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EDUCATION

Former Nardin president suing school, seeking damages following alleged 'smear campaign'

by: [Adam Gorski](#)

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BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) — The former president of Nardin Academy, who [stepped down from her](#) role in [June](#) following a period of turmoil involving herself, Nardin's Board of Trustees and the community, is suing the school and several current and former board members.

The lawsuit, which was sent to News 4 Thursday, seeks damages after Dr. Sandra Betters allegedly faced "a school full of hatred, vitriol, hysteria and retaliatory intent."

It also alleges she continues to suffer economic damages, loss of opportunity, physical harm and mental anguish following her removal as president and the events that led to it.

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alleges that as Dr. Betters was getting closer “to the truth” about the state of Nardin, mass hysteria fueled by “lies, rumors and hate” broke out, and even led to her receiving death threats.

Financial conflicts, lack of diversity initiatives as well as core requirements and unlawful access of staff and students’ private communications are all alleged to have taken place at the school before and during Dr. Betters’ tenure, according to the lawsuit. As she is said to have worked towards fixing these issues, a “smear campaign” conducted by faculty, administrators and board members allegedly commenced.

Nardin students [conducted a walk-out protest](#) out of concern for the school’s future on April 13, which was sparked by a biology teacher allegedly being escorted out of the building. The lawsuit alleges the teacher used a racial slur when speaking to a student and was terminated shortly after.

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The walk-out was followed by the Board of Trustees calling for the resignation of Dr. Betters, as well as Board Chair Tish Van Dyke, a day later. In the weeks that followed, other protests put together by the Nardin Together movement were held and culminated in the planned resignation of Dr. Betters and nine members of the board being announced on May 4.

Among the claims mentioned in the lawsuit, it is alleged that on May 4, Dr. Betters received a threat via email telling her to “not show [her] face” around Nardin and to “walk carefully and look over [her] shoulders.”

Two days after Dr. Betters agreed to transition from her role as president, a third-party assessment initiated by the Board of Trustees that looked into the situation found “no wrongdoing or misconduct” on her part. Despite this ruling, the lawsuit alleges that Dr. Betters’ detractors continued to bash her.

In a statement, Anita P. Baird, a Nardin Board of Trustees member, said that the school will defend itself “energetically and truthfully” in regard to the lawsuit. The full statement can be seen below:

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students with a well-rounded experience, rooted in social justice and reflective of our mission to inspire hearts and minds through faith, character, academic excellence, and service.

With respect to the recent legal action filed by Nardin's former president, we will defend Nardin energetically and truthfully. We deeply appreciate the support we have received from the Western New York Community as we move forward. As it has for the past 166 years, Nardin Academy is ready to welcome our students to a faith-based community where their God-given gifts are appreciated and nurtured.

- ANITA P. BAIRD, DHM U.S. PROVINCIAL, DAUGHTERS OF THE HEART OF MARY VICE CHAIR, NARDIN BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Adam Gorski is a Buffalo native who joined the [News 4](#) team in 2022. You can find more of his work [here](#).

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