

Baylor implements all 105 Pepper Hamilton recommendations

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WACO—Baylor University's board of regents announced the school has completed foundational implementation of the 105 recommendations made by the law firm that investigated its response to sexual assault reports.

But both Linda Livingstone, who assumes office as Baylor's 15th president June 1, and Interim President David Garland emphasized many of the improvements involve ongoing processes—not a once-and-for-all checklist of accomplished tasks.

✘ Ron Murff, who completed his time as chair of the Baylor University board of regents, responds to reporters' questions after the regents' spring meeting. (Photo / Robert Rogers / Baylor Marketing and Communication)The board made its announcement almost a year after regents removed Ken Starr from his role as president, fired head football coach Art Briles and sanctioned Athletic Director Ian McCaw. McCaw subsequently resigned as athletic director, and Starr also resigned—first as chancellor and later as a law school professor.

At their spring meeting, regents also recognized Garland for his service and created a scholarship fund in his honor, elected former Baylor Scott & White President and CEO Joel Allison as board chair and adopted a \$621.7 million budget for the next school year.

✘ David Garland has served as Baylor University's interim president the past year. Baylor's board of regents created a scholarship fund at Truett

Theological Seminary in honor of his service. (Photo / Robert Rogers / Baylor Marketing and Communication)“My top priority during my interim presidency was to implement these expansive corrective actions that demonstrate Baylor’s firm institution-wide commitment to improving our processes, communication, training and response,” Garland said. “We want to re-ignite a culture of respect and character that reflect’s Baylor’s Christian mission.”

Regents announced the “structural completion” of all 105 recommendations made by attorneys at the Pepper Hamilton firm after an investigation into Baylor’s Title IX compliance and response to sexual assault allegations. While “the infrastructure and foundation are in place,” some aspects of implementation remain ongoing, according to a statement from the university.

Audit report to be released this summer

The investigating attorneys formerly with Pepper Hamilton—Gina Maisto Smith and Leslie M. Gomez, who are now with the Cozen O’Connor law firm—will conduct audits of the work completed by Baylor’s administration, faculty and regents, and the university expects to release a written report sometime this summer.

“It’s important to note that for some of the recommendations, there is no completion point, as they speak to an overall culture of compliance and commitment to ongoing initiatives, not necessarily a one-time ‘to-do’ list,” Garland said. “These recommendations will be ongoing as we continue to make them operational throughout campus.”

✘ Linda Livingstone, who becomes president of Baylor University June 1, emphasized “building the culture” in keeping with the Pepper Hamilton recommendations will take time. (Photo / Robert Rogers / Baylor Marketing and Communication) Livingstone—who will become Baylor’s first female

president in its 172-year history—made the same point, noting putting improved policies and procedures in place is, in some respects, “the easy part,” but “building the culture” of an institution takes time.

Baylor will continue to make improvements based on the recommendations not just for the sake of completing tasks, but because “it’s the right thing to do,” she said.

Regents establish Truett scholarship to honor Garland

Regents established a scholarship fund in honor of Garland, who has served as the university’s interim president the past year. He first served as interim president from August 2008 to May 2010, and he was interim provost from July 2014 to June 2015.

The \$5 million fund will provide scholarships for students at Baylor’s Truett Theological Seminary. Garland served as the seminary’s dean from 2007 to 2015 and will return to teach there next spring.

Between now and the spring 2018 semester, the university granted Garland a research sabbatical. He is working on a commentary on the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Romans—an effort he called “the capstone” to his career as a New Testament scholar and a “spiritual lifeline” to him personally in recent months.

Other regents business

✘ Joel Allison In addition to electing Allison as chair of the board to succeed Ron Murff of Dallas, the regents elected Daniel H. Chapman of Dallas, Jerry K. Clements of Austin and Mark Hurd of Redwood Shores, Calif., as vice chairs.

Drayton McLane Jr. of Temple will remain on the board as regent emeritus. He is a founding member of Bears for Leadership Reform, a group of

alumni and donors who have criticized the board of regents for perceived lack of accountability and transparency.

The board welcomed Melissa Purdy Mines of Austin as an alumni-elected regent. She is a member of First Baptist Church in Austin and a vice president at Bulldog Success.

The board elected three new at-large regents—Jill Manning of Dallas and Alicia D.H. Monroe of Missouri City to three-year terms and Julie Hermansen Turner to a two-year term. Both Manning and Turner are members of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas. Monroe is a member of Windsor Village United Methodist Church in Houston.

Faculty regents are Andrea Dixon with the Hankamer School of Business and Gaynor Yancey, director of the Center for Family and Community Ministries in the Diana R. Garland School of Social Work.

Student regents are Hannah Vecseri, a junior from Houston, and Will Cassara, a sophomore from Keller.