his death and expressing hope that the President would suffer the same fate.

When the student arrived in her classroom, she overheard another student talking about the shooting at UVU. The agitator can then be seen showing the video of Charlie’s assassination to other students, who began to cheer that he would die from his injuries and celebrate his children growing up without their father. Classmates also expressed hope that President Trump would also be assassinated. The student then expressed her own opinion that the assassination should not be celebrated or discussed in class. In response, the agitator and other classmates began to yell at the student, and the professor directed her—and *only* her—to take the discussion out of the classroom. To request that her absence from class not be counted against her grade, the student then reported the incident to Dean Smith, who informed the student that she should report the incident to the head of the Psychology Department. She presented her story to the department head and asked for her absence to be taken off the record, citing her early arrival time and that the course is partially graded on attendance.

On September 14, the student posted an update on social media. Troublingly, the student also stated that she believes that the University purposely failed to inform her of her option to file a report in order to avoid creating written documentation of the incident. After finding out that she was permitted to file reports of this incident, she did so. But there has been no response from the University. Because she did not receive any answers, the student also reached out to other campus authorities regarding her attendance request, to no avail. Further, the student announced that other students have reached out to her with similar experiences but are afraid speaking publicly will be punished by the University. Finally, the student reported that the original agitator posted a video that reaffirmed the student's claims that the agitator was celebrating Charlie's death.

The University of North Texas is bound to investigate and enforce its Student Misconduct, Employee, Absence and Free Speech policies. This incident warrants review for multiple violations, including:

- Violation of the Code of Student Conduct, section VI(B)(1). This section prohibits engaging in verbal abuse, intimidation, or "any other conduct" that threatens or endangers the health, safety, or welfare of any person. Speech protected by the U.S. and Texas Constitutions are not a violation, but the policy stipulates that "fighting words and statements which reasonably threaten or endanger the health and safety of any person are not protected speech." Any student who celebrated Charlie's death such that a reasonable person of average sensibility would react to their expression with immediate physical retaliation or expressed a desire for the President to be assassinated may be in violation of this policy.
- Violation of the Employee Ethics policy, section III(C)(2). This requires staff to "act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private or public organization or individual[.]" The course professor's individual dismissal of this student while classmates were celebrating a political assassination and expressing a desire for more violence may be indicative of viewpoint discrimination. Further, inaction by the University's staff in addressing the student's concerns regarding attendance, despite numerous conversations, emails, and filed reports, tends to indicate that other employees did not comply with this policy.
- Violation of the Free Speech policy, section III(G). This provision defines expressive activity to "include speeches, assembly, marches, parades, rallies, protests, picketing, distribution of non-commercial literature, circulation of petitions, graphic or pictorial displays, or similar activities intended to communicate an idea or opinion." Further, the definition explicitly excludes language that consists of physical harm, threats to engage in unlawful activity, or expressive activities that interfere with the legal rights of others. Allegations that classmates communicated an opinion that President Trump should also be assassinated may render such statements to consist of physical harm and could constitute a violation of this policy.

- Finally, Free Speech policy, section IV(G)(1), prohibits activities that “materially and substantially disrupt the normal operations of the University.” The normal operations of any educational institution reasonably include the instruction of students. Unsurprisingly, classmates publicly celebrating Charlie’s assassination before class tend to disrupt those operations and that is exactly what occurred in this instance. That disruption was only exacerbated by the student’s dismissal from class following her opposition to the outrageous commentary from other students. This could constitute a violation of the University’s rules.

The recorded incident demonstrates that there may be numerous violations of university policy, ranging from Student Conduct to Employee impartiality. The student’s allegations are concerning. For too long, schools across the country have ignored complaints of misconduct against left-wing students. This lack of disciplinary action has reinforced a principle that such conduct is appropriate and, in turn, has contributed to radicalizing individuals to engage in reprehensible actions. Texans must be reassured that their children are not being subjected to such indoctrination. To ensure the student’s story was heard and her requests adequately addressed, I request that the University expand its investigation into the students who engaged in the outrageous actions depicted in this video to include the professor who ratified that conduct by acting discriminatorily against the complaining student, and the process employed by staff.

For Texas,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Paxton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ken Paxton
Attorney General of Texas