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Administration Division

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement from Pima County Attorney Laura Conover

In a statement University of Arizona President Robert Robbins issued today regarding the events leading up to the October 5 killing of hydrology professor Tom Meixner, he mentioned the University's contact with the Pima County Attorney's Office about the suspect's behavior in matters concerning other employees.

The University of Arizona Police Department did bring two proposed misdemeanor complaints about former student Murad Dervish to our attention, and both times those concerns were given our full attention. However, in neither instance did the facts of the complaint meet the evidentiary requirements for charging him with the crime of Threats and Intimidation at that time under A.R.S. 13-1202.

Our office bases criminal charges on the evidence presented, which must rise to the Constitutional standard of proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

The complaints brought by UA police in April and again in September did not have sufficient proof to meet that standard, and therefore no charges were filed.

It is worth noting that our Victim Service Division responded on scene at the request of law enforcement to provide crisis counseling to faculty, staff, and students very quickly after the shooting. Our victim advocates also provided "group counseling intervention," a specific type of counseling focusing on the first 72 hours after an incident.

Finally, Red Flag Laws in effect in nearly half the states vary regarding their rules and enforcement, but they provide opportunity to remove guns from the hands of those who are known to present a threat to themselves or others. A Red Flag bill failed to pass in Arizona.

Until we join other states by passing a Red Flag law, our police will be limited to the laws that are on the books, and preventable tragedies like this will continue to occur.

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