



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM[®]

Office of General Counsel

November 18, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

The Honorable Ken Paxton
Attorney General of the State of Texas
Open Government Division
P.O. Box 12548, Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711-2548

RE: Texas Public Information Act Request
Original Requests Date: October 3, 2025
Responses to Clarifications/Narrowings: November 4, 2025
Requestor: Kevin Bass

Dear General Paxton:

Texas Tech University System ("TTUS") respectfully requests an Attorney General's open records decision under the Texas Public Information Act, Tex. Gov't Code § 552.001, *et seq.*

The TTUS Office of General Counsel received two requests on October 3, 2025, (the "Original Requests") from Kevin Bass (the "Requestor") for the following information:

- 1. Please produce a metadata only export for all emails (no bodies) and Teams/SharePoint/Slack/IM/SMS messages referencing any of: "Kevin Norris Bass" OR "Kevin N. Bass" OR "Kevin Bass" OR "kevinnbass" OR "medical student" OR "student", sent or received June 1, 2023 through October 2, 2025 from numerous custodians.**
- 2. Attached is my TPIA request seeking a metadata-only export for emails and Teams/SharePoint/Slack/IM/SMS that discuss or reference students, COVID, or scientific/public-health topics (e.g., science, scientific, epidemiology, virology, public health) (any format: email, Teams/SharePoint, Slack, IM, SMS/text) during the date range, limited to Dr. Deborah L. Birx (and assistants/delegates).**

Said requests are attached as Exhibit "A."¹

On October 17, 2025, TTUS sent a request for clarification/narrowing, asking the Requestor to

¹ In the interest of efficiency, TTUS has consolidated the requests received from the Requestor as the requests were received on the same day and they rely on the same set of facts and/or legal exceptions.

narrow the scope by refining search terms, custodians, timeframes, or platforms. This request was made to reduce potential excessive costs, manage the voluminous amount of information, and assist TTUS in locating the specific records sought.

On November 4, 2025, the Requestor responded to TTUS's clarification/narrowing correspondence. The Requestor made identical clarifications/narrowings to each of the Original Requests. The Requestor's clarifications/narrowings requested the following information:

- 1. Narrowing (Phase-1): Platform: University email only (exclude Teams/SharePoint/Slack/IM/SMS). Custodians (5): Eric Bentley; Ronny Wall; William Webster; Amanda McSween; Beverly Muñoz. Date range: Oct 3–Oct 31, 2025. Search focus (metadata only): From, To, Cc, Bcc, Subject, Sent/Received date-time (UTC), Message-ID/Internet-Message-ID, thread/conversation ID, folder path, size, attachment count + filenames (no body text). Terms (avoid broad "student"): "Kevin Norris Bass" OR "Kevin Bass" OR "kbassphiladelphia" OR "Preservation Notice" OR "P3" OR "SPPCC" OR "professionalism" OR "dismissal" OR "appeal" OR "name-clearing".**

Said clarifications/narrowings are attached as Exhibit "B."² According to the Texas Public Information Act, a governmental body must request an open records decision (ORD) of the Attorney General for exceptions to public disclosure on or before the end of the 10th business day after the date of receiving the written requests, which would be no later than October 17, 2025.

However, on October 17, 2025, TTUS requested that the Requestor narrow and clarify his Original Requests as explained above. The Requestor responded on November 4, 2025. Accordingly, the request is deemed received on the date clarification was provided, which resets the 10th business day response deadline to November 18, 2025. *See City of Dallas v. Abbott*, 304 S.W.3d 380, 387 (Tex. 2010). The date of receipt is evidenced by the Requestor's November 4, 2025, emails. *See* Exhibit "B".

TTUS has responded to the Requestor that it is seeking an opinion from the Attorney General on those items it claims should be excepted from public disclosure. The response to the Requestor is attached as Exhibit "C."

The legal bases upon which TTUS believes exceptions to public disclosure apply or may apply are as follows:

1. Texas Government Code §§ 552.101, 552.103, 552.107, 552.111, 552.137 and/or 552.139.

Pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act, a governmental body that requests an Attorney General decision for exceptions to public disclosure must, not later than the 15th business day after the date of receiving the written requests, submit to the Attorney General written comments stating the reasons why the above-stated exceptions apply. As explained above, since the date of receipt

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of the Requestor's clarifications/narrowings was November 4, 2025, the date by which TTUS must submit its detailed comments is November 25, 2025.

Sincerely,

Brontë Staugaard

Brontë C. Staugaard
Assistant General Counsel

Enclosures: Exhibit "A" – Original Requests
Exhibit "B" – Requestor's Clarifications/Narrowings
Exhibit "C" – Letter to Requestor

xc: Requestor:
Kevin Bass
kbassphiladelphia@gmail.com