

SBU TRUSTEES ELECT RICHARD J. MELSON, PH.D. AS 26TH PRESIDENT



Southwest Baptist University's Board of Trustees unanimously elected [Richard J. Melson, Ph.D.](#), as the 26th president effective Sept. 7.

"Dr. Melson is a conservative evangelical Christian leader with experience in Christian higher education, pastoral ministry and executive leadership," said Dr. Eddie Bumpers, chair of the [SBU Board of Trustees](#). "He is deeply committed to providing a Christ-centered education and wholeheartedly aligns with SBU's mission, vision, values, and statement of faith. He is poised to bring innovation and creativity for positioning SBU to thrive during a challenging time for higher education, particularly Christian higher education."

Dr. Melson was introduced to SBU faculty, staff, students and guests during an announcement event on the Bolivar campus today (Aug. 20) after an Aug. 19 meeting in which the unanimous vote of the board affirmed the unanimous recommendation of the presidential search committee.

"We are eager to meet each of you, to hear your story, and learn what God is doing in your life," Dr. Melson said. "It is our desire to lead SBU into the future with a shared vision, unite the SBU family, and shepherd, love, and serve you. Let us rise to the challenges before us, take hold of the opportunities that await us and partner together to lead SBU to its greatest days ahead."

Dr. Melson has served as vice president of advancement and associate professor of business administration at Cedarville University in Cedarville, Ohio, since 2016. He served as vice president of advancement and external relations at Houghton College and president and CEO of the Willard J. Houghton Foundation from 2012-2016. At both universities, he led teams through major fundraising campaigns with record-breaking results.

He has served in senior leadership positions in business, healthcare, higher education and ministry, including serving on the pastoral staff with John Piper at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minn., and at the Resurgence and Mars Hill Church in Seattle, Wash. He served previously as director of admissions and student recruitment with Dr. R. Albert Mohler Jr. at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Dr. Melson has a doctoral degree in leadership studies from Dallas Baptist University. He holds a master's degree from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a bachelor of arts degree from Murray State University. He also has completed post-doctoral studies at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education in educational management and advancement leadership.



He and his wife, Tammy, have been married for more than 33 years and have three children. Son and daughter-in-law, Jon and Marisa, live and work in Los Angeles, Calif. Daughter Hannah is a nurse at Dayton Children's Hospital in Dayton, Ohio. Son Matthew will be a freshman at Bolivar High School and loves all things sports and science.

"Tammy and I are very excited about the next chapter for our lives and for SBU," Dr. Melson said. "We are grateful to God that he has brought us together for such a time as this. When I read the SBU mission statement, I was struck by each word and its alignment with

our commitments and convictions. We are called to serve in a caring, academic community and are passionate about preparing servant leaders to impact the world for Christ.”

Dr. Melson was selected from a pool of about 30 applicants in a nationwide search.

“It has been an honor to chair this committee and serve alongside my fellow trustees and SBU representatives,” said the Rev. David Brown, chair of the presidential search committee. “My prayer from the beginning has been for our committee to have unity throughout the search process. I am so pleased to tell you that this prayer was answered. The Lord has brought us an individual whose strength emanates from his faith and grounding in Jesus Christ.”

What others are saying about Richard J. Melson, Ph.D.

“I have worked closely with Rick and have kept up with him over the years. He will be a great president. He has integrity and is a gifted man spiritually, relationally and academically.”

— Kevin Knowlton, trustee and chair of the Advancement Committee of Houghton College in Houghton, N.Y.

“I pray God’s blessing upon Southwest Baptist University and its new president, Rick Melson. Rick is a leader of great promise, and he and Tammy are such a gracious couple. May God greatly bless the entire SBU family.”

— Dr. R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“I have prayed for Rick to be given the right opportunity to stretch his amazing wings. Rick knows and loves God. He trusts Jesus Christ as the Lord of the Universe. You are hiring a God-centered, Christ-exalting, Bible-based servant.”

— Dr. John Piper, pastor emeritus of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minn.

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