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PINEVILLE, La. (ABP)-Louisiana College trustees, whose December decision to screen all classroom materials was criticized as a violation of academic freedom, will consider an even stricter textbook policy when they meet this month.

Trustee Leon Hyatt is proposing a policy that would bring the college-and specifically classroom materials-in line with "the principle that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant and infallible word of God."

The policy also would prohibit any "approval or portrayal of profanity, sexual activity outside of marriage, homosexuality, pornography or other illicit sexual expressions."

Violation of the policy would subject faculty and staff members to dismissal, and trustees would consider "compliance or non-compliance on the part of any and all personnel" as a standing agenda item at each board meeting.

Hyatt also is seeking to replace the current trustee officers, which in effect would disband the search committee looking for a new college president. Hyatt announced his plan in an e-mail to selected trustees, according to two Louisiana newspapers.

Current trustee Chair Joe Nesom said the faculty and textbook policy would be addressed during the trustees' previously scheduled April meeting, but Nesom implied the issue of trustee officers would not.

Hyatt declined to comment to reporters and referred all questions to Nesom.

College President Rory Lee and Academic Vice President Ben Hawkins announced in mid-March they are leaving to take other jobs. Both Lee and Hawkins said their resignations were not in response to the new policies. But some faculty and alumni worry the resignations will only speed changes at the college, which is affiliated with the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

Thomas Howell, chair of the college's history department and a critic of the textbook policy, said the new proposal would make teaching even harder.

“'Portrayal of sexual activity outside of marriage?' That would include various parts of the Bible,” Howell told *The Town Talk*. “I think this proposed resolution, if applied broadly and aggressively, would make a liberal arts education impossible.”

But trustee Kent Aguillard disagreed. “Fundamentally, I don't think the board is trying to alter the face of this school,” he said. “The board does not want to turn it into a Bible school. We want students to get a liberal exposure to the arts and sciences. But it's going to be in the context of what the Baptist Faith & Message says. That doesn't mean you can't teach things that are taught somewhere else, but you teach it in the context of what the Baptists believe.”

Trustee Chair Nesom was not one of the 22 board members who received Hyatt's e-mail calling for his replacement. Nesom did not comment on Hyatt's effort to replace the officers, all of whom serve on the search committee.

This is not the first time Hyatt has attempted to enact conservative reforms at Louisiana College. In 1995, before he was elected a trustee by the Louisiana Baptist Convention, Hyatt was part of a group that accused four professors of using inappropriate class materials and failing to use their classes to spread the gospel.

The four professors sued Hyatt for defamation. The lawsuit was settled in 1998, with Hyatt agreeing to pay the professors \$40,000 in legal fees and to write letters of apology to each.

Meanwhile, Carlton Winbery, chairman of the college's religion department, recently was elected by his peers to serve as the faculty representative on the search committee. Winbery was one of the plaintiffs in the defamation suit against Hyatt. The committee is comprised of the seven trustee officers, a faculty representative and a student representative.

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