

# **Southwestern Seminary cuts programs and spending**

April 9, 2020

FORT WORTH (BP)—Meeting via video conference April 7, the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary board of trustees approved structural changes including the elimination of the School of Preaching, which is being folded into the School of Theology.

Trustees also postponed adoption of the fiscal year 2021 budget until mid-July, if necessary, and the school acknowledged it has instituted budget cuts of about 25 percent, including faculty and staff layoffs.

The trustees also authorized the administration to make distributions from the seminary's unrestricted endowment. The decisions were part of the seminary's response to the severe economic downturn related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We're going to come through this," Adam W. Greenway said during the seminary president's report to the trustees. "We're going to come through this stronger than ever before. We're going to come through this in a way that I believe is only going to glorify God."

Like many educational institutions, Southwestern Seminary has been forced by the COVID-19 pandemic to make rapid adjustments, including the closure of campus and moving all classes online for the spring and summer terms, as well as significant long-term changes.

## **School of Preaching folded back into**

# School of Theology



(Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Photo)

Trustees voted to rescind, effective immediately, a motion adopted by the board in 2015 to establish the School of Preaching as a separate school of the seminary. All areas of responsibility assigned to the School of Preaching—including faculty, curricula, degrees, centers and programs—have been reassigned to the School of Theology.

David L. Allen, who has served as dean of the School of Preaching, will continue in his faculty role as distinguished professor of preaching and as director of the Southwestern Center for Text-Driven Preaching, overseeing the seminary’s Preaching Source online resources, as well as conferencing and events related to preaching and preachers, Greenway said.

Other cuts were not detailed during the trustees’ meeting. But in an April 6 statement, the seminary announced it was discontinuing its archaeology program “as part of campus-wide budgetary reductions.” The seminary stated it no longer will offer degrees in archaeology “because they are incongruent with our mission to maximize resources in the training of pastors and other ministers.”

## **Postpone vote on 2021 budget**

John Rayburn, chair of the trustees' business administration committee, recommended adoption of the fiscal year 2021 budget be postponed until "on or before July 15." The budget normally is adopted during the trustees' spring meeting. Rayburn said postponement was necessary because "the coming months are hard to predict" amid the pandemic.

"We've decided we need a little more time to watch what happens with this and all that's going on in our world today before we can really come up with a realistic, informed budget," he said.

Southwestern Seminary's fiscal year 2020 budget is \$34,815,439. In an April 8 statement released to Baptist Press, the seminary said it would achieve "budgetary reductions of approximately 25 percent campus-wide through a combination of faculty and staff position deletions, furloughs, and discontinuation of certain academic programs. These actions realign expenditures with reduced revenue projections while undergirding mission-critical academic programs and continuing the institution's renewal begun last year."

Trustees also authorized the seminary's administration to "execute special endowment distributions as needed on or before Dec. 31, 2021, up to the total amount of the unrestricted portion of the seminary's endowment," which was last reported as \$13,310,454.

"This is to give our administration the flexibility to deal with whatever comes up that they need to deal with," Rayburn said.

## **Changes in faculty and degrees**

The board elected three faculty members who had been serving under presidential appointment—Jonathan W. Arnold as associate professor of

church history and historical theology, Chris S. Osborne as professor of preaching and pastoral ministry and Carl J. Bradford as assistant professor of evangelism.

Trustees approved four undergraduate degrees in Scarborough College, four graduate degrees in the Jack D. Terry School of Educational Ministries and one master's degree in the School of Church Music and Worship. They also voted to revise four master's degrees.

The trustees also approved a recommendation to amend the seminary's bylaws. They adopted the [Nashville Statement](#) on biblical sexuality for the first time and reaffirmed the [Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy](#) and the [Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood](#) "as official guiding documents" expressing the seminary's "convictional standards, expectations, and beliefs," and functioning as "proper interpretations" of the [Baptist Faith and Message 2000](#), which serves as the seminary's confession of faith and is signed by faculty.

Philip Levant, pastor of Iglesia Bautista La Vid in Hurst, was reelected as chairman of the board of trustees; Danny Roberts, executive pastor of North Richland Hills Baptist Church in North Richland Hills, was reelected as vice chairman; and Jamie Green, retired speech-language pathologist in Katy, was reelected as secretary.

In his report to the trustees, President Adam Greenway assured the board that "when challenges come to Southwestern Seminary, Southwestern Seminary always stands ready to meet the challenge."

"It does mean a call to difficult decisions. It does mean a call to fiscal prudence. It does mean a call toward making cuts today that will enable us to not merely survive but to thrive moving forward," Greenway said.