



LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

Board of Curators

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 21, 2024

Lincoln University Board of Curators Announces Results of Recent Independent Investigation & Next Steps

Following robust, weeks-long independent review by third-party expert, Lincoln's Board releases investigators' conclusions and charts next steps in open letter to students, employees and alumni

JEFFERSON CITY – Lincoln University's Board of Curators today announced the results of a robust, weeks-long independent investigation conducted by a third-party expert into potential personnel issues raised around the recent tragic death of the University's Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. Antoinette "Bonnie" Candia-Bailey. In an open letter to University students, employees, alumni and other key stakeholders, the Board acknowledged the tragic loss of Dr. Candia-Bailey, released the independent investigators' conclusions and charted out the University's next steps – ranging from expanded mental and behavioral health support for employees and students to increased training for University leadership.

"This third-party investigation was independent and thorough, and members of the Board and I are confident in its conclusions that no claims of bullying by the University President can be substantiated, and that the University responded appropriately to requests for accommodation," said **Rod Chapel, President of the Missouri NAACP State Conference, currently serving as special counsel to the Board of Curators.**

"While this independent report clarifies the facts about legal and procedural concerns that have been raised, it does not make Dr. Candia-Bailey's death any less tragic for her loved ones or our University community and we continue to grieve her loss as we work with students and employees to strengthen Lincoln University moving forward."

"For us, this report is not the end of a process, but rather the beginning of one. None of its findings have led the Board to doubt President Moseley's ability to lead the University, but this tragedy has forced us to grapple more fully with issues facing Lincoln and our individual students and employees – ranging from mental health support to employee work and relationships," said **Victor Pasley, President of the Board of Curators.** "We are incredibly grateful to Lincoln University's students and employees, our alumni and the University's supporters in Missouri and across the country who have stood up to support Dr. Bailey's loved ones. We're also

thankful to those who are agitating for a stronger Lincoln University – we share your commitment, we are listening, we hear you and we are more dedicated than ever to strengthening our University.”

Lewis Rice delivered the results of the investigation to the Board of Curators at an in-person meeting on March 8, which included a robust discussion and question-and-answer session between the Board and investigators. Following the attachment of relevant supporting documents, the final written report was submitted to the Board on March 14. See attached for a redacted copy of the Lewis Rice investigators’ executive summary.

As part of the independent review process, University President John Moseley volunteered to be placed on paid administrative leave while that review was conducted. Dr. Stevie Lawrence II, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, has served as Acting President during the review process. Following the conclusion of the independent investigation, the Board of Curators has voted to bring John Moseley back from administrative leave as University President.

“Our thoughts and prayers have been and continue to be with Dr. Bailey’s family, friends, and our campus community. There is not a lot I can say about the independent report and its findings, but I am grateful to the Board of Curators for their faith in me and their vote of confidence,” said **Dr. Moseley, University President**. “The Board advised me of the report’s findings a week ago, and I’ve had time to reflect and to discuss my future and that of the University with my family and members of the Lincoln University community. I care deeply for this University, its mission, our students, staff and faculty and I look forward to returning from administrative leave to resume my duties as President.”

The independent investigatory team was led by attorney Ron Norwood at Lewis Rice LLC – himself a member of the governing board and past Board President of an HBCU. As part of its review, Lewis Rice reviewed thousands of pages of documents including email exchanges pulled using targeted searches directed by Lewis Rice, text messages, internal University policies and memos and associated documentation – and conducted dozens of hours of interviews with 24 Lincoln University employees and leaders. Specifically, Lewis Rice interviewed all members of University leadership who were present for routine leadership meetings led by President Moseley and attended by the University’s Vice Presidents and other Department Directors – as well as the employees who had the closest working relationships with Dr. Candia- Bailey and Dr. Moseley.

Following Lewis Rice’s exhaustive, independent investigation, Dr. Candia-Bailey’s claims that she was bullied by President Moseley were unsubstantiated. Specifically, when directly asked in the course of this investigation, no witnesses reported that they had ever witnessed President Moseley engage in bullying – and all denied having ever personally felt bullied by President Moseley. After Lewis Rice’s review of thousands of emails – as well as text messages from President Moseley – the investigators concluded that they did not find any correspondence sent by President Moseley that they would consider to be bullying.

The investigators also found that the University did not fail to accommodate under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), that Dr. Candia-Bailey was not eligible for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) due to her being employed for less than one year, but that the University responded appropriately to requests for accommodation by, among other things, allowing remote work and the use of accrued leave.

In its open letter, the Board of Curators also detailed its efforts to expand Lincoln University's mental and behavioral health support for our students and employees, and highlighted University President Moseley's work to "widen the path to success for our students and employees," adding: "[T]he results have shown that rather than changing the culture of Lincoln, he is working to uphold our proud traditions and the values that make Lincoln special. President Moseley – who has spent 15 years of his higher education career at HBCUs – has helped lead significant progress, advancing housing and facilities upgrades, strengthening retention and recruitment among employees and students, improving academic outcomes and securing critical resources for the University. His is a record of striving for excellence that benefits all members of the Lincoln community..."

In response to a high level of interest in the Lewis Rice investigative report, the Board has released a redacted version of the report's executive summary (see attached). However, given the nature of some of Dr. Candia-Bailey's personal and medical information detailed in the report, the Board has requested guidance and a formal Attorney General Opinion from the Missouri Attorney General's Office as to whether the full report qualifies as an open record and should be made available under the Missouri Sunshine Law. Until such time as we receive advice that the full report must be made available, as a matter of caution, the Board will only make the redacted version of the executive summary available in response to Sunshine law requests.

[Click HERE to read the open letter from the Board of Curators.](#)

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MEMORANDUM

ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE WORK PRODUCT

TO: Board of Curators for Lincoln University

FROM: Lewis Rice, LLC

DATE: March 14, 2024

RE: **REPORT REGARDING ALLEGATIONS OF BULLYING AND FAILURE TO ACCOMMODATE**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Board of Curators for Lincoln University (the “Board” or the “University”) engaged our Firm on January 18, 2024 to conduct an independent investigation after Dr. Antoinette “Bonnie” Candia-Bailey sent an email to many friends and university employees detailing multiple allegations of mistreatment and bullying at the hands of the University’s Human Resources Department and Dr. John Moseley, President of the University. See Dr. Candia-Bailey’s January 8, 2024 Email and Attachments, attached hereto as Exhibit A. The Board voted to employ our Firm as an outside third-party to review and evaluate the allegations, including whether there had been violations of the University’s HR policies and procedures. See the University’s Bid Solicitation, attached hereto as Exhibit B.

After learning that we were engaged by the Board on January 18, we immediately began our investigation by reviewing documents sent by [REDACTED]. In reviewing Dr. Candia-Bailey’s twelve-page letter, it became readily apparent that it would be prudent to conduct a searching review of email correspondence involving Dr. Candia-Bailey and others at the University. Indeed, in her twelve-page letter, Dr. Candia-Bailey noted that there were emails, recordings, and other “documentation” to support her allegations. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Thus, it was incredibly important that we target and review email communications that could substantiate or disprove Dr. Candia-Bailey’s allegations, particularly because her unfortunate death left us unable to interview her to conduct an inquiry into her allegations and assess her credibility.

In this regard, we contacted [REDACTED] to assess whether it was possible to conduct targeted searches for email correspondence involving certain employees to allow us to objectively assess Dr. Candia-Bailey’s allegations and employment at

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the University. In our discussion with [REDACTED], we confirmed that the University had the capability to run targeted searches for email correspondence, and we provided [REDACTED] several searches to run throughout our investigation. [REDACTED] promptly provided emails that fit within our search parameters, and we received and reviewed thousands of emails. [REDACTED] also provided documents [REDACTED] compiled to respond to the Sunshine Requests the University received from media outlets.

In addition to the emails we received from [REDACTED], we also worked with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to gather additional documents and information.¹ See Listing of Documents Received from the University, attached hereto as Exhibit C. Lastly, upon our request, [REDACTED] provided a list of all employees in the University's Student Affairs and Human Resources departments. See Listing of Student Affairs and HR Employees, attached hereto as Exhibit D. [REDACTED] also provided a list of employees on the President's Advisory Council ("PAC") and the "Extended" PAC. See Listing of PAC and EPAC Members, attached hereto as Exhibit E.

After gathering a critical mass of the documents and information we requested, we began conducting in-person and Zoom interviews over a two-week period. In total, we interviewed twenty-four people—nineteen employees of the University and five members of the Board. See List of Interviewees, attached hereto as Exhibit F. It should be noted that [REDACTED] provided us a document [REDACTED] created titled "University Witness List" with twelve witnesses to interview. See University Witness List, attached hereto as Exhibit G. There was also a request that we interview [REDACTED]. We interviewed [REDACTED] and nearly every person on the University's Witness List with the exception of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As we have concluded, many of the allegations in Dr. Candia-Bailey’s twelve-page letter are wholly unfounded and do not implicate any employment laws at all. Indeed, many of Dr. Candia-Bailey’s allegations involve complaints regarding her negative performance evaluation, interpersonal conflict with co-workers, and rank speculation about administrative issues that pre-dated her employment at the University. In light of the broad allegations, the Board requested that we prioritize and address allegations that Dr. Moseley bullied Dr. Candia-Bailey and the suggestion that the University failed to accommodate her disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”).

In sum, we find that the University did not fail to accommodate Dr. Candia-Bailey in violation of the ADA—on the contrary, the University responded appropriately and timely to Dr. Candia-Bailey’s request for accommodation by, among other things, allowing Dr. Candia-Bailey to work remotely one or two times per month and to use accrued leave if she needed time off.

Moreover, in order to assess Dr. Candia-Bailey’s allegations that Dr. Moseley bullied her (and other members of the PAC), we interviewed nineteen employees, including every member of the PAC and several employees who reported directly to and worked closely with Dr. Candia-Bailey and Dr. Moseley. Indeed, we interviewed the employees we assessed to have the *closest* working relationships with Dr. Candia-Bailey and Dr. Moseley. No employee reported that they had ever witnessed Dr. Moseley bully Dr. Candia-Bailey in PAC meetings or otherwise. Moreover, every member of the PAC denied that Dr. Moseley had bullied them. Lastly, in our review of text messages and thousands of emails, we did not find any correspondence sent by Dr. Moseley to Dr. Candia-Bailey that we objectively would consider to be bullying. For these reasons, and as further detailed below, the allegations in Dr. Candia-Bailey’s twelve-page letter that Dr. Moseley bullied her are unsubstantiated.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Dr. Candia-Bailey’s death by suicide is beyond tragic and unfortunate for many, including Dr. Candia-Bailey’s family and University employees who clearly cared about her and are devastated by her death. The University, however, did not fail to accommodate Dr. Candia-Bailey in violation of the ADA, and the allegations in her letter that Dr. Moseley bullied her are unsubstantiated.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]