

Baylor University starts presidential search

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was updated Sept. 13 to include a response from the Baylor Line Foundation.

A Texas Baptist pastor from Arlington will serve on the search committee seeking a new president for Baylor University.



Dennis Wiles, pastor of First Baptist Church in Arlington and a university regent, is part of a committee that will enlist a firm to help with the national search for Baylor's 15th president.

Ronald Murff, chair of the Baylor board of regents, announced the presidential search committee appointments Sept. 8. Subsequently, the Baylor Line Foundation—formerly the Baylor Alumni Association—issued a [statement](#) saying the search committee “seems to represent a narrow segment of the Baylor family.”

Bob Brewton of Houston, president and principal owner of Brewton Investment Corp., will chair the search committee. He was named a Baylor Distinguished Alumnus in 2011.

Vice chair is Andrea Dixon, the Frank M. and Floy Smith Holloway Endowed Professor in Marketing and executive director of the Center for

Professional Selling and Keller Center for Research in Baylor's Hankamer School of Business.

Murff characterized Brewton and Dixon as "extraordinary people of faith and leaders in their respective fields."



Alumni representatives on the search committee are Drayton McLane Jr. of Temple, chair of the McLane Group; Richard Welday of Dallas, president of AT&T AdWorks; and Kathy Wills Wright of Arlington, Va., a former Baylor administrator and Baylor regent.

Bill Nelson of Waco, associate dean of the Honors College at Baylor and senior lecturer and clinical professor in the Honors Program, will represent faculty, and Jonathan Siktberg, a senior Baylor Business Fellow from Nashville, Tenn., will represent students.

Kevin Jackson of Waco, vice president for student life at Baylor, and Marjorie Ellis of Waco, executive director of Career and Professional Development at Baylor, will represent staff and administration on the committee.

Regent representatives on the search committee are Robert Beauchamp of Houston, chairman and chief executive officer of BMC Software; and William Simon of Rogers, Ark., former president and CEO of Walmart U.S.

"We are grateful to these thoughtful and devoted servant leaders who represent each of the major constituencies of the university," Murff said. "They have agreed to give of their time to oversee the important responsibility of identifying and recommending our next president."

However, after its Sept. 10 quarterly meeting, the Baylor Line Foundation released a statement critiquing the selections as representative of a “a narrow segment of the Baylor family” and not representative of “some of the key academic units at Baylor or of alumni without close ties to the board of regents.”

The foundation board insisted it was not criticizing “the qualified individuals named to the committee.”

“However, there is a clear need for more representation by the tenured faculty at the university in order to create a search committee more in line with the principles of shared governance historically followed by top-tier private universities,” the foundation’s board stated.

“The inclusion of strong, independent nonaffiliated alumni might also offer a broader perspective and deeper candidate pool. The structure of the committee seems to represent another effort or attempt by the board of regents to maintain control and limit open discussion and transparency, a continuing trend that we also see with the makeup of the university’s two Title IX implementation task forces.”

The Baylor Line Foundation was formed as part of a [legal settlement](#) between the Baylor Alumni Association and the university.

Under terms of the settlement, the alumni association agreed to remain an independent nonprofit entity and change its name. The renamed entity was granted authority to continue to publish the *Baylor Line* with editorial and operational independence.



David Garland David Garland, former dean of Baylor's Truett Theological Seminary and professor of Christian Scriptures, was named interim president of Baylor in June. He will continue to lead the university throughout the search process and until a new president is installed, Murff said.

"As we commence this presidential search, we extend our deepest appreciation to our interim president, Dr. David Garland," he said. "The board and our Baylor family are thankful he answered the call to lead the university in this interim period, and we have full confidence in his exceptional leadership and faithful stewardship of Baylor University."

In May, the board of regents removed Ken Starr from his role as Baylor's president in the wake of an investigation into Baylor's handling of sexual violence reports. Within a few days, Starr also stepped down as chancellor. Last month, he also resigned his post as the Louise L. Morrison Chair of Constitutional Law at the Baylor Law School.