

## TALKING POINTS

- Request that you urge AG Rob Bonta to investigate the Board of Trustees, the finances of Mills College and the merger activities.
- College administration has refused to answer basic questions, not shared complete financial information, and has not responded meaningfully to the strong messages of opposition to the closure of Mills College
- College has removed access to regional email lists to Mills clubs, limiting ability of alums to fundraise and recruit, obstructing efforts to save the college (never ran a capital campaign to restore)
- Concern that the administration hasn't proven the need for the merger.
- Mills financials are not dire as the administration says
- BOT is not fulfilling its duty to maintain the mission of Mills: educating women
- Concern that students are victims of fraud
- The need for women's college with personalized learning is more critical than ever
- The merger should be stopped
- Mills can be turned around, despite the damage this administration has done to the college

## SAMPLE LETTERS

Dear [elected official],

I am an alumna of the class of \_\_\_\_\_ and I request that you urge AG Rob Bonta to investigate the recent merger activities at Mills College.

While it has been clear for years that Mills needs to change, that change should not come at the expense of our mission or our community. From the start, the college administration has refused to answer basic questions, not shared complete financial information, and has not responded meaningfully to the strong messages of opposition to the closure of Mills College.

In the absence of responses from the college administration, I have read about the financial analysis by outside experts who have examined the publicly available information regarding Mills' financial situation. I find the conclusion compelling that Mills is viable on its own, if only there were competent management in place to turn around the current financial difficulties. The current administration continues to push the narrative that the college is no longer viable.

I believe the members of the Board of Trustees have shirked their duties of stewarding Mills to maintain its founding goal of educating women. They have done this despite expert opinions that the acquisition is not necessary, but have chosen a 'buy out' as a convenient solution. This is where AG Bonta needs to exercise his authority. I ask that you urge AG Bonta to take action.

The Mills College Board of Trustees has abandoned the College that it is duty-bound to steward. We cannot let this go unchallenged. Because I believe that Mills is viable on its own, despite the administration's statements to the contrary, and the lack of response of the administration to the most basic of requests, I do not trust that the decision to merge with Northeastern was made by a fully informed and competent Board.

I implore you to do everything you can to help save Mills College with its founding mission. Regards,

California Department of Justice  
Attn: Attorney General Rob Bonta  
1300 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814-2919

September 21, 2021

Dear Attorney General Bonta,

Today, I come to you with an extremely important request for California: saving Mills College, a 169-year-old state treasure, and one of the few remaining Historically Women's Colleges, and where you have, on occasion, taught classes.

Recently, the Mills College Board of Trustees, under the direction of current President Beth Hillman, took an ill-advised vote allowing Mills to be acquired by Northeastern University, an international educational conglomerate with a history of buying up small liberal arts colleges and turning them into satellite campuses as copies of itself with no trace left of the formers' individual identities or culture. I, and many in the larger Mills Community, believe this to be a tremendous mistake.

The truth is that this so-called "merger" between Mills College and Northeastern University is deeply flawed, and you, as Attorney General, have the power to stop it. You can and should take steps to replace current officers and trustees of the College as part of an overall effort to stabilize the College and put it back on the path to sustainability, protecting Mills and enabling it to continue in its present mission for many years to come. At the very least, it is your duty to investigate the situation. The Save Mills College Coalition sent you a legal memo to this effect but have heard nothing in response. I strongly urge you to move forward on that request immediately, and if you cannot be impartial (due to your personal connection to President Hillman and to other entities related to Mills), please recuse yourself and assign an Assistant Attorney General to perform the investigation. Time is of the essence, as the closure of this shady deal draws nearer every day.

I thank you for your time and attention, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Angela Adams DeMoss  
Master of Arts, English  
Mills College, Class of '99

Governor Gavin Newsom  
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

Today, I come to you with a request extremely important here in California. You may have seen a full-page, colorful ad in the *San Francisco Chronicle* last month with a photo of a belltower, some footprints, and messages such as “Say No to Northeastern” and “Follow the Money.” Governor, those messages are about saving Oakland’s 169-year-old Mills College, a state treasure, and one of the few remaining Historically Women’s Colleges.

Recently, the Mills College Board of Trustees, under the direction of current Mills President Elizabeth Hillman, took an ill-advised vote allowing Mills to be acquired by Northeastern University, an international educational conglomerate with a history of buying up small liberal arts colleges and turning them into satellite campuses as copies of itself with no trace left of the formers’ individual identities or culture. I, and many in the larger Mills Community, believe this to be a tremendous mistake.

The truth is that this so-called “merger” between Mills College and Northeastern University is deeply flawed, and the Attorney General, Rob Bonta, has the power to stop it. He can and should take steps to replace current officers and trustees of the College as part of an overall effort to stabilize the College and put it back on the path to sustainability, protecting Mills and enabling it to continue in its present mission for many years to come. At the very least, it is his duty to investigate the situation. The Save Mills College Coalition has sent him a legal memo to this effect but has yet to hear a response. Please urge AG Bonta to move forward on that request immediately, and if he cannot be impartial (due to his personal connection to President Hillman and to other entities related to Mills), he should recuse himself and assign an Assistant Attorney General to perform the investigation. Time is of the essence, as the closure of this shady deal draws nearer every day.

As the *Chronicle* ad stated, Governor Newsom, “California needs you. California needs Mills. Mills needs YOU!” I thank you for your time and attention, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Angela Adams DeMoss  
Master of Arts, English

I am writing to you with an urgent plea to help Save Mills College. The current Mills administration has pushed a so-called "merger" with Northeastern University in haste and secrecy. It is an acquisition in which Northeastern would receive Mills donor base, valuable real estate, and art collections for very little in return. Research done by many from within the Mills community and from outside experts has shown the college to be financially salient with a healthy endowment. Mills does not need to end its degree-granting history for financial reasons. For more expert financial analysis, please see the article by Dr. Matthew D. Hendricks, Chair of the University of Tulsa Dept. of Economics, in his American Prospects article: [bit.ly/MillsFinances](https://bit.ly/MillsFinances)

Mills has historically sent its students out into the community and world with courage, flexibility, creativity, and broadness of thought to make change in all fields, which comes from the gift of a liberal arts training, a totally different curriculum from Northeastern. Mills is proud of its success in closing equity gaps - by accepting 65% students of color, achieving a people of color faculty majority, welcoming all women and transgender students, supporting low-income families, and offering tuition at close to half of that of Northeastern.

Mills needs your help *urgently*. The acquisition is set to occur in less than two months, July 1, 2022. We call on you to do everything you can to help save Mills College. Please urge California Attorney General Rob Bonta to investigate the recent acquisition activities at Mills College and the Mills' leadership's breach of fiduciary duties to the College and beyond.

With great appreciation for your time your efforts to help out,

Name

Email

Phone Number

Address

April 14, 2022

I am writing as an alumna of Mills College 1975. Boston's Northeastern University plans to acquire Mills College in Oakland, CA. This so-called "merger" violates the Mills College charter to educate women in perpetuity. Northeastern is co-ed and has a history of dismantling the colleges that it acquires.

Mills is a liberal arts women's college founded 170 years ago in 1852. It currently serves a student body of about 900 students, including a co-Ed graduate school. Mills enrolls about 50% women of color and includes students who are non-traditional age and first in family college attendees. It emphasizes excellence in academics, ranking high in college ratings with a student-teacher ratio of 7:1. It has an extraordinary art collection and a beautiful campus of 135 acres in the foothills of Oakland, CA. The combined value of the land and art is beyond \$1 billion, which raises serious questions about the Northeastern merger terms.

Mills College is being sold in a rushed, secretive, and questionable manner by President Beth Hillman to Northeastern. Hillman claims that financial problems are insurmountable and necessitate the sale/dissolution of the school. This is not true. Mills Debt to Endowment Ratio is only 15%, compared to Northeastern, whose debt-to-endowment ratio is an astronomical 128%! For more expert financial analysis, please see the article by Dr. Matthew D. Hendricks, Chair of the University of Tulsa Dept. of Economics, in his American Prospects article: [bit.ly/MillsFinances](http://bit.ly/MillsFinances)

The US Department of Education's financial education score rates the fiscal health of all educational institutions receiving Title IV funding. The data for Mills College shows a school that, while not at its financial peak, is certainly not in an endangered financial category. Our calculations show that for FY 2017 through 2020, the average score for almost 1700 reporting non-profit institutions was 2.4. In 2019, according to this particular ratings system, Mills College was at 2.3. We believe this shows that the US Department of Education is being seriously misled by this hasty, secretive "merger," which will kill an historic, culturally vibrant, and societally important institution.

This acquisition is a tragic loss of a distinguished and unique liberal arts college that serves women and women of color with a 170-year history of excellence. I wish to make you aware of this troubling acquisition and respectfully ask that you look into this "merger" and take steps to stop it. Mills is proud of its success in closing equity gaps - by accepting 65% students of color, achieving a people of color faculty majority,

welcoming all women and transgender students, supporting low-income families, and offering tuition at close to half of that of Northeastern.

**It is not too late.** July 1<sup>st</sup> is when the acquisition is finalized. I'm including a [link to](#) a two-page ad I saw in the San Francisco Chronicle on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, laying out the timeline and additional details of this disturbing move to close historic Mills College without apparent cause.

Please give this matter your attention as soon as possible. Feel free to contact me. The Save Mills Save Mills College Coalition has compiled extensive data on this problematic situation. I can send additional supporting documents as needed.

Sincerely,

Nan Roche. B.A. Biology, Class of 1975 Mills College

301-318-2717

[Rochebender@verizon.net](mailto:Rochebender@verizon.net)

4511 Amherst Road

College Park, Maryland 20740

I am a retired research scientist of 35 years at the NIH cancer division.