

February 23, 2022

Dear Members of the NOMAF Board,

I write to formally notify you of my resignation as the Program Manager & Director of Makin' Groceries with the New Orleans Musician's Clinic & Assistance Foundation. This resignation is effective at the end of our Carnival distribution day, Wednesday, February 23rd, 2022. I will return office keys, storage space keys and credit card no later than the end of day.

The actions and behavior of the Board President—with what appears to be the full support of the Board—is the express reason for my resignation. The President and Board's increasingly discriminatory actions, some of which are described below, are in direct violation of NOMAF's "Corporate Culture Agreement (Culture of Caring Value Statement and Personal Code of Conduct), and include but are not limited to:

1. Following the sudden resignation of NOMAF's Managing Director, an organization-wide gaslighting campaign beginning with the President's personal emails erroneously reducing Erica Dudas's multiple years of service to "16 months." When Mrs. Bultman was corrected regarding the tenure of Ms. Dudas as an employee, Bethany continued to utilize this incorrect description of Erica. Because the letter was sent to both team and important community partners, this potentially caused Ms. Dudas reputational harm while also contributing to a hostile working environment for the rest of the team. This type of behavior can best be described as "gaslighting."
2. Disparaging comments and fabricated outrage made by the Board President to patients and our community partners, directed at the Strategic Partnership Director, Gregory Joseph—the only man of color hired to a senior position.
3. The President's constant, disruptive insertion of her personal agendas into routine foundation business, including an expectation that I participate in her passion projects (such as a Justice & Beyond Reparations Panel, and soliciting personal clothing alterations upon discovering my status as a masking Culture Bearer/Baby Doll who constructs her own suits) neither of which are in the lane of projects I was contracted to do.
4. The President's dismantling of my Makin Groceries team (both Mr. Joseph as strategic partnership director in support of that and many other projects and the inability of the NOMAF Board to hire an Interim Managing Director), in spite of my explicitly expressing the necessity of their position, then further complicating my

workload by forwarding a tidal wave of unsolicited partnership requests she has never discussed me with personally.

5. The President's unreasonable and insulting expectation that I take on Gregory Joseph's job, portions of the former Managing Director's duties, the President's outside passion projects, and my own contracted duties, all without addressing proper compensation for this additional labor, none of which is outlined in my initial contract.
6. The President's deeply concerning hyper-fixation on eliminating and/or controlling employees of color, while our Caucasian colleagues (and their program/duties) appear to endure no comparable scrutiny or meddling.

It should go without saying that all of these issues, and more I decline to list for the sake of my mental health, are toxic and, at their core, rooted in plantation politics. Moreover, they are in direct violation of multiple tenants of NOMAF's own Culture of Caring Value Statement, that same document I was made to initial upon my hiring.

As it appears neither the President nor the Board has any intention of following the same Culture of Care it holds its team, volunteers, and contractors to, therefore it is my belief that any proposed organizational realignment is designed to fail.

I am a musician, culture bearer, and a patient of the NOMC. My family members have not only been long-time patients of the clinic, but also activated their sizable networks to raise funds and awareness for the Musician's Clinic. I joined the staff with the understanding that our shared mission was to provide easy, unbiased care to the people who cultivate the identity of New Orleans. While I will forever be grateful for NOMAF's contributions to my community, however, the past month is a clear indicator that the new mission of NOMAF and my values are no longer in alignment. A workplace where team members—especially those of color—are bullied and manipulated into compliance using a vague, generalized "vision" with no regard for the community who receives it, is not sustainable.

Above all, Bethany's habitual centering of herself in allegedly advocating for "racial justice" and "social equity" gives me zero confidence that NOMAF's values of collaboration, inclusion, and advocacy are authentic. For instance, her personal wealth seems substantial, yet she gives very little (if anything in certain years) to NOMAF while receiving staff and organizational support for errands and personal items. Her targeting of team members of color, and refusal to hear our concerns nor preserve our jobs, are actions which cancel out any words about "equity." It is clear that Bethany's interest in social justice is performative at best, lacking the authenticity that comes from doing the deep and painful work of self-examination which produces true inclusivity. As a culture

bearer and woman of color fighting for equality in my community, I can no longer enable the President or Board with my silence or participation.

With my departure, I officially rescind the right to use my name, likeness, and quotes in connection to advertising, promotion, marketing, and endorsement of the Foundation.

For the record, I still firmly believe in the NOMAF mission, and hold its staffers in the highest possible regard. I thank these incredible NOMC & AF staffers again for their monumental support in co-creating and building the Makin' Groceries program, and for their exhaustive efforts across other services. I encourage the staff, and especially the Board, to properly hold its President accountable for her actions; to examine why, exactly, this organization has driven out its only diversity hires while serving a majority-black community; and to implement a structure of checks and balances that will insure the kind of toxicity, gaslighting, and casual racism which has contributed to my exit never repeats itself again.

May this experience ultimately produce a more compassionate, and more diverse, NOMAF in the future.

Be well,

Arséne DeLay