

# NEWS

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## Southeastern put on Probation

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Wake Forest, NC - Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina has received notice from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) that the Commission on Accreditation has placed the Seminary on probation for two years. ATS indicated that the school had failed to show that the conditions cited in the June 1991 "show-cause" order had been remedied.

President-elect Paige Patterson received the communication from ATS during his second week of transition with President Lewis A. Drummond. Patterson commented that while this action was not unexpected, nevertheless it was "not a particularly pleasant welcome" to the school.

Patterson was pleased to note that in their adopted statement, ATS provided explicit continued approval of the Seminary's degree programs during the period of probation. "We are grateful that our students can be confident of continuing recognition of their academic and professional endeavors by the academic community."

"The complete satisfaction of the accrediting agencies remains in the priority position for the immediate future. Obviously, many other things have to be done, but this is paramount," said Patterson.

Patterson indicated that it is his contention that neither accreditation agency has requested anything of the Seminary that is unconscionable. "Furthermore, every expectation which has been stated is reasonable and able to be accomplished by the school within the two years granted."

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Patterson further noted that the Seminary is preparing for the ten-year reaffirmation visit from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in September. "We are hopeful that this visit will be the beginning of a significant upturn in satisfying the requirements of the accrediting agencies."

Patterson commented that the Seminary has become like a "taffy" school. "It is constantly being pulled in various directions by its supporting constituencies and its past."

The letter from Daniel O. Aleshire, Associate Director of ATS indicated that "it is too soon to tell if the recently adopted purpose and mission statement can serve effectively as a basis for making crucial institutional decisions, or if the document will serve as an 'enabling' rather than 'inhibiting' function as the standards require."

Patterson noted the expression "too soon" and said that it was his persuasion that ATS has seemingly taken note of the recent actions of the institution, but felt that it would take time to ascertain the effectiveness of the new procedures.

The ATS notations included: an inadequate number of faculty in Christian Education; the need for better evaluation procedures; the improvement in the general tone of the school; a reference to inappropriate control by the governing board; and to faculty members being unduly diverted from essential tasks.

The Commission has called upon the school to make a major report during the Spring of 1994 to provide evidence that patterns of cooperation have been achieved in relations among trustees, administration and faculty.

ATS also indicated that the institution must report to the Commission that it has set appropriate goals for the allocation of the resources of the Seminary in serving its constituencies.

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