

Cornel West denied tenure, leaves Harvard

by [Alejandra Molina](#) in the [April 7, 2021](#) issue



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Cornel West is rejoining the faculty of Union Theological Seminary, where he started his teaching career more than 40 years ago.

The move comes after West threatened to leave Harvard University, which he said denied his request to be considered for tenure, according to media reports.

West has been granted the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Chair at Union, named in honor of the German theologian who attended the seminary in 1930, the seminary said in a statement on March 8.

This is West's second departure from Harvard, where he taught in the law school, divinity school, and department of African and African American studies, the *Boston*

*Globe* reported.

In his first stint at Harvard, West held the status of “university professor,” considered the school’s highest faculty rank. He left in 2002 after what the *Harvard Crimson* called a “high-profile spat” with Lawrence H. Summers, the university president at the time.

West returned as a “professor of the practice” in 2017, a position that does not carry tenure. Harvard’s Undergraduate Council in late February voted to support a petition to reopen pathways for West’s tenure.

In a recent interview with *Truthout*, West said his situation with Harvard is a sign of the school’s “spiritual and intellectual bankruptcy.” — Religion News Service