

ORU Provost Vows to Resign if Roberts Returns

The provost of Oral Roberts University, told the Board of Regents that he was willing to go as far as resigning his top academic post if Richard Roberts, the school's president, was reinstated.



Mark Lewandowski, provost of Oral Roberts University (ORU) since May, told the Board of Regents on Thursday that he was willing to go as far as resigning his top academic post if Richard Roberts, the school's president, was reinstated, the Associated Press (AP) reported.

In an adamantly written letter to the chairman of the ORU Board of Regents, Lewandowski claimed some regents were "waffling in their decision-making ...even in the face of overwhelming information of a management style that promotes fear and has done nothing to address the increasing debt of the university."

He said he could not "in good conscience" serve under Roberts were he allowed to return, reported the AP.

Roberts, who asked for a leave of absence last month while an investigation into the school and his leadership is underway, received a vote of no confidence by tenured faculty at the university last Monday.

The vote comes after a wrongful termination lawsuit was filed against Roberts and the school in October. The lawsuit includes accusations that Roberts and his family used university funds to support a lavish lifestyle.

Last week, Oral Roberts called an emergency meeting at ORU in which his son, Richard, reportedly asked faculty for a second chance, claiming that if he stepped down it would be tantamount to admitting to wrongdoing. But several faculty

members refused to acquiesce, the AP reported.

Lewandowski asked the Board of Regents to vote at a Nov. 27 meeting on the issues his letter raises regarding a perceived lack of openness and transparency at ORU.

Donald Vance, professor of biblical languages who has taught at ORU for 13 years, said a key issue is ensuring faculty and the Board of Regents are both on the same page. "We see the Board of Regents as allies wanting to do the right thing," he said. "But we're not sure they know everything and we're not sure they knew how the faculty felt."