



## Campus protests shut down legal scholar, candidate who wants to ban 'sex-change surgeries' for kids

One university vaguely promises to enforce student code of conduct, while another doesn't even hint at sanctions for students.

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Politically motivated disruptions of campus events, which largely took a break amid pandemic restrictions, have come roaring back in the new era of "living with" COVID-19. Protesters successfully shut down events this week hosted by the Federalist Society at the University of California Hastings College of the Law and Young Conservatives of Texas (YCT) at the University of North Texas (UNT), the latter of which involved riot police.

If the students who disrupted constitutional scholar Ilya Shapiro and Texas House candidate Jeff Younger are facing sanctions under campus disciplinary codes, their universities aren't saying what they might be. Neither UC Hastings nor UNT responded to Just the News queries.

Videos of the disruptions proliferated on social media, though one source of primary evidence has inexplicably disappeared: UNT student Ismael Belkoura's Twitter account. Its Google archive shows a mix of videos, photos and on-the-ground observations across the YCT event and police response.

Chilling effects on free speech didn't disappear when professors and students weren't in the same physical space under campus COVID policies, however.

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education issued a report this week counting more than 100 "targeting incidents" against faculty in 2021, mostly in response to their classroom remarks and particularly regarding race. ("Rally/protest" was the least likely context for targeting last year.)

About two-thirds of targeting came "from the left" of the scholar and almost as many resulted in sanctions against the target, led by formal investigations (28), suspensions (18) and terminations (14), including revoked tenure.

**'Written warning' possible**

Shapiro left the libertarian Cato Institute this year to lead Georgetown Law's Center for the Constitution, but he was quickly put on leave for an "inartful tweet" about President Biden's pledge to only consider black women to replace Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer.

He was set to debate a UC Hastings professor about the nomination battle, but students started chanting "Black lawyers matter!" when it was Shapiro's turn at the podium, according to a 53-minute Instagram video posted by the Black Law Students Association, which organized the disruption.

Protesters ignored Dean of Academics Morris Ratner's plea to wait until Q&A to confront Shapiro and they instead mocked the constitutional scholar's baldness, called him a coward and physically confronted him, National Review summarized.

While the law school later issued a statement warning disruptors that it "will —indeed, must — enforce" the student code's ban on "disturbances," UC Hastings declined to tell Reason what sanctions may follow.

Section 115 of the student handbook lays out the range of sanctions for code violations. It says students may receive a nondisciplinary "written warning" that is not included in their record or "reported to a licensing authority," which could threaten their bar approval.

The backdrop for the UNT disruption was Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's directive last month to the Department of Family and Protective Services to investigate parents who subject their children to "abusive gender-transitioning procedures."

Those include "reassignment surgeries" that can sterilize children and "administration of puberty-blocking drugs or supraphysiologic doses of testosterone or estrogen." A state judge imposed a temporary restraining order against the directive Wednesday.

Titled "Criminalize Child Transitions," the YCT event featured Younger, the Texas father who unsuccessfully took his ex-wife to court to stop her from raising their son as a girl and allegedly planning to "put him on chemical castration drugs at the age of nine," the child's current age.

Tweet URL

Younger announced his run for the state house in December on a platform that includes "outlaw[ing] sex-change surgeries on children" in Texas, which he claims is a destination for such procedures.

A video shows a room of protesters clapping, pounding tables and chanting "F— these fascists" at Younger, who claps along with them, and his hosts. Younger told National Review he egged them on in the hope that they would "tire them[selves] out."

Another video shows an activist trying to stop a photographer from documenting the protest in the room, grabbing and blocking his camera. A self-described antifascist collective posted a highly pixelated video of the protest to shield the identities of protesters.

A larger group of chanting activists was waiting outside for Younger and Kelly Neidert, the face of YCT, who each claimed an activist punched Younger in the gut.

Neidert told The Post Millennial that two officers "pushed me inside of the closest building" to avoid the mob and one of them joined her in a "janitor's closet," the only secure room they could find, as intruders ran down the hall testing doors.

Another video appears to show a police car running into protesters as it tried to get Neidert away from the scene. The Dallas Morning News reported that Denton police said a person at a hospital reported being hit by a UNT police vehicle.

YCT's flyer for the event roiled campus last month, prompting a petition to expel Neidert and alleged death threats against her. Neidert posted a video showing a male student physically confronting her in a campus library, calling her a "fake ass Christian" and "bitch" who wears "too much makeup."

UNT President Neal Smatresk publicly responded to the controversy by blaming YCT, though not by name. "I know the last several days may have felt particularly difficult for the transgender members of our community, due to the intolerant views of a handful of campus members," he wrote last month.

Smatresk published another statement Thursday defending police and blaming "a small group of protestors not affiliated with the university" for escalating the protest from "peaceful" to "aggressive."

He didn't mention possible sanctions for students who disrupted the event. "We have always been a passionate community that stands up for our ideals, but last night's behavior by some individuals is not reflective of the UNT I know and love," Smatresk wrote.