

SBU TRUSTEES APPROVE \$60.8 MILLION BUDGET

BOLIVAR, Mo. — Southwest Baptist University is well-positioned to withstand the global disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, SBU President Dr. Eric A. Turner told the SBU Board of Trustees.

“While the higher education industry is experiencing a systemic collapse, I think there is a hope and a promise for SBU,” he told the Board during its May 19 meeting. “Regardless of what anyone says, this University has not strayed from its mission of being a Christ-centered, caring academic community. I will put us up against anyone.”

Another strength, he said, is the University’s diverse academic programming, ranging from the associate level to the doctoral level with market-sensitive academic programs appealing to a broad constituency.

The University’s Strategic Planning process that began in Fall 2018 continues to move forward, though Turner said priorities and timelines have changed.

“With the punctuated uncertainty related to COVID-19, the focus of the University efforts for all of us — trustees, administration, faculty and staff — are focused on strategic goal number 10: Utilize thoughtful planning and processes that support institutional sustainability, efficiency, and effectiveness, for today and in the future,” he said. “Goal number 10, ensuring institutional sustainability, is the business at hand.”

Dr. Turner praised the University’s faculty, staff and students for a quick pivot to a remote-learning environment.

“The life-transforming Kingdom work of SBU has continued,” he said. “To be sure, we firmly believe there is no substitute for a first-class, biblical worldview education, and we are committed to its importance, circumstances notwithstanding. This transition occurred because of our commitment to Kingdom work that is embodied in our mission and out of a love for students and this University.

“I have never been prouder of the resilience of our faculty, staff and students in making these extremely difficult and Herculean transitions.”

Dr. Turner said the University is looking at ways to innovate to create value. Part of this approach includes developing a “long overdue” strategic budget process in which the budget accomplishes the University’s mission, rather than the budget determining the scope of the mission.

“For the long-term health and sustainability of this University, this paradigm shift must be made,” he said. “As we look toward the fall and beyond, the University will look differently. In fact, the University is already looking differently, but we don’t approach it with fear and trepidation. Rather, we approach it with the confidence in our Lord and a charted plan to get there.”

Business session

After considering information from all sources, the Board took no action against Dr. Mike Roy. He remains a member of the SBU Board of Trustees in good standing.

The board set a schedule for finalizing changes to the University’s governing documents. The Board submitted a draft to the MBC Executive Board in February. SBU trustees who are part of the governing documents work group and MBC leadership are meeting June 1 to review the revisions requested by the MBC. The full board will meet in a special session on July 9 to finalize the governing documents submission.

Trustee actions taken during the meeting include:

- Adopting a \$60.8 million budget for the 2020-21 fiscal year.
- Setting future regular board meeting dates of Oct. 19-20, 2020; April 19-20, 2021; Oct. 18-19, 2021; April 11-12, 2022; and Oct. 17-18, 2022.
- Tabling a resolution for the sale of Ingman Hall and Maupin Hall on the Stufflebam Campus in Bolivar. Trustees asked for an appraisal of the property.
- Continuing post-retirement benefits pursuant to current policies.
- Using earnings from the Future Fund Endowment to be used to purchase faculty computers as part of the overall computer rotation needs for the 2020-21 academic year.