



# STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA

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Dear State University System Presidents:

On September 10, 2025, Charlie Kirk was brutally and violently assassinated on a university campus. Charlie toured the country engaging in on-campus debate and dialogue with students. Just this year he visited three Florida universities where his appearance drew large and enthusiastic crowds.

Charlie Kirk modeled what Florida has long promoted: free expression, civil discourse and debate. As a reminder, in 2018, the Florida Legislature enacted the “Campus Free Expression Act” expressly protecting the right to free speech activities at universities.<sup>i</sup> The following year, as coordinated by the Board of Governors for the State University System of Florida, “the presidents of Florida’s twelve public universities, adopted a ‘Statement of Free Expression.’”<sup>ii</sup>

In 2021, to further “promote and support civil discourse”, the Board established a “Civil Discourse Initiative.”<sup>iii</sup> Thereafter, the Florida Legislature required an annual survey to be done to measure “the extent to which competing ideas and perspectives are presented and members of the university community, including students, . . . feel free to express their beliefs and viewpoints on campus. . . .”<sup>iv</sup> And as recent as 2023, in further recognition of the value of “open discussion and debate of contested public policy issues from diverse perspectives . . .” each university must have an Office of Public Policy Events to organize debates and group forums with opposing sides and a diversity of perspectives on the “most widely discussed public policy issues of the day.”<sup>v</sup>

However, while the right to free expression is paramount it is not absolute. Celebrating or excusing campus violence—and in this case, the murder of Charlie Kirk— by members of our university system will not be tolerated. Such behavior is abhorrent, has the deleterious effects of breeding further violence and undermines efforts to promote civil discourse. Accordingly, Presidents are directed to review policies, procedures and codes of conduct for employees and students regarding social media postings and other related communications and ensure such measures are deliberately enforced.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter,

Ray Rodriguez  
Chancellor, State University System of Florida

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<sup>i</sup> § 1004.097, Fla. Stat. (2018); *see also* Civil Discourse Final Report, Florida Board of Governors, p. 1 (2022) (available at: [https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/SPC\\_09\\_Civil-Discourse\\_Final\\_CE.pdf](https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/SPC_09_Civil-Discourse_Final_CE.pdf)).

<sup>ii</sup> Civil Discourse Final Report, Florida Board of Governors, p. 1 (2022).

<sup>iii</sup> *Id.*

<sup>iv</sup> § 1001.706, Fla. Stat. (2022).

<sup>v</sup> § 1001.93, Fla. Stat. (2023).