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**POINT LOMA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY FIRES PROMINENT NAZARENE ELDER,  
DEAN OF SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY OVER SUPPORT OF ADJUNCT PROFESSOR  
REMOVED FROM ADJUNCT POOL FOR HER SUPPORT OF THE LGBTQ+  
COMMUNITY**

**San Diego, CA | APRIL 5, 2023** — Point Loma Nazarene University has been quietly undermining the rights of not only LGBTQ+ students and staff, but also of vocal allies on campus. On March 15th, PLNU's Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Kerry Fulcher fired the Dean of the School of Theology and Christian Ministry. With no previous disciplinary actions or concerns, Dr. Mark Maddix was fired due to what the Provost claims as 'insubordination' for his support of former adjunct professor and minister Melissa Tucker.

Near the beginning of this year, Melissa Tucker found out that she would never again be welcomed back as a professor at PLNU. Neither human resources nor administration contacted Tucker to let her know of her blacklisted status. While she left her position at First Church of the Nazarene and then the Nazarene denomination, Tucker never imagined she would find herself without her teaching position at the school she earned both her undergraduate and masters degrees at. She decided to fight her 'unofficial' dismissal internally without going public, but the word spread amongst faculty. Initially, when Tucker met with human resources and asked about terms of her employment, she was told she was considered an employee, despite not teaching a class this semester. This was retracted in an email later, stating that because her contract was not active and there would be no formal termination process.

Earlier in the year, Mark Maddix had a private meeting with Provost Fulcher where he stated that due to Melissa's affirmation of the LGBTQ+ community, she would not be allowed to teach again. Maddix did not feel he could express dissent. As Dean, Maddix later defended his former adjunct professor in an email to faculty of the School of Theology and Christian Ministry. The email stated that the School would not be able to use Melissa Tucker as an adjunct in the future. Maddix shared what Fulcher had told him- that this decision was made due to her public support of LGBTQ+ people. Maddix stated that he disagreed with Provost' decision, but felt that it was not up for negotiation. The email was sent after another adjunct asked for Tucker to act as a substitute.

A few weeks or so later, Dean Maddix was fired for insubordination for 'disclosing information about an employee to other employees.' He was fired for whistleblowing. Provost Fulcher has since walked back his initial comments about Tucker and later claimed that he said that, 'because Tucker was a prominent Nazarene minister and has since left her Nazarene church role and affiliation, students and parents might be bothered by that. This move would protect the department.'

Melissa Tucker was removed from her position at Point Loma Nazarene University for being a public ally to the LGBTQ+ community and Mark Maddix was fired for not standing by the homophobic and discriminatory decision. He had just started his sabbatical when he was fired. An anonymous faculty member at Point Loma Nazarene expressed that Melissa is being used as a political pawn in Fulcher's long distaste for Maddix.

This is not a first at Christian institutions; staff and faculty from other schools across the U.S. have been fired for holding liberal or affirming beliefs. In 2017, Ruthie Robertson was removed from her position as an adjunct professor at BYU-Idaho for a private Facebook post supporting the LGBTQ+ community. Just last year, Professor Michael O'Keefe was fired from Oklahoma Christian University for hosting a gay guest speaker in one of his classes - O'Keefe had dedicated over 40-years to the university. Thomas Jay Oord, Elder in the Church of the Nazarene and Professor of Theology at Northwind Theological Seminary was asked to resign from his position at Northwest Nazarene University in 2014 for his 'liberal views' and later was brought up on charges by the Church of the Nazarene for his full affirmation of the LGBTQ+ community. He was formally tried and, ultimately, he was not disciplined by the Church, but his local ministerial assignments were taken away. Oord is standing by Maddix in a statement:

"The irony is that administrators of a Christian university have fired one of their best professors for standing up for love. Aren't Christians supposed to love like Jesus? University administrators seem to be sending a message. But that message is *not* the message of love. It's a message of fear, revenge, and bullying, hoping to silence those who love queer people.

The doctrine of the Church of the Nazarene is based fundamentally on love. But its views on Queer people are far from loving. There's a contradiction between the denomination and the university's view of God and its view of Queer people.

Even if I agreed with the university's stance on LGBTQ matters, I would be angry at Mark Maddix's firing. His punishment doesn't fit the 'crime'. He's standing up for his colleagues and their attempts to love queer people."

Dr. Mark Maddix has lawyered-up and plans to take legal action against the university. He confirmed that, "I was fired and I have hired an attorney." He did not sign the release / non-disclosure agreement that he was asked to sign. California law protects LGBTQ+

employees and employees that associate with LGBTQ+ individuals. It is also illegal for an employer to punish an employee who complains about discrimination within the workplace.

PLNU has continued fighting for the right to discriminate based on religious grounds, notably joining a coalition of ten Christian universities to fight AB 569, which would have prohibited religious colleges and faith-based institutions from having 'faith-based' hiring policies. Bob Brower, President of Point Loma Nazarene University, stated that hiring only, "deeply, faithful, committed Christian faculty and staff members," is an essential part of being a Christian university. The well-funded lobbyist was able to convince then-Governor Jerry Brown to veto the bill.

**###**

## **BACKGROUND**

On PLNU's [Human Resources Webpage](#), it states;

PLNU's mission to provide whole-person, Christ-centered education is made possible by our community of compassionate and creative faculty and staff who bring excellence into everything we do — regardless of title or responsibility.

At Point Loma Nazarene University, we believe in pursuing calling together. By weaving meaningful work and intentional relationships, we achieve what we call vocation. Share your unique talents alongside fellow professionals committed to the same purpose.

Cultivate your calling helping students discover theirs by being a part of PLNU.

**Job postings include the following:**

PLNU is a Christian liberal arts university in the evangelical, Wesleyan tradition, offering quality undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. We provide higher education in a vibrant Christian environment where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. PLNU is an institution that is committed to reflecting the rich diversity of God's kingdom. We therefore encourage applications from culturally and academically diverse faculty of the highest caliber, skilled and/or demonstrating great potential in the practice of teaching and scholarship.

**The following is listed as a requirement for all faculty and staff:**

Evidence of Christian commitment, active church involvement, and commitment to the religious and educational goals of the university. In addition, faculty agree to live in agreement with PLNU's [Community Life Covenant](#).

### **Elected Representation:**

PLNU's campus at 3900 Lomaland Drive is represented in government by Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins, County Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer, Mayor Todd Gloria, and Councilmember Jenifer Campbell - all of whom are openly members of the LGBTQ+ community and Assemblymember Tasha Boerner-Horvath, a vocal ally to the LGBTQ+ community.

### **Timeline:**

**2010:** Student-elected [Director of Spiritual Life](#), Todd Clayton, came out as gay. Unfortunately, Todd quit (was ousted) as he was told by campus administrators he couldn't act or be gay.

**2012:** The first attempted [LGBTQIA+ club was denied charter](#).

**2014:** PLNU states that [celibacy is expected](#) if LGBT faculty or staff are hired.

**2015:** PLNU [ends on-campus weddings](#) after the Supreme Court ruling in Obergefell v Hodges, making same-sex marriage federally legal.

**2016:** PLNU donates \$50,000 to fight SB 1146 which aimed to protect LGBTQ+ students at religious institutions

**2017:** The short-film [Saltwater Baptism](#) took PLNU by storm: a documentary following a week in the lives of a same-sex couple at PLNU. A [New York Times article](#) about being gay and in love at a Christian school was published by the directors, Jared Callahan & Russell Sheaffer, as well.

**2022:** The Student Handbook for 2022-2023 states that:

- "Students are expected to abstain from sexual intimacy outside of heterosexual marriage."
- "Residential Life housing assignments, use of single gender restrooms, and locker rooms are consistent with one's assigned sex at birth."
- "Intercollegiate athletic team assignments are consistent with one's assigned sex at birth."

**2023:** Loma LGBTQIA+ Alumni & Allies Coalition is founded by 2019 alumni Lauren Cazares, the coalition stages peaceful protest during Homecoming Weekend “We Are Loma 5K” walk/run.