



Victor B. Pasley, President
Everidge Cade, Vice President

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Subject line:

Open letter from the Board of Curators on conclusion of independent investigation

Dear Lincoln University students, employees, alumni, supporters and members of our community:

Student Representative
Nia C. Walker

The loss of Lincoln University's Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. Antoinette "Bonnie" Candia-Bailey, earlier this year is a tragedy that will stay with our school forever. For many at Lincoln, not a day goes by in which we do not think about Dr. Candia-Bailey. This tragedy has forced us to grapple more fully with issues facing Lincoln and our students and employees – ranging from mental health support to employee work and relationships.

As announced several weeks ago, Lincoln University's Board of Curators engaged an independent third-party expert to fully review potential personnel issues and concerns raised around this tragedy regarding compliance with the University's established policies and procedures. The Board engaged in this independent review because we are committed to making certain the mental health of Lincoln University employees is a priority and that every employee is always treated with dignity and respect. As part of that 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.

That process has now been completed. Attorneys at Lewis Rice LLC led by Ron Norwood, himself a member of the governing board and past Board President of an HBCU, 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 over the course of two weeks. 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. 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.

During this exhaustive, independent investigation, no evidence was found that Dr. Moseley bullied Dr. Candia-Bailey. University leaders – and President Moseley himself – all confirmed that his communication style can be described as direct. But none of the witnesses interpreted his style of

communication as bullying – and all stated that they had never personally felt bullied by President Moseley. Lewis Rice’s investigators also reviewed thousands of emails – as well as text messages from President Moseley – to ascertain whether any might constitute bullying, concluding that they did not find any correspondence sent by President Moseley that they would consider to be bullying. Based on this report, we are confident that President Moseley has not, and does not, engage in bullying or harassment of Lincoln University employees.

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.

Lewis Rice’s investigation did find that some workplace stress existed, leading to strained relationships among and between University employees, including those in senior leadership positions. Those concerns have been largely addressed and the Board will be working with President Moseley on improvements to staff operations and increased staff training and resources.

In response to a high level of interest in the Lewis Rice investigative report, the Board has publicly released a redacted version of the report’s executive summary. 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. However, nothing in the report finds that President Moseley engaged in bullying or failed to respond with appropriate accommodations under the FMLA or the ADA. Accordingly, the Board has voted to bring Dr. Moseley back from administrative leave as University President.

While the independent report resulting from Lewis Rice’s investigation clarifies the most relevant facts before the Board, it does not make Dr. Candia-Bailey’s death any less tragic or painful – and it does shine a spotlight on some of the systemic issues at our University that many are rightly calling to be addressed. For us, this report is not the end of a process, but rather the beginning of one. Those challenges long pre-date President Moseley’s tenure and we feel a new sense of urgency to tackle those challenges, and to do so in lockstep with the students, staff, faculty, alumni and broader Lincoln community – all crucial stakeholders and partners with whom we will be listening and talking in the coming weeks and months.

We know there are striking disparities in the outcomes of mental illnesses in this country. People from under-resourced communities, including many Black Americans, are less likely to receive mental health care – and when they do receive care, they are less likely to receive high-quality, evidence-based mental health services. That is why continuing this campus and community-wide dialogue is so important.

The Board is working diligently to expand Lincoln University's mental and behavioral health support for our students and employees. An important lesson from this tragic loss of a university administrator who oversaw the mental health services on campus is that simple access to mental health support services is not always enough. We must move beyond access to acceptance and normalization so that all of our employees and students understand that it is normal – and sometimes vital – to seek help. As part of our efforts, we have launched a new University Wellness Committee, an effort that has two main priorities: an Employee Wellness Program, which will include employee health risk assessments aimed at earlier diagnoses of employees' health needs, and a Student Wellness Program to boost mental health resources for our student population. This comes in addition to our offering three licensed counselors on staff and additional counseling by Compass Health.

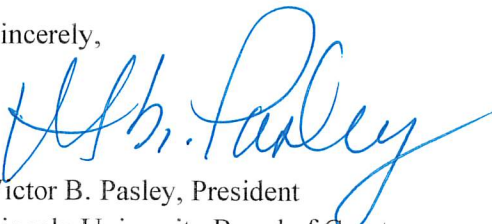
In the wake of this tragedy, we have seen an outpouring of support for Dr. Candia-Bailey and her loved ones – and many voices advocating for changes to strengthen our University. Lincoln University hears those voices and the Board has been working every day since Dr. Candia-Bailey's death to answer those calls.

There has also been significant discussion in recent weeks about what President Moseley is not; we would like to take this opportunity to remind our community of what President Moseley is and what he has done for Lincoln University.

Since the beginning of his tenure at Lincoln University, President Moseley has worked tirelessly to widen the path to success for our students and employees, and the 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 and we are confident that with President Moseley's leadership, the best years of Lincoln University still lie ahead of us.

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 spoken out for a stronger Lincoln over recent months. We share your commitment, we are listening, we hear you and we are more dedicated than ever to strengthening our University.

Sincerely,



Victor B. Pasley, President
Lincoln University Board of Curators