

Attorneys for Ousted Grammys Chief Deborah Dugan Call for Her Reinstatement

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The statement comes after interim CEO and board chair Harvey Mason sent a memo to the Academy's 25,000 members on Sunday morning with specific directions that the Academy was taking on diversity issues.

Ousted Recording Academy president-CEO Deborah Dugan's attorneys are calling for her to be reinstated and for board chair Harvey Mason to step down if the organization is serious about reform.

Interim CEO and board chair Mason on Sunday sent a memo to the Academy's 25,000 members in which he stressed that change was needed and bullet-pointed specific directions that the Academy was taking. In response, Dugan's attorneys Douglas Wigdor and Michael Willemin said real change could only happen if Mason stepped down; if the Academy agreed to suspend the nominating review committees; if an independent investigation of alleged board members' conflict of interest and use of the non-profit monies occurred; and if Dugan was reinstated.

Mason's latest memo, which was written Saturday but not released until Sunday morning, announced five initiatives, many of them based on recommendations from the Tina Tchen-led Diversity Task Force. Those included a commitment to hire a diversity and inclusion officer within the next 90 days; the establishment of an Academy-funded fellowship devoted to independent review and reporting on the Academy's inclusionary efforts; and the creation of a fund distributed annually to different "women in music" organizations.

The statement from Dugan's attorneys is just the latest volley in an increasing ugly battle between Dugan and the Recording Academy that started Jan. 16 when the organization announced its board had placed Dugan, who started Aug. 1, on administrative leave after accusing her of misconduct toward a female staffer.

Dugan fired back with a 44-page Equal Employment Opportunity Commission complaint that called the Recording Academy a "boys club" so entrenched in its way of thinking that she was not allowed to move the organization forward, despite its allegedly "corrupt" Grammy voting procedures beset with conflicts of interest. Dugan also lobbed a sexual harassment allegation against the organization's general counsel, Joel Katz; accused the Recording Academy of paying "exorbitant" legal fees to Katz's firm, Greenberg Traurig, and

another firm, Proskauer Rose; and brought to light an allegation of rape — investigated and dismissed by the board — filed against her predecessor, Neil Portnow. Katz denies Dugan's allegations, and Portnow called the allegations "ludicrous and untrue."

On Thursday, the Tchen-led Task Force issued its own blistering statement calling for the organization to "immediately commit themselves to real reform, take concrete steps to implement all of the Task Force reforms, and transparently and regularly report on their progress — including transparently reporting on the pending investigations they have announced are underway."

The Task Force was established in early 2018 after Portnow said backstage following the Grammy Awards that female artists needed to "step up" if they wanted to win more Grammys.

Read the statement from Dugan's attorneys below.

"Harvey Mason's public statement on the eve of the Grammys is all smoke and mirrors given that each of his so called new "initiatives" had already been agreed to under the direction of Ms. Dugan. If the past ten days have shown anything, it is that the current Chair is not the appropriate individual to effectuate meaningful change at the Academy. This is the same Chair that put Ms. Dugan on leave because she was calling for increased diversity and the end to self-dealing and conflicts of interest. This is the same Chair that has leaked attack after attack on Ms. Dugan to the media, and done everything in his power to defame and disparage her. In fact, in the very same statement that Mr. Mason just issued calling for change, he makes additional attacks against Ms. Dugan. The prior male CEO was not even put on leave when he was alleged to have raped a woman. Yet, Ms. Dugan remains on leave to this day.

Therefore, in order for there to be real change four things must happen immediately. First, there must be an independent and qualified professional Chair and Board. Second, the Academy must agree to immediately suspend the conflict-rife nominating review committees ("secret committees"). Third, there must be a truly independent investigation into the Board's relationships, self-dealings, and use of public non-profit monies. Finally, the Board must immediately reinstate Ms. Dugan as the CEO of the Recording Academy to oversee and effectuate such changes."