

Fwd: To the Board of Northern Seminary

From: [REDACTED] [REDACTED])

To: [REDACTED]

Date: Monday, February 20, 2023 at 01:08 PM MST

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Anita Lustrea** <[REDACTED]>

Date: Thu, Nov 3, 2022 at 6:55 PM

Subject: To the Board of Northern Seminary

To: <[REDACTED]>

November 3, 2022

To the Board of Northern Seminary:

I have not heretofore shared my story. I didn't think it would matter, in part, because my stay at Northern was brief. I worked from November of 2015 until some time in May of 2016. I was hired under interim President, Karen Walker Freeburg. I was told that one of the desirable qualities that I possessed was name recognition in Evangelical circles. I was a former talk show host with Moody Radio on a show that won program of the year from the National Religious Broadcasters.

Northern hired me as the Director of Alumni and Church Relations and I was instructed to use my name to help connect with alumni and churches. I thought that the new President coming in might even have ideas on how to better leverage my background for the seminary but Bill showed no interest in who I was or what I had to offer.

As I began planning and traveling to alumni gatherings, I took Northern swag to give away along with faculty authored books and copies of books I had authored.

I returned from my first alumni event near Saint Louis, MO and was informed by Bill Shiehl's administrative assistant that Bill was livid that I had taken along books of mine for the book table give aways. And she shared that Bill raised his voice and used strong language, "how dare she do that...etc."

I was doing what I was hired and encouraged to do. Soon after that event I was relegated to stuffing envelopes instead of planning new alumni gatherings. Bill informed me he was reworking my job description but never once talked with me about it nor asked about my gifts, strengths, or background. I decided I did not want to be part of an organization where the President, I perceived, was threatened by my

presence in a public facing position at the seminary. I decided to resign and within a day or two of Bill's outburst I gave my 2 weeks notice.

I took my resignation letter to Bill's office and let him know I'd finish up any outstanding work on my desk over the next two weeks. I didn't want to leave Northern hanging or deposit unfinished work onto someone else's full plate. Bill shared with me that he wanted to bless me and pay me for the two weeks but that I could just leave at the end of the day and not return.

Honestly, I didn't realize he was ending my employment early. I really thought he wanted to "bless me" (the exact words he used) with two weeks of pay without work....a nice vacation. So I said, I don't want to leave anyone in the lurch. Can I think about it and call you? When I told my husband what Bill had said, he told me I was being terminated immediately. When I understood Bill's intent, I was distraught over this. I called Bill that night and said I'd clear out my office before the next day and to please let my coworkers know I wouldn't be returning.

Still later that night I received a call from Bill saying the seminary would like to give me a going away luncheon the next day and to please come in. It was bizarre. Karen Walker Freeburg led the luncheon with Bill in attendance. She asked if anyone had anything to say which surprised me and made me feel awkward. I didn't believe I'd been there long enough to elicit anyone's comments. One after another my colleagues spoke up that my office had been a safe space for them to come and sit and share. I watched Bill sit there in silence with his head down not saying a word. I'm still shocked that he came to the lunch.

I was grateful to leave early on in Bill's time as President. With every employee that left after me, which seemed like a steady stream, I wondered if they'd left of their own volition. .

Is this a pattern of Bill Shiell's Presidency? I don't know. But I hope the board will take my story into consideration.

Anita Lustrea
Faith Conversations
Podcaster, Spiritual Director,
Certified Enneagram Teacher,
Retreat Leader, Author,
Media Coach



Sent from my iPhone