

# Paige Patterson stripped of seminary titles and benefits

May 31, 2018

FORT WORTH—Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary cut its remaining ties to its former president, Paige Patterson, stripping him of titles and benefits after the board of trustees' executive committee confirmed "new information" about how he mishandled rape allegations at a school he served previously.

On May 30, the executive committee "unanimously resolved to terminate Dr. Paige Patterson, effective immediately, removing all the benefits, rights and privileges" the full board had granted one week earlier when it [removed him as president](#) after a 13-hour closed-door session but named him president emeritus with compensation.

The committee also rescinded the board's invitation for Patterson and his wife, Dorothy, to continue to live on campus as "theologians-in-residence" at the Baptist Heritage Center.

The board took its earlier action in response to Patterson's comments about spousal abuse and women, determining to "move in the direction of new leadership for the benefit of the future mission of the seminary."

However, the board's decision to continue to allow Patterson to live on campus and hold honorary positions with compensation sparked significant [backlash](#).

## Southeastern Seminary incident

# reported

The same day the full board convened, the [Washington Post reported](#) Patterson allegedly instructed a woman who told him she had been raped not to report the assault to police. The woman said she was sexually assaulted while a student at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., when Patterson was president there.



On May 28, Megan Lively [tweeted](#): “I am the woman you read about, #SEBTS 2003, not afraid, ashamed, or fearful. I am proud to be #SBC, bc of how many have responded with compassion & love. Our history isn’t our future. Ephesians 4:30-32, Romans 8. Please join us in praying tomorrow. #PaigePatterson #sbc18 #matthew5.”

At the earlier meeting, the board affirmed a motion that said in part, “evidence exists that Dr. Patterson has complied with reporting laws regarding assault and abuse.”

## Trustee executive committee acts

However, the executive committee met a week later and issued a public [statement](#):

“During the May 30, 2018, executive committee meeting of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary board of trustees, new information confirmed this morning was presented regarding the handling of an allegation of sexual abuse against a student during Dr. Paige

Patterson's presidency at another institution and resulting issues connected with statements to the board of trustees that are inconsistent with SWBTS's biblically informed core values.

"Deeming the information demanded immediate action and could not be deferred to a regular meeting of the board, based on the details presented, the executive committee unanimously resolved to terminate Dr. Paige Patterson, effective immediately, removing all the benefits, rights and privileges provided by the May 22-23 board meeting, including the title of president emeritus, the invitation to reside at the Baptist Heritage Center as theologian-in-residence and ongoing compensation.

"Under the leadership of Interim President Dr. Jeffrey Bingham, SWBTS remains committed to its calling to assist the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention by biblically educating God-called men and women for ministries that fulfill the Great Commission and glorify God.

"Further, the seminary stands against all forms of abuse and grieves for individuals wounded by abuse. Today, Dr. Bingham made it clear that SWBTS denounces all abusive behavior, any behavior that enables abuse, any failure to protect the abused and any failure to safeguard those who are vulnerable to abuse. Additionally, Dr. Bingham called for the SWBTS community to join the Body of Christ in praying for the healing of all individuals affected by abuse."

The executive committee statement does not indicate the nature of the new information or how it was confirmed.

Charles Patrick, vice president for communications at Southwestern Seminary, confirmed the institution mentioned in the executive committee statement was Southeastern Seminary. Trustee leaders will meet with Patterson when he returns to the United States from Germany June 2 to work out details of his severance.

Kevin Ueckert, chair of the board of trustees and pastor of First Baptist Church in Georgetown, was on study leave and could not be reached by phone. He had not responded to an email with follow-up questions before this article was posted.

## Southern Baptists react

Denny Burk, professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Boyce College in Louisville, Ky., posted an [online statement](#) late evening May 30: "I am very grateful that the trustees chose to act with moral clarity. If there was some question about that before, there can be no question now."

Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, [tweeted](#): "Let's pray for the students, faculty, and trustees of @swbts right now. They have a bright future, but need our prayers tonight."

Patterson was an architect of what supporters called the "conservative resurgence" in the Southern Baptist Convention and what critics considered its "fundamentalist takeover," along with Paul Pressler, who is facing a [lawsuit alleging sexual abuse](#).

Both Southwestern Seminary and Patterson are named in the suit, which alleges the "conservative resurgence" provided Pressler access to victims of molestation. In April 17 court documents, the seminary denied the claims.

Patterson is scheduled to deliver the convention sermon at the SBC annual meeting at Dallas in less than two weeks. If he withdraws or if messengers to the convention demand a substitute, the alternate preacher is Kie Bowman, pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin and a trustee of Southwestern Seminary.

*(This article will updated when additional information becomes available.)*