

Greenway resigns as Southwestern Seminary president

September 23, 2022

FORT WORTH—Adam Greenway resigned as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

A statement from the seminary released on Sept. 23 said the executive committee of the board of trustees gathered for a regularly scheduled meeting the previous day and subsequently accepted Greenway's resignation.

The seminary initially announced O.S. Hawkins was named acting president. Hawkins is retired president of Guidestone, the financial services agency of the Southern Baptist Convention, and he was pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas from 1993 to 1997.

However, five days later, the board changed plans. Trustees announced David Dockery will serve as interim president and Hawkins will be senior adviser and ambassador-at-large. (See related story [here](#).)

'External and internal challenges'

Hawkins asked the board to consider "a more strategic option" to address the "combination of external and internal challenges facing the seminary."

"It is no secret that the seminary has serious financial challenges and going forward we will be giving oversight to aggressively manage costs and implementing best business practices with the intent to move our school to a more solid financial footing," Hawkins said.

Dockery, who joined the Southwestern Seminary faculty in 2019, has close to four decades experience in higher education. He was president of Union University from 1995 to 2014, before he was named president of Trinity International University and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

In [an official statement](#) posted on the Southwestern Seminary website, Chairman Danny Roberts initially announced Greenway accepted a role with the International Mission Board.

However, on Sept. 28, Greenway announced on Twitter he and his wife “have not been able to find the Lord’s peace to move forward in that direction,” and he would not be going to work for the IMB.

The Southwestern Seminary board of trustees is expected to name a presidential search committee during its next meeting, Oct. 17-18, according to the statement.

Offered ‘big-tent’ vision

Greenway was elected president of Southwestern Seminary in February 2019, less than one year after seminary trustees cut ties with former president Paige Patterson over alleged mishandling of sexual abuse cases and using demeaning language toward women.

Early in his time at Southwestern Seminary, Greenway presented a [“big-tent” vision](#) for the school and made positive overtures toward the Baptist General Convention of Texas. He reached out personally to former faculty whom he called “legacy servants,” including some who left with hard feelings toward the seminary.

“It’s never the wrong thing to do what’s right, even if it’s years after it should have been done,” Greenway told the Baptist Standard in an [October 2019 interview](#).

He also engendered good will by opening the seminary's Riley Center, a conference center with hotel-style lodging, in February 2021 to some individuals whose homes lacked heat during a prolonged [winter storm](#).

Challenges with finances and turnover

Greenway had to deal with financial challenges during his three and a half years as president. In spring 2020, Southwestern Seminary made [25 percent spending cuts](#), which included laying off some faculty and staff.

Greenway's time as president was marked by significant turnover in faculty, administration and staff. Critics asserted he seemed to rely heavily on bringing to Southwestern personnel from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., where he was dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Ministry.

He also garnered criticism for his involvement in—and subsequent defense of—a [statement](#) by the six Southern Baptist seminaries declaring critical race theory and intersectionality incompatible with the Baptist Faith & Message.

Greenway, a native of Frostproof, Fla., completed his undergraduate degree at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., earned his Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary and his Ph.D. in evangelism and apologetics from Southern Seminary. He also earned a master's degree in nonprofit administration from the Mendoza College of Business at the University of Notre Dame.

He is a former president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and chair for the Lifeway Christian Ministries board. He also has served on the SBC's committee on order of business, is a former vice chair of the committee on nomination and has served as assistant parliamentarian at the SBC annual meetings.

‘Challenging times’

Greenway reflected on his time as president of Southwestern Seminary: “These days are incredibly challenging in the life of our denomination. They are also challenging times for academic institutions, particularly theological seminaries.

“In February 2019, Carla and I accepted the call to come back ‘home’ to Southwestern Seminary with an understanding of these challenges, but also with the strong desire to be part of the solution. What we failed to appreciate was the enormity of the reputational, legal and financial realities that would welcome us to the Dome—only to be compounded by a global pandemic unlike anything we have ever experienced before.

“We have done our best to serve Southern Baptists by helping position our seminary for the future, but much, much work remains to be done. Nevertheless, in the Providence of God, we sense a release from our duties here.”

Referring to his new position with the SBC International Mission Board, Greenway said: “We will continue to serve Southern Baptists as we have throughout the course of our lives and ministry. We believe our next assignment is not a departure from but a continuation along the journey God has always had us walk.

“As we look forward to beginning a new chapter with Southern Baptists’ favorite entity, the International Mission Board, we ask for your prayers for us in this season of transition, and we pledge our continued prayers and support for our beloved ‘crown jewel.’”

EDITOR’S NOTE: A paragraph was added Sept. 27 to provide additional information from the IMB. Additional information was added Sept. 28 after the board announced David Dockery as acting president and

O.S. Hawkins as senior adviser and after Greenway announced he would not be moving to the IMB post.