

As an Inver Hills Community College alumni I stand in solidarity with the faculty and students who are calling for the resignation of President Tim Wynes.

When I first enrolled at Inver Hills in the fall of 2001 I did not know that I would be able to succeed. I was not a great student in High School and I had little confidence in my abilities to do any better in college.

Once I started classes my attitude changed very quickly.

My professors at Inver Hills believed in me more than I had believed in myself and they pushed me to succeed in ways that I could never imagine. I had hoped to scrape by my first semester with passing grades, but because of all the help and encouragement I got from my professors at Inver Hills I ended that first semester with straight A's. Once that happened I no longer doubted myself, it was that first semester at Inver Hills that I proved to myself that I could be successful in life.

I can honestly say that my experience at Inver Hills changed my life and I would not be where I am today if I had not attended classes there. I was able to maintain a high GPA throughout my two years at Inver Hills and because of that success I was able to get accepted to Hamline University where I graduated with honors in 2005.

The reason I was able to succeed at Inver Hills was because of the positive environment on campus, I actually enjoyed going to class every day because the faculty on campus was very passionate about engaging the students and maintaining a friendly and welcoming environment.

Under the leadership of former President Cheryl Frank I never noticed any major problems between the faculty and the President's office, she did everything she could to maintain a positive atmosphere on campus and both the students and the faculty benefitted greatly from this positive atmosphere.

It saddens me today to hear about how that positive atmosphere has been destroyed under the leadership of the current President Tim Wynes.

It saddens me to hear about the students who had to get by without books for several weeks because the President failed in his attempts to move to an online book ordering system. I don't think I would have succeeded in college if I had been unable to obtain my books until weeks into the semester, and I cannot even imagine the stress that those students had to face when they needed to study but did not have the materials to study. We may never know how many students suffered academically as a direct result of the President's failure to get text books to the students, but there is no doubt that a number of students GPAs suffered because they had no books.

It saddens me to hear about the hundreds of nursing students who will have to retake their nursing exams because of a cheating scandal that happened under the watch of President Wynes. The vast majority of these students did nothing wrong, they studied for their test and they succeeded in passing it but now their scores are being thrown out. Many of them have already accepted jobs and they are being told that they need to retake the test again while the material is no longer fresh in their minds, now they have to fear the loss of their job if they do not pass the second time.

It saddens me to hear that the faculty of Inver Hills no longer feels that they are working in a positive atmosphere on campus. This is the same faculty that helped me so much to succeed in life and has the ability to help thousands of other students to succeed in the same way that I did, but the President has made their jobs so much more difficult that they are now forced to hold a no confidence vote in the hope that they can get new leadership that respects them.

It saddens me that many of these faculty members want to speak out and say what they think needs to be done to create a more positive atmosphere on campus, but they are afraid to say anything because they have seen too many people who did speak face retaliation. Under the leadership of President Wynes employee turnover has increased dramatically, people are leaving the school because they no longer feel welcome due to a culture of intimidation.

When I attended Inver Hills I never heard of any faculty member or staff complaining of intimidation from Cheryl Frank, she was a President who was friendly to everyone and her positive attitude ensured that the faculty was able to fight for their students without having to worry about fighting the President's office. Cheryl Frank may have had a lot of power as President but she wisely chose not to portray herself as a powerful person, instead of exercising her power to intimidate people she used her power to make the campus more welcoming.

Inver Hills needs a new leader who will bring the campus a leadership style similar to what we saw with President Frank. The culture of intimidation that President Wynes has brought to campus needs to end and if he will not resign on his own then he needs to be fired.

As an alumni I want to see Inver Hills go back to being the great school it was when I graduated, please listen to the faculty who are calling for new leadership so that Inver Hills can once again be the school that brought me success in life.

Sincerely,
Bjorn Johnson
Inver Hills Class of 2003