

LCC LAWSUIT REVERBERATES WITH TRUMP ELECTION

The recent legal settlement between a tenure-track Pakistani-American Lane Community College instructor and the college adds a renewed focus on safety for minorities at LCC in this post-Trump world.

In the same month that racial and sexual harassment have seen a definite uptick on campuses around the U.S. after Trump was elected, sociology instructor Nadia Raza reached a legal settlement with LCC that contains provisions for college security to go through threat assessment training and other pro-safety measures by May 2017.

Raza filed a lawsuit against LCC last January, saying the LCC administration had failed to provide security measures to protect her after she repeatedly reported being stalked by an LCC student for four months in 2014. Raza moved out of her home, switched to exclusively teaching online courses and obtained a restraining order against a student the lawsuit refers to as “S.S.” in April 2014.

S.S. was finally arrested in May 2014 when he was caught at an apartment complex where he told police he was looking for Raza. Today, he is out on probation but still in the Eugene area. Raza continues to teach online courses.

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— NADIA RAZA

The new settlement, reached Nov. 4 with the help of Raza’s attorneys Meredith Holley and Jennifer Middleton of Johnson, Johnson & Schaller, spells out three conditions the college must meet by May 2017: hire a security company, Sigma Threat Assessment, to create a safety plan for Raza; acquire new and better training for the college’s threat assessment team, which monitors security on the LCC campus; and a new review of the college’s Title IX compliance.

Raza also receives \$175,000 as part of the settlement, \$63,200 of which will go to Johnson, Johnson & Schaller.

“We all hope the settlement is a starting point for creating more safety at Lane for people of color and people of different religions, and for Nadia specifically,” Holley says.

One specific part of the new settlement mandates that the administration will give summarized data on student conduct cases (such as student harassment) to a new committee of faculty, students and administration for review.

Raza says she heard from about 10 other women from colleges across the U.S. when she filed the initial lawsuit, sources which told her they, too, had faced harassment and received little protection from their institutions.

Since Trump was elected on Nov. 8, Raza says students have come to her afraid.

“I’ve had students reach out to me from immigrant backgrounds. I’ve also had working poor students who identify as white reach out to me as well in deep concern over what this means for their future,” Raza says.

The Southern Poverty Law Center website reports more than 700 new “hateful incidents of harassment” have occurred in the U.S. since the election. Anti-immigrant hate crimes have the highest percentage and anti-black hate crimes form the second highest. The settlement with LCC, Raza says, is particularly meaningful and particularly poignant at this time in the nation’s history.

“I’ve been thinking about the Trump election and how the case relates to it. People have referred to this election as ‘white-lash,’ as a reaction to the racial progress made over the past eight years. That’s an important analysis,” she says.

Raza adds, “It is also a patriarchal backlash to feminist organizing addressing sexual violence and gender based harassment,” saying that “the election of a man who boasts of sexual assault has consequences for the very meaning of harassment and safety.”

She says she feels the settlement can set a precedent for the protection of minorities on the LCC campus.

“I see it as an incredible contribution to the campus in terms of immediate and long-term effects,” Raza says. ■

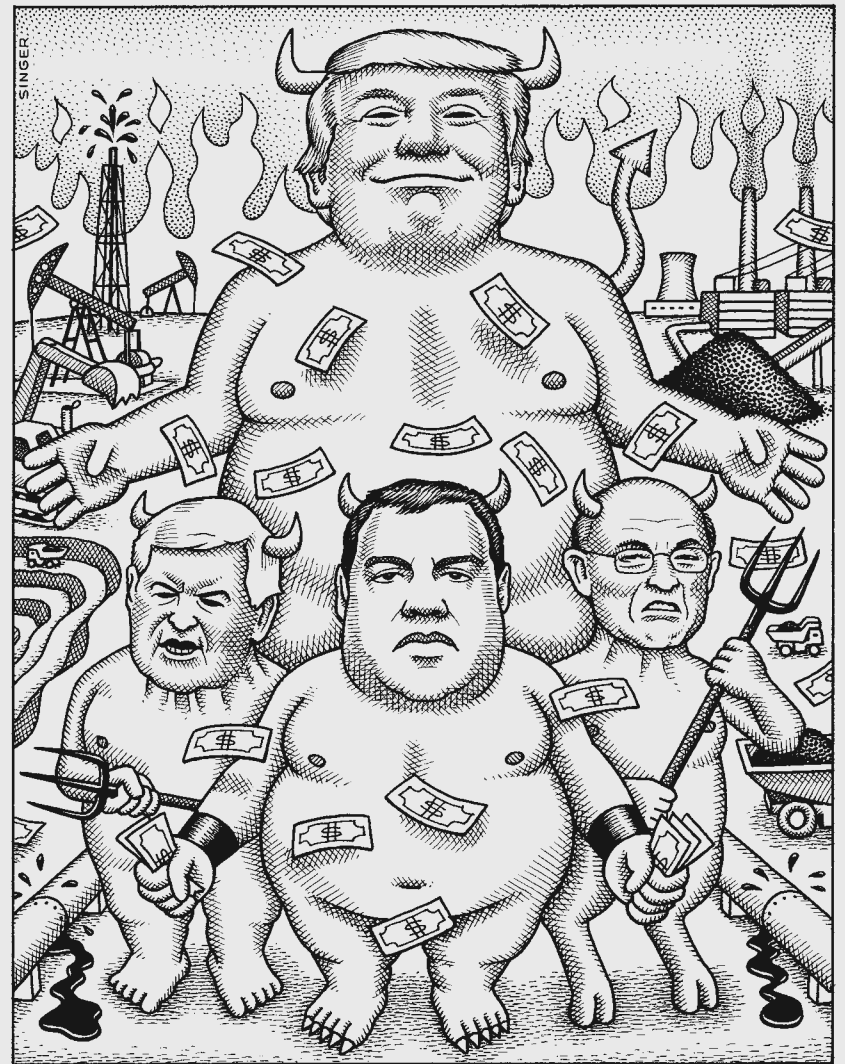
Art Johnson of Johnson, Johnson & Schaller is a part-owner of Eugene Weekly.

SLANT

• It was good to see **Nike in the list of American companies urging Donald Trump** not to abandon the Paris climate deal, “saying a failure by the United States to build a clean economy endangers American prosperity,” as *The New York Times* wrote it. And now we have U. S. military leaders putting out their concerns about climate change. We wonder if President-elect Trump has the capacity to understand that climate change is not a “hoax,” as he called it in the campaign? Water in the streets of Florida cities not far from his Mar-a-Lago estate should tell him something.

• We haven’t seen the lawn signs “**Blue Lives Matter**” in our neck of the woods, but we hear they are all over America — yet another factor in the election of Donald Trump. With the terrible random shootings of policemen this week, we blame the National Rifle Association for its part in these crimes.

• When Robert Kuttner, economist and political writer, spoke on the University of Oregon campus Nov. 15, he was asked the question of our time by a 78-year-old Eugenean in the audience: “**What can I do?**” Kuttner’s advice: Pick an issue you care passionately about and go to work on it. Get involved. Speaking about “Challenges for the Next Administration,” Kuttner expressed his admiration for Elizabeth Warren, the junior senator from Massachusetts who clearly speaks to the economic issues affecting all Americans in a way that Hillary Clinton simply could not do. Warren for president in 2020?



• As some celebrate Thanksgiving, and others just give thanks and try to avoid the colonial and oppressive aspects of the holiday, the irony of law enforcement spraying **Native American pipeline protesters at Standing Rock** in North Dakota during below-freezing temperatures is not lost on us. Between the water, the tear gas and rubber bullets, media reports say at least 150 activists were injured. As we celebrate thanks at Thanksgiving, let us also thank the protesters for standing up against climate-damaging fossil fuels and standing up against Big Oil’s continuing exploitation of Native peoples. Go to StandingRock.org to donate to the tribe’s protest effort and peruse *EW*’s calendar and upcoming Give Guide for local options to donate.

• As we go to press we hear that **Oregon state Sen. Chris Edwards is stepping down from the Legislature** in January to take a job at the University of Oregon. Rep. Val Hoyle, who had to forgo running for the seat she has held in the House when she ran for the secretary of state’s office in the May primary, says she is putting her name in for the seat. It’s going to be a tough 2017 session, with budget fights looming large. We need a strong voice like Hoyle’s in state government advocating for education, social issues and hopefully the environment.