

# Southwestern Seminary announces layoffs

October 27, 2022

FORT WORTH (BP)—Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary confirmed Oct. 27 it has initiated layoffs a week after announcing steps to rectify a financial environment that could “quickly escalate to a crisis.”

“As part of the previously announced intention to implement organizational restructuring, including budget reductions, at the direction of the board of trustees, the interim administration has informed certain staff their employment has been ended,” a statement read. “These have been extremely difficult decisions as we seek to address our current challenges.”

When asked if information on the number of affected staff could be released, a seminary spokesman responded, “Not at this time.” Baptist Press was unable to confirm whether more layoffs are forthcoming.

“We recognize the disruption that this causes for these staff members and their families,” the statement continued. “There is certainly no joy in having to make these decisions at this time. Appropriate severance is being offered to affected employees.”

Interim President David S. Dockery presented the “organization restructuring” to trustees on the second day of their Oct. 17-18 gathering on Seminary Hill. It was the group’s first gathering since the resignation of former president Adam W. Greenway.

“The [Southwestern Seminary] community is praying not only for the Lord’s provision and favor but for genuine renewal to come to the Southwestern campus,” Dockery told trustees on Oct. 18.

## **What restructuring includes**

The restructuring includes a reduction of the operational and personnel budget by at least 10 percent, representing approximately \$3.6 million. Those cuts will come primarily from the area of institutional support, beginning with programming over personnel, Dockery said.

A years-long evaluation of the seminary's 200-acre "campus footprint and its optimal use" has led to placing the B.H. Carroll Park Apartments on the market. Other parcels surrounding the main campus may follow suit, Dockery said.

Trustees spent Oct. 17 in closed session reviewing seminary financials and, said Chairman Danny Roberts, "had access to any and all information they requested."

"As a result, we are requesting the auditors to do some additional work to carefully examine all expenditures, especially those which raised concerns," he said in the group's open session Oct. 18.

O.S. Hawkins, serving as senior advisor and ambassador-at-large since retiring as Guidestone president, commended trustees as "the most engaged group of men and women I have ever seen."

## **Seeking clarity on new financial guardrails**

On Oct. 24, Baptist Press sent a list of follow-up questions to Southwestern Seminary that requested clarity on the new financial guardrails and "multi-faceted matters" mentioned by Dockery that led to the current financial position as well as if details from the audits would be provided.

The seminary responded: "Southwestern Seminary trustees continue to work with the interim administration in executing the actions taken by the board during its meeting. As it is appropriate to share new developments, we will provide that information.

"We were delighted to host the largest recent fall Preview Day in some years on Oct. 21, welcoming more than 300 prospective students and their families, and culminating with more than 650 participants in our fall festival.

"Our Admissions team is aggressively recruiting students to study with our first-class faculty of scholar-ministers who not only teach their subjects with excellence, but help our students live their calling as Gospel ministers during their studies. Our campus community has been infused with multiple prayer gatherings as students, faculty, and staff humbly seek God's blessings under the theme verse of Psalm 90:17."