

Press contact: April 2, 2021 Scott Horton  
[bluescott260@hotmail.com](mailto:bluescott260@hotmail.com)  
510-229-9739

**An open letter to the Mills College Board of Trustees  
from the Faculty Executive & Academic Promotion  
and Tenure Committees  
on behalf of Mills faculty**

We, the faculty of Mills College, stand in solidarity with the students, alumnae/i, and friends of Mills College who have shared their anger, shock, and support since President Hillman's announcement of March 17, 2021. We are outraged that the Board of Trustees has moved to close the academic programs of Mills College by 2023. This action comes without any due consultation with the faculty, abrogating the norms of shared governance that are essential to successful institutions of higher education.

This leaves us deeply concerned about what will happen to our students, to the vision of an accessible, inclusive liberal arts education and the historical legacy of our College if Mills stops conferring degrees in 2023.

Mills has been a powerful force in women's education since 1852, and it is rare in its commitment to making high quality liberal arts education widely available. It is a national model that has led the way to progressively solving issues that many educational institutions and organizations are just beginning to struggle with. They look to Mills for its inclusivity, diversity and relevance.

Mills is also a Hispanic Serving Institution, and it was the first women's college to develop a transgender-inclusive admissions policy. Our undergraduate student body is 65% students of color, 58% LGBTQ students, 44% first generation students, and 17% returning students. Our graduate programs have trained generations who have pursued highly successful artistic, professional, and scholarly careers.

It is an institution we cannot afford to lose.

We are also troubled that the Board has made this announcement without providing any information about the possibility of future employment opportunities or severance packages for Mills faculty and staff, or any details about the pathways to graduation that will be offered to students. The failure to thoroughly consider the impacts of this decision on those most affected is a profound disrespect to our community.

Finally, we believe that a Mills Institute created without any

meaningful faculty input—and that leaves out students, who are the very reason for the existence of the College--will not reflect the historical legacy and values of Mills.

We call on the Board to engage faculty, staff, students, alumnae/i, and the surrounding East Oakland community in any further discussion of the future of Mills, and to make transparent and public any plan to partner with other higher education institutions.

**The Faculty Executive Committee:** David Bernstein, chair; Tomás Galguera; Jay Gupta; Mark Henderson; Priya Kandaswamy; Kim Magowan; Dean Morier; Ann Murphy; Carol Theokary

**Academic Tenure and Promotion Committee:** Diane Cady; Kristina Faul; Nalini Ghuman, chair; Martha Johnson; Brinda Mehta

**Contact: Mills Board Chair, Katie Sanborn,**

**[ksanborn@mills.edu](mailto:ksanborn@mills.edu) Beth Hillman, President: 510-430-2094;**

**[president@mills.edu](mailto:president@mills.edu)**