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Eugene-Springfield NAACP Statement on Substantiated Findings Against LCC Board Chair Zachary Mulholland

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The Eugene-Springfield NAACP issues this statement with unwavering conviction and a renewed call for accountability following the public release of a formal investigative report regarding the conduct of Lane Community College Board Director Zachary Mulholland. The report, completed by Garrett Hemann Robertson, P.C., substantiates multiple complaints of harassment, bullying, and abuse of power directed toward LCC President Dr. Stephanie Bulger, a Black woman and leader at the college. These findings were not speculative. They were affirmed by the Board Vice Chair, Board Secretary, and multiple other board members and staff.

The Facts Are Now Public and Undeniable

The report concludes that Mr. Mulholland engaged in a pattern of dismissive, disrespectful, and hostile behavior that "has been perceived by President Bulger and others who have witnessed the conduct to be microaggressions based upon her race and sex." One of the most troubling events took place on March 27, 2025, during an agenda-setting meeting where Mulholland reportedly yelled profanities, used demeaning gestures, and told Dr. Bulger, "Can – you – take – a – freakin' hit, man?!" His behavior was so aggressive and inappropriate that the meeting was immediately ended by participants out of concern for the President's well-being. That concern was so serious that campus security was later requested for future meetings.

To describe these actions as merely "passionate" or "blunt" is an insult to the standards of professional leadership. This is bullying. This is abuse of power. This is textbook misconduct. And it was substantiated by an independent legal investigation.

Let us name plainly what is happening here: a white man in a position of elected power has been found to have mistreated, intimidated, and targeted a woman of color in both public and private settings, using the authority of his office to do so. That alone is grounds for action. But even more troubling is the broader institutional and community response—or lack thereof. Rather than

swift accountability, we have seen equivocation. Rather than centering the survivor, we have seen public defenses of Mr. Mulholland's character. Rather than acknowledging harm, we are witnessing the protection of status and comfort.

This Is What White Supremacy and Patriarchy Look Like in Practice

This is not just about one man behaving poorly. It is about the culture that enables it. The ability of a white man in elected office to treat anyone, especially a Black woman, in this way—openly, repeatedly, and without consequence—is not a personal quirk. It is the manifestation of white supremacy and patriarchy in our institutions.

As President Bulger herself said in the report: "Dismissiveness can look like racism and sexism, because he will go to a man to get the answer he wants." She went on to describe the behavior as an attempt to dominate her authority, stating that the message was clear: "You can work for me, but you better do exactly what I tell you to do."

This is the racial and gendered power imbalance that communities like ours have long warned against. And now we have a clear, substantiated example of how it shows up in boardrooms, behind closed doors, and on public stages.

Leadership Is a Privilege, Not a Right

Let us begin where we did months ago: with a call for accountability. In our April 2025 letter, we affirmed that if these allegations were substantiated, Mr. Mulholland should resign his position. That condition has now been met. It is not enough to speak of justice abstractly. It must be practiced. Mr. Mulholland's continued presence on the Board of Education—after independent confirmation of misconduct—violates the public trust, retraumatizes the person he harmed, and sends a chilling message to anyone else who might come forward in the future.

Leadership is not simply about intent. It is about impact. And when a leader uses their platform to harm others, especially those with less institutional power, they forfeit the privilege to lead. That is not punishment—it is accountability.

A Culture of Denial Is Not Leadership—It Is Complicity

We are also deeply troubled by statements made by some board members who continue to defend Mr. Mulholland by insisting he is "not a racist" or "not sexist." This kind of character defense in the face of documented misconduct is a hallmark of white supremacy culture—where the focus is placed on protecting the accused rather than centering the harm caused.

Let's be clear: Racism and sexism are not about how someone identifies or what they "mean." They are about behavior. They are about systems. They are about impact. And when an independent third-party investigator finds that a white man has targeted, dismissed, and undermined a Black woman President in ways that align with race- and sex-based microaggressions, it is not for colleagues to debate her reality. It is for them to take responsibility.

To defend these actions is to condone them. To dismiss these findings is to gaslight the survivor. To delay accountability is to signal complicity. If Mr. Mulholland is allowed to remain on the board—without resignation, without censure, without consequence—the LCC Board of Education will be sending a very clear message to the public: that this behavior is acceptable. That the safety and dignity of women of color can be sacrificed to preserve the comfort of powerful white men. That institutions will protect their own before they protect the people harmed by their leadership.

Baseless Accusations Against the NAACP

We are particularly disturbed by statements made by Former Director Denise Diamond, who speculated in the report that the NAACP’s advocacy was part of a politically motivated attack. This accusation has no basis in fact. There is not a single shred of evidence to suggest that our intervention was politically coordinated. Our letter was submitted after the LCC Foundation Board, Vice Chair Alltucker, and multiple staff had already raised alarms. Our concerns were voiced in alignment with our mission—to protect civil rights, to hold public institutions accountable, and to defend the dignity of Black women in positions of leadership.

That said, we are not naïve. We understand that calling out abuse by a public official can have political ramifications. That does not make it politically motivated. It makes it necessary. There is a difference between taking a principled stand that influences policy and leveraging harm for partisan gain. The former is accountability. The latter is manipulation. We categorically reject the idea that our position was about the latter. To suggest otherwise is a deflection tactic – and a deeply telling one.

The fact that an elected official would find it more plausible that a 115-year-old civil rights organization is engaging in a political conspiracy than to accept that a fellow board member is engaging in unethical, racist, and sexist behavior is in itself proof of how deeply white supremacy culture has infested the board.

Leadership Must Be Rooted in Accountability

We reaffirm our original position: if Mr. Mulholland refuses to resign, the Board must take immediate steps to censure him and begin the process of public recall. His continued presence on the Board of Education is incompatible with the values of public service, educational leadership, and basic human dignity.

We also call on the full Board to:

- Acknowledge the findings publicly, without euphemism or minimization.
- Issue a formal censure of Mr. Mulholland.
- Implement mandatory, public anti-racism and anti-harassment training.
- Create independent reporting channels for future board misconduct.
- Publicly affirm their support for Dr. Bulger and commit to creating a safe, respectful working environment for all college staff.

Conclusion: The Moral Test

What's at stake here is not just the integrity of the LCC Board. It is the well-being and dignity of a woman who did her job with professionalism and conviction, and who was harassed and targeted for it. That reality must remain central. Too often, survivors—especially women of color—are expected to carry their pain silently while institutions protect those who caused it.

She should not have to fight this battle alone. And she certainly should not have to see her abuser defended by the very institution that employed her.

Any response to this moment that does not center her dignity, safety, and humanity is inadequate. This is not about politics. This is about principle. This is about what we accept and what we are willing to excuse. The facts are on the table. The behavior has been verified. The harm is real.

To the Lane Community College Board: this is your test. Do not prioritize Mr. Mulholland's reputation over Dr. Bulger's dignity. Do not delay action in the hopes the outrage dies down. Do not look away.

We are not going anywhere. The community is watching. And history is already taking notes.

Signed,

Drae Charles

Drae Charles, Executive Director
Eugene-Springfield NAACP