

Faculty at Baptist college resign rather than sign required morals statement

by [Adelle M. Banks](#) in the [June 13, 2012](#) issue

More than two dozen faculty members have resigned from Shorter University, a Baptist school in Georgia, after it required them to sign a “personal lifestyle statement” that condemns homosexuality, premarital sex and public drinking.

An online campaign called “Save Our Shorter” says that the lifestyle pledge, adopted in the fall of 2011 along with a statement of faith, has led to dozens of resignations. University president Donald Dowless on May 18 confirmed that 36 faculty have resigned and at least 25 cited disagreement with either the personal lifestyle statement or the faith statement. The school usually has about 100 full-time faculty.

“The Shorter board of trustees is slowly destroying the reputation of our beloved school and causing irreparable damage to the cause of Christ,” the Save Our Shorter website says.

In a statement on May 16, Dowless said he and the university board recognized there are “strong feelings on both sides” about the new employment rules, but the board decided to “reclaim our Christian roots” even if the consequence was a loss of faculty and staff.

“Our university was at a crossroads to either take steps to regain an authentic Christian identity in policy and practice or we would become a Christian university in name only,” he said.

The university, in Rome, Georgia, requires faculty to sign a personal lifestyle statement that says they will not engage in illegal drug use or drink alcohol in restaurants, stadiums and other public locations. “I reject as acceptable all sexual activity not in agreement with the Bible, including, but not limited to, premarital sex, adultery, and homosexuality,” the statement reads. —RNS