



# CITY OF OAKLAND

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#LoveLife

REBECCA KAPLAN

SHENG THAO

Vice Mayor

President Pro Tempore

District At-Large

District 4

Date: July 7, 2022

To: Members of City Council and Members of the Public

From: Vice Mayor Kaplan and Council President Pro Tempore Thao

Re: **Resolution Celebrating The Contributions Of Mills College To The City Of Oakland And Beyond, And Calling On The California Joint Legislative Audit Committee And The State Auditor’s Office To Conduct An Independent Investigation Into The Circumstances Of The Sale Of Mills College To Northeastern University**

Dear Colleagues on the City Council and Members of the Public,

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. To ensure transparency and accountability to the community Mills College serves, this resolution calls upon the California Joint Legislative Audit Committee and State Auditor’s Office to conduct an investigation into the circumstances of the sale of Mills College to Northeastern University.

Mills College, located in East Oakland, is an integral part of the city’s diverse culture as are its students. 44% of the 2021-2022 Mills student population are first-generation undergraduate students and about 66% of undergraduate students are students of color. 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.

After 170 years of operation, Mills notified students and staff on March 17, 2021, of its impending closure, citing financial hardship as the motivating factor for closing the college. Subsequently, in June 2021, Mills College announced a forthcoming sale of the college to Northeastern University – a Boston-based coed university.

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.

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

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impacted communities, alumni, and students when they advocate for transparency at such an important community institution.

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 sale of the school to Northeastern, and the college’s commitment to allow current students to complete their intended programs after the sale of the school. Given these allegations, this resolution urges the California Joint Legislative Audit Committee and the State Auditor’s Office to conduct an independent investigation into the circumstances of the sale of Mills College to Northeastern University.

These issues must be fully reviewed to ensure that community needs are respected, truth is pursued, and the important work of Mills in serving vital needs can be continued.