

Financial irregularities reportedly the focus of May 30 special called meeting of Southwestern Seminary trustees

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP and local reports) – Documents related to reports delivered April 17-18 to the Southwestern Seminary trustee board and its executive committee will be the focus of a special called Zoom trustee meeting on May 30.

Those reports contain allegations of credit card and identity fraud and misappropriation of donor funds that have garnered the attention of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Copies of reports to board members and the board's executive committee as well as a letter sent to trustees outlining reasons for the called meeting were emailed to a Baptist Press (BP) reporter through an anonymous account.

BP reached out to trustee Aaron Sligar, who was mentioned in the documents as having filed the reports, for authentication. Sligar is lead pastor of Living River Chapel in Sutton, W.V.

"An anonymous source leaked the report in question, which is a working document within the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Board of Trustees," he emailed BP. "While our review is ongoing, this document was never intended for the press or public; as such, it does not represent an official statement from the board. Please direct any questions regarding the report to Danny Roberts, Chairman, SWBTS Board of Trustees."

BP contacted Southwestern Seminary and received the following statement from Roberts and the Executive Committee of the

Board of Trustees:

Southwestern Seminary has inherited and endured a challenging period for more than eight months following the resignation of the former president. Out of a desire to balance charity to the former president with a need to address actions and decisions that have brought us to the seminary's current state, the board of trustees has disclosed limited information to the Southern Baptist public while it has fulfilled its fiduciary duty to carefully evaluate certain financial matters.

Unfortunately, some individuals have questioned the integrity of the board's processes and actions. While it would be imprudent at this time to answer each claim that is now in circulation in various platforms, we assert claims of inappropriate activities of the board officers, executive committee, and/or named staff are without merit, and the board will release all relevant and appropriate information following a special-called meeting of the board of trustees to be held on May 30 to address these matters. Additionally, as has been previously reported, the Department of Justice is investigating the Southern Baptist Convention concerning sexual abuse. The seminary is cooperating fully in this matter.

A spokesperson in the Dallas office of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation told BP that they could not confirm an investigation into financial matters at Southwestern Seminary.

Another report on this matter can be obtained at Baptist News Global, the former Associated Baptist Press.

Representing Mississippi Baptists on the Southwestern Seminary Board of Trustees is David F. Maron of Madison, whose expires this year and who will be replaced on the Board by Barbara C. McMillin, president of Blue Mountain Christian University

in Blue Mountain, which is affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention.