

February 11, 2023

Dear Chairman Hoch and the Northern Seminary Board of Trustees:

The 2018 MANT cohort of Northern Theological Seminary has been made aware of an investigation regarding abusive behaviors, including bullying, that have been levied against the President of our institution. The allegations against Dr. William Shiell regarding his actions and behaviors predominantly toward women in the Northern community are deeply concerning to us. It is our understanding that the investigation has been completed and what remains is follow-up, which we are unclear as to what that entails. We are sending this letter as a group of deeply concerned alumni, including current DMin students, who want to make it unequivocally clear we stand with those individuals who have come forward, including but certainly not limited to Dr. Ingrid Faro and Jennie Boysen.

Our greatest desire is to see Northern weather this storm well and set an example to other Christian institutions for how to respond in a Christ-like, victim-centered manner. We believe this means moving ahead with transparency, humility, and most importantly, care and concern for those who have so bravely come forward to share their painful stories.

Therefore, we would like to collectively ask the Board of Trustees to consider the following actions:

1. Bring in a victim advocate who can help support and provide timely information to those who have been harmed and also to help advise on best practices moving forward.
2. To ensure the safety and well-being of our entire Northern community, place Dr. Shiell on administrative leave until the follow-up work has been completed and the report of findings has been released.
3. Invite others who did not initially have a chance to be interviewed by the outside investigator to have the opportunity to share their stories. The report will be incomplete without this.
4. Once the report of findings has been released, allow the full, unredacted report from the third party investigation to be made public, or at the very least, made available in full to those who participated in the investigation. A board summary is insufficient in this case.
5. Take the recommendation/s of the investigator seriously, and not only seriously but we urge you to act upon these recommendations.

These are deeply concerning allegations which have been brought against Dr. Shiell, allegations which are not befitting of a Christian leader. As followers of Christ, we are to love one another deeply and use any given-power or authority to lift up, honor, and empower those in our care. When power is used abusively to harm others in any way, those in positions of power should humble themselves, repent, and face any consequences with grace. If this does not happen willingly, it should be taken as a sign of a lack of humility and true repentance. We would ask the Board to prayerfully and carefully consider what your role and next steps will be, for you, too, hold significant power here.

Northern students, faculty, staff, and alumni are looking to each of you to make Christofom decisions which center those who have been harmed and bring justice where needed. We want to see Northern be a place where: all students can continue to thrive as leaders for the Church, where they can be educated in a safe, tov environment, and where Christ continues to receive all the glory. How you respond in the coming days and weeks is of utmost importance.

We look forward to your prompt reply that you have received this letter within 48 hours of receipt and then your response to our recommended actions within one week. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

The 2018 MANT Cohort

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