

--- Forwarded Message ---

**From:** "Tommy Lee" <[REDACTED]>  
**To:** "Jason Gile" <[REDACTED]>, "Laurie Nichols" <[REDACTED]>, "Lynn Cohick" <[REDACTED]>, "Amy DiSanto" <[REDACTED]>, "Moore, Michael D." <[REDACTED]>, "Greg Armstrong" <[REDACTED]>, "Ingrid Faro" <[REDACTED]>, "Boysen, Jennie" <[REDACTED]>, "Jay Schommer" <[REDACTED]>, "Jeffery Carthan" <[REDACTED]>, "Kelly Dippolito" <[REDACTED]>, "David Fitch" <[REDACTED]>, "Gupta, Nijay" <[REDACTED]>, "Wunderlich, Kelly" <[REDACTED]>, "Joshua R. Carney" <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** "Loren Joseph" <[REDACTED]>, "Donna Dai" <[REDACTED]>, "Tanya Hageman" <[REDACTED]>, "Sarah Martel" <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Wed, Feb 22, 2023 at 9:31 AM  
**Subject:** Message from Tommy Lee of the Grow Center

Dear Northern Family,

As Resource Global ([www.resourceglobal.org](http://www.resourceglobal.org)) was growing with our young Christian marketplace leaders around the world (10 global cities in Indonesia, Malaysia, Kenya, South Africa and Hong Kong) we were encountering more and more pastors who needed training because of the lack of access (but more affordability) for biblical, theological, and ministry training. As a result I was actively looking for a seminary to work under to train these leaders and had expressed that desire to some of the foundations we were working with.

When Bill Shiell and I met at a New Canaan Wheaton event I was intrigued by the potential of the Grow Center that he pitched to me. As I got to know the team and what Northern stood for it meant a lot to me to be under an education institute that was innovative, willing to make changes, and stood for things that were important to me. I got more excited as I met some of the staff who were in place and doing the wonderful things they were doing.

That was three years ago. Last year we grew the Grow Center from 0 to over \$300,000. I was also a personal donor who donated \$40,000 to Northern in my roles as Director of the Grow Center and also as Special Assistant to the President at Northern.

But by year 2 I started noticing some things that began to bother me. It was the number of COO's and VP of Development Directors going in and out of the door. Employees began to leave and you were always meeting someone new. The narrative of "it wasn't a good fit" grew old because "weren't you the common denominator in all of these hires and management." I sat in meetings where Bill started taking credit for things going well and then was singled out during board meetings for things that were going wrong. Suddenly my overhead for the Grow Center ballooned to 20 percent without any approval from my end and I was being blamed and called out for Northern's deficit. When I was hired I said I was NOT going to be responsible for fundraising. It was in my contract. But suddenly I was responsible and he just told me I had to do it. And then our team started feeling the micromanagement of Bill's leadership.

As time went on I started hearing the leadership style of Bill was not just singled out to me and the Grow Center team but overall and much worse with other employees at Northern. I never came to the office to avoid Bill but some had it much worse. I didn't bring in donors to the Grow Center because I did not trust his leadership.

With that said I was DISGUSTED yesterday by the staff meeting. I was disgusted we lost the talent of the wonderful Dr. Lynn Cohick. HUGE LOSS. I was disgusted hearing how all of this was because of one man and his shenanigans and some of the board allowing this to happen. If it was anyone else, any employee, we would have fired them already. All this for one man. NOT ACCEPTABLE. I don't care who he is. If Bill was in the room I would have said the same thing. If there is even a hint that a women or employee felt mistreated and felt bullied you need to either change the behavior and seek forgiveness or be fired. There's no place where anyone despite their age, position, sex, or color should not feel equal compared to everyone else. NO PLACE. Are you serious? We're wasting our time talking about this versus the good work of Northern. We're dealing with your fragile ego. He is a distraction from what everyone is doing. He is an embarrassment and he needs to go. And if some of the board even embodies that then i call on their resignation as well.

The Grow Center will not work under Bill's leadership ever again. If he even comes back we will suspend all operations. That may jeopardize my role and it's fine. I have too much respect for my colleagues for us to be having this wasteful conversation. And frankly Bill you need the team because can you really do this yourself? NO. Seminary Now did not get this grant because of you. Center of Women in Leadership did not start because of you. We didn't sell the property without everyone working long hours. We certainly did not get all of these grants because of you. QUIT taking credit for it. You were the leader but part of an amazing team. Don't ever forget it and take it for granted. Consider it an honor that you have this team to work with.

So with the article coming out I do agree with it and will publicly endorse it. I am sending a link to a report I wrote to the board several months ago about the journey of the Grow Center that I wanted to share with you. All this for one man. Seriously????

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eDxY2w\\_Sgz5mQia4tNuFstZB00AfvGC7CNzU25oktE/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eDxY2w_Sgz5mQia4tNuFstZB00AfvGC7CNzU25oktE/edit?usp=sharing)

I am sorry Jason is stuck with this. I am sorry that soon employees will have to be stuck dealing with this. I am angry that one man and his insecurities has brought us to this point. This is a waste of time. Do we really have to take care of your ego and make sure you feel respected? I call on him to resign and I believe the Chairman needs to resign as well. This is Tommy Lee unfiltered today. Initially I stayed quiet hoping he would apologize, and we would give him another chance. I could have stayed quiet and say it's none of my business, I would just do my own work in my corner and let everyone else deal with it. I am a contractor and will just collect the pay. But my conscience wouldn't let me do it. As a Christ follower this is wrong. And these are brothers and sisters that I serve with. So here I am.

Feel free to forward this to whoever.

Note:

If Bill Shiell even comes back to lead here's what the Grow Center will be sending out:

Effective \_\_\_\_\_ the Grow Center for Church and Mission will be suspending all of its activities (except for the ALS Family of Faith Chaplaincy) until the situation with the President of Northern has been resolved.

Because of the negative leadership culture established by the President at Northern Seminary and its impact on colleagues at Northern Seminary, the Grow Center for Church and Mission cannot condone and support these actions as long as the current President is in leadership. As a result, we will be suspending all activities until this is resolved in a way that honors the dignity and value of all men and women.

Furthermore, I believe that the actions of the President warrant a call for his resignation or removal by the Board of Trustees. I am not demanding this to punish him, but believe he is not qualified to lead and represent the Grow Center as the President.

Tommy Lee  
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