

ETBU President Riley announces retirement plans

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MARSHALL—Bob Riley has announced plans to retire in July 2009 as president of [East Texas Baptist University](#).

Riley announced his retirement plans during the May 9 meeting of the ETBU trustee board. At his retirement, he will have served 16 years.

Bob Riley

“Although this presidency has been a wonderful experience, Gayle and I believe that it is time for a new vision and leadership for ETBU,” said Riley, whose term as president is the second longest in the 96-year history of the school.

“God has blessed our university immeasurably over the years with outstanding men and women to serve as faculty, staff, and trustees at this very special place.”

During Riley’s tenure at ETBU, the school has posted record enrollments, significantly increased its endowment and completed more than \$25 million in capital projects.

“Dr. Riley has led ETBU as its president for over 15 years,” said Hal Cornish, chair of the ETBU trustees. “During that time there have been many significant accomplishments at ETBU. The campus has been expanded greatly and beautifully through the addition of many new buildings and the renovation of several others. The quality of student education has also been greatly improved.

“Dr. Riley and his wife, Gayle, certainly deserve a long and enjoyable retirement. They have been good for ETBU and have represented the university well over the years both externally and inside the ETBU community. He has been a man of integrity and has engendered that quality within the faculty and staff.”

Trustees will follow established policy that defines how to proceed in the search and selection of a new president, Cornish said.

“Our goal is to conduct a national search and have a new president in place prior to Dr. Riley’s retirement next year to assure continuity in that important position,” he said.

From Howard College

Riley arrived at East Texas Baptist University in 1992, following eight years as president of Howard College in Big Spring.

“Universities are deeply blessed by continuity of leadership as the mission and purpose of the university is consistently advanced. A short drive or walk through the campus bears evidence of the significant improvements under Dr. Riley’s leadership, including academic buildings, athletic fields, and residence halls,” said Paul Sorrels, provost and vice president for academic affairs. “Nearly every building has been improved, extensively renovated, or built during his tenure.

“The more notable advancements, however, have been in the academic arena, the prime purpose of an educational institution. The credentials and reputation of the faculty have significantly improved, with the number of faculty holding doctorates or terminal degrees increasing from 63 percent to consistently over 70 percent and at one point, even over 80 percent.

New fields of study

“Several new major fields of study have been initiated in athletic training, mass communication, liberal studies, university studies, and management information systems. Partnerships have been established or maintained with three international universities in China and Poland. Nearly one-half of our graduates pursue additional formal study after graduation.”

“On a personal note, Dr. Riley has been a very supportive president, mentor, and valued friend and colleague. His contribution and loyalty to the university, the faculty and staff, and many students cast a very long shadow, one which has and will benefit all of us for many years to come.”

Riley noted he will leave some unfinished goals for the new president, including the completion of the university student center and the design and construction of a new performing arts center.

“There will always be a new building to build or a project to complete,” said Riley, 65. “Gayle and I believe what Ecclesiastes teaches, that there is ‘a time for everything,’ and now is the time for us to move on to the next chapter of our life. We leave with an almost overwhelming love for ETBU and the belief that the ‘light on the hill’ will never die.”

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