

San Francisco seminary to close Pasadena campus

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Because of a significant budget shortfall, the Presbyterian-related San Francisco Theological Seminary has announced that it will close its 21-year-old Southern California campus in Pasadena on June 30.

Laird J. Stuart, interim president of the main campus in San Anselmo near San Francisco, said that earlier steps taken to reduce the seminary's operating budget by \$850,000 annually over four years were not enough to reach its goals.

The Pasadena campus, whose classes meet at Pasadena Presbyterian Church near Fuller Theological Seminary, has graduated nearly 300 students who serve in various ministries in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and other denominations.

"I didn't believe it would happen," said Jack Rogers, one of the founders of the Pasadena campus and a former moderator of the PCUSA General Assembly. The decision was announced at the end of the SFTS board meeting February 8, and Pasadena students in class knew it by e-mail that evening.

"That's just a very crude way to learn this," said Rogers, who said the heavily populated region has a large pool of potential students representing considerable ethnic and racial diversity.

Dean Elizabeth Liebert, a professor of spiritual life at SFTS, said the board action was not the final word for Presbyterian theological education on the West Coast. "We want to respond to new trends in online education and distance learning [with] an extended learning program that needs to include Southern California," she said.