

  
CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

## OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.**

**INTRODUCED BY VICE MAYOR KAPLAN & COUNCIL PRO TEMPORE THAO**

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**RESOLUTION CELEBRATING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MILLS COLLEGE TO THE CITY OF OAKLAND AND BEYOND, AND CALLING ON THE CALIFORNIA BUREAU OF PRIVATE AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND THE US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONDUCT AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE MERGER BETWEEN MILLS COLLEGE AND NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY**

**WHEREAS**, since its opening in 1872, Mills College - the oldest undergraduate college for women in the West – has empowered women and removed barriers to women’s advancement and opportunity; and

**WHEREAS**, Mills College, located in East Oakland, is an integral part of the city’s culture and its student body is reflective of the region’s diversity. Within the 2021-2022 Mills student population, about 44% are first-generation undergraduate students and about 66% of undergraduate students are students of color; and

**WHEREAS**, a provenance of women’s rights, Mills College was the first women’s college to offer a computer science major in 1974, and in 2014, Mills was the first women’s to openly welcome transgender students; and

**WHEREAS**, after 170 years of operation, Mills College abruptly notified students and staff on March 17, 2021, of its impending closure, citing financial hardship as the motivating factor for closing the college; and

**WHEREAS**, subsequently, in June 2021, Mills College announced a forthcoming acquisition of the college to Northeastern University – a Boston-based coed university; and

**WHEREAS**, in response to these actions taken by the college, current students, faculty, and alumni organized to form groups such as Save Mills College Coalition and All in for Mills, dedicating themselves over the past year to stop Northeastern’s acquisition of Mills, and to restore Mills as an independent women’s college under new leadership; and

**WHEREAS**, at a time when students of color, the LGBTQ+ community, and women’s rights are under attack, from perpetrators ranging from the “Proud Boys,” to the Supreme Court, we must listen to impacted communities, alumni, and students when they advocate for transparency at such an important community institution; and

**WHEREAS**, community members, students, faculty, and alumni have shared significant concerns about a lack of transparency and allegations of disseminating false information by the college – specifically in regards to the school’s financial health that Mills college leadership provided as justification for the merger of the school with Northeastern, and the college’s commitment to allow current students to complete their intended programs after the acquisition of the school; and

**WHEREAS**, given these allegations of misconduct and misinformation, these issues must be fully reviewed to ensure that community needs are respected, truth is pursued, and that the important work of Mills in serving vital needs can be continued, now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED:** The Oakland City Council hereby calls upon the California Bureau of Private and Post Secondary Education and the US Department of Education to conduct an independent investigation into the circumstances of the merger of Mills College with Northeastern University.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES – FIFE, GALLO, KALB, KAPLAN, REID, TAYLOR, THAO,  
PRESIDENT FORTUNATO BAS

NOES –

ABSENT –

ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

ASHA REED

City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the  
City of Oakland, California