Blizzard co-lead Jen Oneal steps down three months after taking the role



Jen Oneal is stepping down as a co-lead of Blizzard just three months after taking the role in the wake of the sexual harassment lawsuit brought against Activision Blizzard by the state of California. Mike Ybarra, a former Xbox executive who had stepped into the co-lead role alongside Oneal, will now be the sole lead of the studio, effective immediately.

“I want you to hear from me personally that I have made the decision to step away from co-leading Blizzard Entertainment and will transition to a new position before departing ABK at the end of the year,” Oneal said in a statement on Blizzard’s website. “I am doing this not because I am without hope for Blizzard, quite the opposite — I’m inspired by the passion of everyone here, working towards meaningful, lasting change with their whole hearts. This energy has inspired me to step out and explore how I can do *more* to have games and diversity intersect, and hopefully make a broader industry impact that

will benefit Blizzard (and other studios) as well."

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Blizzard will be making a $1 million grant to Women in Games International, where Oneal is a board member. Before she fully leaves Activision Blizzard, Oneal will work to "determine the first steps around how the grant will be utilized, and its structure," she said.

Activision Blizzard has undergone significant changes since the lawsuit was filed in July. Former Blizzard president J. Allen Brack (who Ybarra and Oneal replaced) and former head of global human resources Jesse Meschuck left the company in early August. The company's chief legal officer departed in September. And Activision Blizzard CEO Bobby Kotick took a massive pay cut and ended forced arbitration last week.

In addition to staffing changes, the company has paused plans for BlizzConline 2021 and made changes to its games to remove references to problematic characters or themes. Blizzard changed the name of *Overwatch's* Jesse McCree, who was named after a former lead designer, and vowed to remove "references that are not appropriate for our world" in *World of Warcraft*.

Activision Blizzard also announced Tuesday that *Overwatch 2* and *Diablo 4* have been delayed again.

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