

LANE STUDENTS PROTEST CONTROVERSIAL INSTRUCTOR

Students speak to LCC's Board of Education about employment of instructor Daniel Mackay, convicted of prostitution

It's been about four weeks since classes began at Lane Community College, and about the same amount of time since *Eugene Weekly* broke the news that Daniel Mackay would be returning to teach at the school.

Mackay, a former priest, was found guilty in 2017 of three counts of prostitution, specifically for soliciting sex from a 17-year-old girl. He worked at the college before his conviction and arrest, and he is currently teaching as a part-time writing instructor this fall term.

LCC would not discuss with *EW* the reason for rehiring Mackay, citing the confidentiality of personnel issues, but it has now been revealed that the school's legal counsel determined LCC had no grounds to dismiss him.

Students began taking a stand against Mackay's employment almost immediately. Only a day after *EW*'s story was published, students began writing chalk messages around campus, including "Fire Daniel Mackay," "LCC does not care about sexual assault" and "Students are watching Pres. Hamilton," according to posts on Twitter.

At LCC's first Board of Education meeting of the new school year on Oct. 11, students protested Mackay's employment in person. Six students spoke during the public-hearing portion of the meeting, and three of them spoke directly about Mackay's employment.

Associated Students of LCC Student Government President Keely Blyleven read a statement composed by the student government. In that statement, she laid out the ASLCCSG's concerns about Mackay's employment in terms of student safety and discussed the college's decision to rehire him as an instructor.

"We have met with the college administration, and they explained that the decision to allow Mackay to return to teach our students was made after legal counsel reviewed the college policies, procedures and the faculty collective bargaining agreement and determined that they were not able to take action against Mackay without becoming liable for legal recourse," Blyleven read from the statement. "Their plan is to 'review, evaluate and revise as needed all policies and procedures related to providing students with a safe campus environment.'"

She continued: "Keeping our students safe is of the highest priorities of student government, and we will continue to advocate for students within the college governance system by speaking up about issues that affect students."

Blyleven also reiterated various options for support of "those affected by Daniel Mackay's presence on campus," such as the school's counseling and career center, which offers walk-in appointments. She also said that the student

government would be advocating for students who wish to drop Mackay's class.

At this point, Lane students can still add and drop classes to their schedules, but they are past the deadline to receive a tuition refund.

The board did not respond to student statements at the meeting. Board member Mike Eyster said those public statements would be referred to LCC President Margaret Hamilton for later discussion.

ASLCCSG Vice President Dan Good also spoke during the meeting, specifying he was speaking not as vice president or a representative of student government, but solely as a student at LCC.

"The overwhelming concerns from students I have spoken with on the matter are just too much. Many feel unsafe with him on this campus. Many have been triggered by his presence alone," Good said. "Regardless of the convictions, state laws and teacher-union laws, the needs of the students should always come first."

In his statement, Good also noted the prevalence of sex trafficking in the area and the fact that prostitution aids the work of traffickers. He also specified the fact that Mackay's conviction involved a minor.

"These were allegations with a minor, and we have a multitude of minors on this campus and for that reason alone, he should not be able to teach here," he said.

Good called for the school to assemble a committee to re-evaluate the policies that allowed Mackay to return to teaching after his conviction. He also called for Mackay to be fired immediately.

"Stand up for your students, especially those that are vulnerable and survivors of sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and anything alike," he said. "This is not going unnoticed." ■



HAPPENING PEOPLE

BY PAUL NEEVEL

Mike Shugrue

After high school in Uxbridge, Massachusetts, and a brief stint at nearby Worcester State College, Mike Shugrue hit the road and hitchhiked around the country for five years. Afterward, he returned to Boston and worked as a travel counselor at AAA. "I went to open mic nights and did comedy," he says. "It was an early experience that led to what I'm doing now." Shugrue first visited Eugene in 1996, a year before he married his wife Patricia, a North Eugene high school grad. "We thought about moving," he says, "but we stayed 18 more years in North Smithfield, Rhode Island." When he was laid off from his financial services job in 2002, the firm paid for college. "I got a psychology degree from Worcester State," he says. "I started working in human services in my late 40s." He first worked with disabled adults in independent

living, but soon was working with kids. In 2010, he began a collaboration with Trinity Repertory Company in Providence, involving kids with intellectual and developmental disabilities in theatrical productions. "It was eight years ago," he notes, "that I finally found a passion." He and Patricia moved west in 2014. A year later, he found work as a program supervisor with Full Access, an agency that supports people with disabilities who live independently or with their families. In the past two years, he has launched an improv theater group called Stray Cast, for adults with disabilities, that meets twice a month at the Oregon Contemporary Theatre, and a similar group for high school age kids that meets weekly at C-Space in Springfield. "Improv helps with social skill building and peer interactions," he says, "in a safe, respectful area."

SLANT

• *The Oregonian* endorsed Republican candidate Knute Buehler for Oregon governor. We hate to break the news to the *O*'s editorial board, but this political race really is about women's right to choose as well as climate change, two issues that stand to lose if Buehler is at the helm. Then again, this is the same paper that a couple years ago refused to editorialize about climate change because

it's not local. WTF. Ignore the *O*, and go with Kate Brown. Speaking of editorial boards, and local, *The Register-Guard's* board (and their editorial writers from Portland-based Opinion in a Pinch) seem a little out of touch, too. "No" on Measure 102? The measure has flaws, but in case the *RG* editorializers haven't noticed, we are in sore need of affordable housing. Now read *EW*'s own political endorsements in this issue and vote!

• Speaking of Buehler, he followed some bad political advice when he announced that Gov. Kate Brown should fire Colt Gill from his job with the state because he had not raised the graduation rate. Wait a minute — Gill is one of the most respected educators in this part of the state. He was superintendent of schools in the Bethel district, where he was raising the graduation rate right up to the moment he was persuaded to move to the state level. Brown beats Buehler on this one. It was a brilliant stroke to bring Gill to Salem.

• Too bad Gary Williams didn't share the podium with Heather Buch Oct. 12 at the City Club of Eugene. He was invited, but declined, probably thinking that platform would not help him win the East Lane County Commission seat he was appointed to and wants to keep. Buch did a fine job. Wouldn't it be amazing to have a smart woman on the county commission! On the other hand, too bad Scott Rohter did show up to face off against Floyd Prozanski for Senate District 4. No contest.

• "If there's a mess, it's their job to clean it up." That was one of many provocative lines out of E.J. Graff's talk on Oct. 11 sponsored by the Morse Center on the UO campus. A senior fellow at the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism at Brandeis University, Graff was talking about women in the 2018 midterm elections as voters, candidates and activists working to clean it up. She did warn that women don't vote as a bloc. Clearly, if there is a blue wave in the midterms, women are expecting to be leading it. We can only hope.