

Dockery notes seminary's 'new place of stability'

August 11, 2025

FORT WORTH (BP)— Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President David S. Dockery told faculty and staff the seminary has experienced a “turnaround” and is in “a place of stability and health” at the start of a new academic year.

Dockery voiced gratitude for God’s faithfulness over recent years and expressed reliance on God’s blessings in the future.

“I am incredibly excited as we enter this new year,” Dockery said of the measurable improvements made over the past three years.

“We have a new place of stability in terms of continuity of people, financial stability, enrollment markers, faithfulness from our donor base. ... God has blessed us during these three years.”

Third straight year of measurable improvement

Dockery said the 2024-25 academic year was the third straight year of increases in both the nonduplicating annual headcount enrollment and credit hours taught.

Enrollment increased from 3,403 to 3,656 while credit hours increased from 33,253 to 36,284. This was the first time since 2014-2016 to have three consecutive years of increases in those areas, he said.

Southwestern also continued to make measurable steps toward institutional

and financial stability. This past year, Dockery observed the seminary has seen additional improvements to its operational and financial positions, noting a \$9 million operational turnaround over three years and a third year of reaching the institution's goals for unrestricted giving.

"These three years have strong markers in enrollment and financial management and unrestricted giving, and in that sense, I think these things point to a genuine turnaround, particularly financial," Dockery said.

"We are at a place of stability and health as we enter this new year that Southwestern has not seen in a long time. We haven't arrived, we still have work to do, but we're in such a different place than was the case in 2022. ... God has been so good to us, and I hope that you will not let it go by without thanking the Lord for his providential care for us."

Dockery said the institution will continue to address the sanctions from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, which this summer noted the seminary had made considerable progress but still needed to focus on three particular areas.

'A renewed sense of hopefulness'

He also pointed out other achievements including the revised Master of Divinity degree program, the recently launched Equip the Called platform, and the publishing of *Shapers of the Southwestern Theological Tradition* and other faculty publications.

Dockery also spotlighted national and international mission trips, as well as new partnerships with the Prestonwood Pregnancy Center, Logos Bible Software and a gap-year program with Turning Point Academy.

"We enter this new year with a renewed hopefulness, a lot of good things happening," Dockery said.

When he voiced commitment to pursue the seminary's core values of being grace filled, Christ centered, scripturally grounded, confessionally guided, student focused and globally engaged, faculty and staff joined in reciting the seminary's mission statement.

He underscored the previously announced theme verse for the 2024-2025 academic year, Matthew 6:33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you."

During the annual gathering, the seminary also recognized faculty and staff celebrating significant service anniversaries this past year, including 15 years for Adam Dodd and Brian Rolfe, and 25 years for Jamie Knight.

Jimbo Brown, director of audio-visual productions, Stephanie Litton, director of Student Success and International Student Services, and Brian Rolfe, data architect in Campus Technology, were named the three staff members of the year.