

Highline College Is Out of Time: Why We Need a Vote of No Confidence in President Mosby

Highline College is at a breaking point, and the campus community knows it. Students are losing housing, missing meals, and being dropped from classes because support systems have collapsed. Classified staff are burned out, underpaid, and being asked to give up the few protections they have left. Faculty are watching the institution drift with no direction.

And the person who is supposed to lead us through this — President John Mosby — has been absent, silent, and unaccountable.

At some point, a college must look itself in the mirror and admit the truth: **this is not sustainable, and it's not leadership**. It is time for a campus-wide **vote of no confidence** in President Mosby.

1. Let's start where the harm is clearest: Financial Aid is in crisis.

ThunderWord's investigation revealed that only **15% of students** who asked for help with financial aid issues were able to get them resolved. Students shared stories of going hungry, losing transportation, skipping medication, delaying rent, and considering dropping out entirely because of weeks — sometimes months — of silence and contradictory information.

Students described the system as:

- “Dehumanizing.”
- “Beyond confusing.”
- “Set up to push us to the edge.”

Faculty testified that students’ **“humanity and dignity are under assault.”**

This isn't a paperwork problem. It's a harm problem. Students don't get to delay their responsibilities indefinitely. Their homework is due. Their bills are due. Their lives do not stop because the president stops showing up.

And here is the part that demands accountability:

Dr. Jamilyn Penn oversaw Student Services, including Financial Aid, when this crisis unfolded.

Yet instead of accountability, she was promoted to **Acting President**. If the campus truly practiced “mutual accountability” — a phrase Dr. Penn regularly uses — then the people at the top would be held responsible for the outcomes under their leadership. Instead, the only people expected to show accountability are the ones at the bottom.

2. Classified staff are underpaid, overworked, and facing the loss of union power.

Classified staff make **26% less** than similar roles across the state. These are the people who keep the college running: enrollment, advising, outreach, facilities, financial services, front desk operations — the day-to-day work that students actually rely on.

While staff struggle to get by, President Mosby:

- Makes **eight times** the lowest-paid employee
- Received a **133% salary increase** in three years
- And has taken **extended, repeated medical leaves** with no clear plan for continuity

On top of this, his administration floated sending WPEA members back to statewide bargaining, which could **strip away decades of local gains**, including leave protections. That is not leadership. That is abandonment.

If staff miss deadlines, don't respond to emails, skip meetings, or disappear for weeks at a time, we get disciplined. Meanwhile, the president can vanish from campus, avoid accountability, and still be shielded from any review process.

That is not “mutual accountability.” That is a double standard.

3. The campus is being kept in the dark.

For over a year, *ThunderWord* has reported that:

- Executive Cabinet members skip meetings with students
- The President “appears disengaged,” turning his camera off or scrolling on his phone
- Key administrative decisions lack public explanation
- Meetings go unrecorded
- Minutes are bare-bones
- Requests for comment are repeatedly ignored
- Staff and students are left piecing together rumors because leadership refuses transparency

One of the most telling signs came when the campus community asked Acting President Penn:

“What is the red line for determining when President Mosby can no longer lead?”

She had no answer.

Imagine any other workplace where the leader cannot perform the essential duties of their job for long periods of time, and yet the organization refuses to even discuss a succession plan. If the campus were anonymously surveyed, it would already be a landslide vote of no confidence.

4. Highline can’t keep pretending. Action is overdue.

We can’t build an “equity-centered” institution on top of:

- failing student support systems,
- underpaid and demoralized staff,
- faculty cut out of decision-making,
- absent leadership,
- and no transparency about who is running the college day to day.

Highline’s students deserve better. Our staff deserve better. Our faculty deserve better.

The Board of Trustees will not act unless **we** do.

What the campus must do now

This is the moment where the campus community has to choose action over silence.

1. **Classified staff, faculty, and students** must:

- Pass a **formal vote of no confidence** through their unions, councils, and governance bodies.

2. **Show up at Board of Trustees meetings** and use public comment to demand:

- President Mosby's resignation or removal
- A neutral, outside interim president
- A transparent, campus-involved presidential search

3. **Share stories publicly** (anonymously if needed). The harm is real. It deserves to be heard.

We cannot keep waiting for leadership to fix itself. It won't.

Highline deserves a president who is present, accountable, transparent, and capable of leading a college in crisis.

We no longer have confidence in President Mosby — and it's time to say it openly, collectively, and decisively.