



Hello, Vanguard University community.

I want to speak directly to you about recent media coverage and the questions it has raised.

A Fox News story presents several claims about Vanguard University's policies and how we guide political engagement on our campus, especially in relation to our decision not to recognize a Turning Point USA chapter.

This coverage comes at a moment of deep grief, as we also recognize and share the profound loss felt within the Turning Point USA community following the assassination of Charlie Kirk. As we respond to this moment, we hold both truth and care at the center of this communication.

I want to speak directly to you to clarify our policies, the values that guide them and the steps we have taken to support civil, respectful engagement across differences.

Let me begin here:

We believe political engagement matters.

But we believe something else matters even more—how we engage one another as members of a Christian community.

At Vanguard, our commitment is to form students who can think critically, listen carefully and engage passionately about the most important issues of our day with dignity, respect and humility.

So, let's dive into what has happened. The recent news coverage has stated that political groups are not allowed to form on our campus.

Our policy allows students to form academic, service and social clubs. It DOES NOT allow for campus clubs affiliated with political advocacy initiatives, whether independent or as a chapter of a national organization.

That distinction is important.

As a private Christian university, we are not governed by the same framework as public institutions. Our policies are guided by our Christian mission and our responsibility to develop our students intellectually, spiritually and personally. That includes how they engage with one another.

Other Christian universities may take a different approach, but because our students come from a wide range of backgrounds, we have a unique call to help our students learn to effectively and respectfully engage with people who see the world differently.

This is not about silencing viewpoints.

Rather, this is about fostering a campus culture where people with fiercely different convictions can speak, listen and disagree with respect.

As we look at what's happening across university campuses in the nation, we see what can transpire when outside organizations can drive group political identity on campus, causing students to begin to

see each other as political opponents, first—rather than as classmates, community members and brothers and sisters in Christ.

Vanguard exists to form disciples, thinkers and leaders.

So, our responsibility is to ensure that political engagement on our campus is grounded not in winning arguments, but in seeking understanding.

How is it that we foster a campus culture where people with fiercely different convictions can speak, listen and disagree with respect?

Well, Vanguard intentionally creates spaces for civil dialogue across political differences. Over the past year, we hosted multi-perspective forums, debates and public events that modeled respectful engagement.

- Something that I'm very proud of, and many of our faculty and staff take great pride in, is our theme for 2024, which was A Year of Civility. We held this event series throughout 2024 leading up to the presidential election. We held more than 30 events.
- In fact, our campus-wide Presidential Debate Watch Party, which included a pundit panel of students garnered attention of our local paper, the *Los Angeles Times Daily Pilot*, who covered the event and explained that it was borne of an effort to “guide students into engaging in more respectful conversations.”
- These efforts are ongoing in this academic year, in the form of our Courageous Conversations series, to ensure our campus environment is conducive to education and respectful discourse.
- In fact, all students who have requested a political advocacy club have been invited to participate in planning these events. Many have joined us to plan and participate, including students now claiming that our campus is apolitical.

It's clear that robust political dialogue is not something we avoid.

It is something we actively cultivate within the framework that we have set forth for our Christian community.

So, to our students. I want to speak directly to you.

We see your passion.

We affirm your desire to engage with the issues of our time.

And we will continue to support thoughtful, courageous and faithful dialogue.

Valuing fellow students within our community, even in the face of disagreement, is more vital than any political affiliation. And, as Christians, we must stand together—student to student, not group against group—and prioritize what we hold in common.

To our parents, alumni, supporters and partners:

Please know that this decision flows directly from our commitment to our mission: To pursue knowledge, cultivate character, deepen faith and equip each student for a Spirit-empowered life of Christ-centered leadership and service.

We remain committed to robust dialogue and the intellectual and spiritual formation of every student engaged in a transformational Vanguard education.

Soundbites and headline click-bait are designed to generate heat.

But when we disagree—especially when we disagree—we are called to practice dignity, respect and humility, first and foremost.

This is who we are.

This is the spirit in which we move forward together.

Thank you.