

Theological center put on probation: Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta

News in the [January 13, 2004](#) issue

The Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta has been put on probation by its accrediting agency for employing two professors who had not completed their doctoral degrees.

The consortium of six African-American theological schools learned December 8 of its status from the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Michael A. Battle, ITC's new president as of September 3, told Religion News Service the decision came as a surprise to school officials. They had the impression after a September visit from an association committee that they were going to receive a favorable report.

"Our fiscal integrity and fiscal compliance was exceptional," he said. "Our institutional effectiveness was exceptional. . . . The single thing that affected us was the fact that we had two faculty members in ABD [all but dissertation] status and a policy that allowed us to hire people in ABD status."

Battle said the two faculty members—one full-time and one part-time—were informed shortly after the probation notice that they would no longer be on the teaching staff as of December 31. He also called for the immediate deletion from the faculty handbook of any references to a policy permitting the hiring of persons who have ABD status.

Battle said the association's decision marks the first time that ITC, which was founded in 1958, has been on probation. A probationary period usually lasts for a year, and an institution can lose its accreditation if it does not take corrective action. "We remain an accredited institution and will do everything that we need to do as an

institution to protect our accreditation,” he said. Battle added that he hoped ITC’s quick response to the association’s concerns might lead to an expedited hearing on the probation issue.

James Rogers, executive director of the association’s Commission on Colleges, could not be reached immediately for comment.

Battle announced the probationary status of ITC at a news conference December 10 and outlined a strategic plan for the next decade. “We will shift our paradigm and offer a full-degree completion option by evening programs and weekend programs in addition to the daytime option that is our current predominant option,” he said. –

Religion News Service