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Editor: Greg Warner
Associate Editor: Bob Allen
Phone: (904) 262-6626
Fax: (904) 262-7745

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Fired seminary dean denies charges she broke confidentiality

By Mark Wingfield

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- A dean at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary who was fired in March after publicly criticizing the school's president has issued a statement denying charges that her actions were inappropriate.

In her first public statement since her March 20 firing as dean of the seminary's Carver School of Church Social Work, Diana Garland asserted April 17 that she did not release confidential information, as both President Albert Mohler and trustee Chairman Rick White have alleged.

Mohler fired Garland as dean after she told students that limitations on faculty hiring imposed by Mohler place the Carver School's future in "serious jeopardy." She continues to teach in a tenured faculty position at the school in Louisville, Ky.

Garland told the students that in blocking the nomination of a prospective professor, David Sherwood, Mohler had established new hiring criteria, in addition to the seminary's official governing documents, that make it impossible to hire qualified faculty.

Both Sherwood and Mohler later confirmed that Sherwood was rejected over his belief that women may sometimes be called to pastoral roles.

An open letter from White, pastor of First Baptist Church of Franklin, Tenn., and a response from Garland appeared in the April 18 issue of the Western Recorder, newspaper of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

In his letter, White said "the sole reason" Garland was asked to resign was "that she took an internal, administrative conflict which Dr. Mohler and others were seeking to resolve with her and made it public in a meeting with students, faculty and invited media."

"If you are a layperson who manages a business, you could not allow one of your managers to publicly advocate positions in conflict with yours and to encourage employees to pressure you to change," White continued.

In her response, Garland disputed White's business analogy.

"In chairman White's letter, he suggests that an academic institution is a business and that deans are managers that need to agree with the boss," she wrote. "But seminaries are not businesses any more than churches

are.

"We use business principles, but we must be guided by the Holy Spirit and the Bible. A dean in a seminary is responsible to the students and the churches who send them, the faculty and the trustees, as well as to the president," she said.

Garland said her remarks to social work students were appropriate and none of the information she shared was confidential.

"Students and faculty are included in the search process for new faculty members, and I had a responsibility to report to them the outcome of these processes," she wrote. "The Organization of Student Social Workers had a meeting scheduled on March 20, and they had invited me to report to them the outcome of the faculty search process at that time, which I did. None of what I shared was confidential; I simply recounted the processes of the institution, which are supposed to be open."

Garland also said it was Mohler, not she, who told the media that the role of women in ministry was an issue in the case. "My statement did not name any of the president's criteria, including women in ministry, because I did not think it was right to speak for the president or to give the reasons he had found Dr. Sherwood to be unacceptable."

Garland said she was fired simply for asking the administration to be faithful to the seminary's governing documents and established procedures for faculty hiring.

In his letter, White stated that the "underlying issue behind the conflict" between Mohler and Garland is the president's position that women may not serve as senior pastors in churches.

But Garland said her primary concern was not women in ministry, but that published guidelines for faculty hiring be followed.

Citing the seminary's Faculty/Staff Manual, she said: "My primary concern ... was the president's new requirements that were in conflict with the basic guideline that 'The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary must strive to be a community of teaching and learning in which freedom of mind and spirit are accepted as fundamental under the lordship of Jesus Christ.' "

"Within the confessional guidelines of Christian faith and with a deep respect for one another's differing ideas, a seminary must be a place where persons can respectfully hold differing views and explore God's truth together," Garland said.

White said the president has the right to ask prospective faculty members any questions he deems appropriate. Garland said she agreed with that statement, but "if there are going to be absolute criteria which must be met by faculty candidates, they need to be clearly spelled out in our seminary policies."

Transporting faculty candidates to the campus for interviews, only to have them rejected based on previously unspecified rules, is a waste of Cooperative Program money, Garland said.

Garland said she opposed Mohler because she has "taken seriously the stewardship entrusted to me by God and by Southern Baptists as dean of the Carver School of Church Social Work."

"It would have been far less costly for me personally simply to resign. I have acted in what I believe are the best interests of Carver School, of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, of the churches we serve and of the ministries for which we prepare students."

Golden Gate trustees adopt budget that will require 'belt-tightening'

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (ABP) -- Trustees of Golden Gate Baptist Theological approved a \$5.6 million budget that administrators say will require "significant belt-tightening" at the campus in Mill Valley, Calif.

Among the six seminaries owned by the Southern Baptist Convention, all but Golden Gate will receive increases in denominational funding in 1995-96, President William Crews told trustees meeting in Mill Valley April 10-12. Golden Gate, meanwhile, stands to lose about \$171,000 in income from the SBC's Cooperative Program unified budget.

That is because funding from the SBC is based on full-time enrollment at the seminary's main campus in Mill Valley, which has declined in recent years, and does not consider student counts at other campuses operated by the seminary in California, the Pacific Northwest and Arizona, Crews said.

The seminary plans to recover the shortfall by reducing administrative costs and through a projected 5 percent increase in enrollment, Jim Stephenson, vice president for business affairs, told trustees.

The new budget includes no salary or wage increases. "That's a tradeoff that we're making" to maintain academic programs, Stephenson explained.

The budget calls for student fees to be increased by 10 percent, from \$800 to \$880 per semester for students from Southern Baptist churches. Non-Southern Baptists will pay \$2,200 per semester, up from \$2,000 during the current year.

The new budget is 1 percent higher than the current year's spending plan, but it includes costs for a new seminary center in Arizona and the addition of a continuing education program.

Trustees reaffirmed their executive committee's March 10 vote electing David McCormick as director of the new Arizona campus. McCormick, a Southern Baptist missionary to Hong Kong since 1975, is expected to be on-site in late summer or early fall.

The Arizona campus, based at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, officially opens in mid-April, offering the master of divinity and master of arts in Christian education degrees.

The campus is a cooperative effort of Golden Gate and Grand Canyon University. The Arizona Southern Baptist Convention Executive Board and Baptist Foundation of Arizona are participating in start-up costs.

Course offerings at the Arizona campus will be scheduled so that a master of divinity degree can be completed in four years and a master of arts in Christian education degree can be completed in three years.

In addition, with accreditation of the Arizona campus and following a prescribed course of study, a student could complete both a bachelor of arts or science degree from Grand Canyon and a master of divinity degree from Golden Gate in six years, rather than the normal seven years.

Golden Gate also operates a teaching site in New Mexico and nearly 60 Ethnic Leadership Development centers across the western United States. Golden Gate and the Baptist General Convention of Colorado are negotiating to jointly open a campus in the Rocky Mountain region in 1996.

In other business, George Mullinax, pastor of Western Branch Baptist Church in Portsmouth, Va., was elected trustee chairman, replacing California pastor Rob Zinn, who was ineligible for re-election.

Darrell Gabbard, pastor of Dublin (Ohio) Baptist Church was elected vice chairman and Barrett Duke, pastor of First Baptist Church of Highland Ranch, Littleton, Colo., was elected recording secretary.

Study says freshmen at 'party' schools quickly pick up binge drinking habits

BOSTON (ABP) -- Freshmen entering colleges and universities with high rates of binge drinking among students quickly adopt the drinking habits of their peers, according to a recent study.

The study, released by the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, surveyed 720 freshmen entering 13 colleges across the U.S. earlier identified as having high rates of binge drinking. The students were interviewed within a few weeks of arriving on campus and again after 12 weeks on campus. The schools involved in the study were not identified.

The study defined binge drinking as consuming at least five drinks in a row by men or four by women in the two weeks before the survey.

In the survey, 41 percent of entering freshmen who said they did not binge drink in high school began bingeing shortly after arriving at college. Only 6 percent of the students said they anticipated they would get drunk at a party during their freshman year, but 50 percent reported weeks later they had gotten drunk one or more times in the previous month.

Four out of five freshmen at the schools said they had at least one drink of alcohol and 68 percent binged before the end of the first semester. Half (54 percent) of those did so within one week of arriving on campus and 45 percent binged as part of a drinking game.

The study linked binge drinking with other problems freshmen face. Of frequent binge drinkers -- those who had binged three or more times in the past two weeks -- 82 percent reported having a hangover, 60 percent doing something they regret, 57 percent forgetting where they were or what they did, 55 percent missing a class and 38 percent engaging in unplanned sexual activity.

The study also identified "secondhand" effects on non-bingers who attend the schools. Of freshmen living in dormitories, fraternities or sororities at high-binge-rate campuses, 87 percent said they had experienced at least one effect of another student's bingeing. Those effects included having study or sleep interrupted (67 percent), having to take care of a drunken student (57 percent), being insulted or humiliated (34 percent) and, among women, experiencing an unwanted sexual advance (29 percent).

The study said underage drinking laws are no deterrent to drinking on campuses. All the respondents (100 percent) said it was very easy for freshmen to get alcohol on campus, while only 12 percent have fake ID's that can be used to buy alcohol.

Most students choose a college based on its academic reputation, but more than half consider an active social life important to their decision, the study said. "It's time to apply a higher standard in accepting a college's invitation to attend their school," said Henry Wechsler, director of College Alcohol Studies at the Harvard School of Public Health, who performed the study.

"Students want to have a good time but don't need their quality of life or education jeopardized by drunken classmates," Wechsler said. "We must pay more attention to the students who no longer think that repeatedly getting drunk should be a college rite of passage."

Wechsler recommended that parents and students examine a school's alcohol record before saying "yes" to the college of their choice. Among questions that parents can ask are:

- Are there alcohol-free dorms on campus?
- How well attended are Friday classes?
- How easy is it for a freshman to get a new roommate if the one assigned is abusing alcohol?
- How much is the library used on weekends?

- What is there to do on weekends besides drinking?
- Can students who are 21 drink in the dorm?
- Are kegs allowed in fraternities?

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-- By Bob Allen

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