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A Message from Interim President Paige Comstock Cunningham

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A Message from Interim President Paige Comstock Cunningham

BY: James R. Garringer

PUBLISHED: Dec 11, 2020 1 pm

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I write to you today with troubling, but important, news to share. A Taylor University faculty member was fired today due to violations of university policies discovered during an ongoing investigation. While we do not usually share information about personnel matters, we need to let you know because this is part of an ongoing investigation concerning possible sexual misconduct by this individual.

At the request of Taylor University, the Indiana State Police are conducting this investigation. We continue to work with an outside investigatory firm with relevant expertise to address allegations that have been made. We are working diligently on this issue, and we desire to be as transparent as we can. The Indiana State Police has requested that we not release the individual's name at this time.

The ongoing investigation involves the possibility of sexual exploitation and abuse of a minor, which if true is abhorrent behavior and criminal activity. Any such conduct is directly counter to our beliefs

and values. We believe it is important to share key aspects of the decision-making process with the Taylor community and provide the following synopsis.

Taylor University personnel were informed by the Upland Police Department of allegations of sexual misconduct occurring many years ago between a Taylor University faculty member and a young person in the Upland community. The alleged misconduct did not involve University students, but it did involve a minor in the community who became acquainted with this Taylor University faculty member.

Based on these allegations, Taylor University reported to Child Protective Services and worked with the Upland Police Department to investigate the claims, and the faculty member was immediately placed on administrative leave. At all times we have cooperated fully with local and state law enforcement authorities and we continue to do so.

Given the gravity of the misconduct allegations, Taylor University independently retained an outside firm of forensic experts that specializes in investigating allegations of abuse. Investigations are ongoing, and we encourage anyone with relevant information to come forward.

Sexual misconduct with underage youth is a crime and a grievous violation of Taylor University policies. It will not be tolerated.

We know that it takes courage to come forward about any abuse, and we are grateful for those who are participating in the investigation. If you or someone you know has been a victim of sexual misconduct of any kind, please know that there are resources available to you. The [Indiana Department of Child Protective Services](#) is one of many resources. (External resources are listed below.)

Anyone with information related to acts of sexual misconduct by any Taylor University employee or any other violations of Taylor University's sexual conduct policies, should immediately report them to the Indiana State Police Detective Joshua Maller ([765-475-8111](#)) or Taylor University Vice President of Student Development Dr. Skip Trudeau ([765-998-5368](#)). We will seek to help you in any way we can.

I know this is difficult news. Please support those who are engaged in this process by respecting their privacy at this time. I hope you will join me in praying for wisdom, discernment, and healing for all of those involved. For "surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Isa.53:4).

Sincerely,

Paige Comstock Cunningham, PhD, JD

Interim President

External Resources

1. A Better Way 24-Hour Crisis Hotline (Muncie): [765-288-HELP \(4357\)](#)

2. National Sexual Assault Hotline: [1-800-656-HOPE \(4673\)](tel:1-800-656-HOPE)
Information and referrals for sexual assault and relational violence.
3. [Guidepost Solutions](#)
4. City of Marion Police Department, [Victims Advocate Tammy Wolf \(765-668-3688\)](#).
5. [GRACE](#) (Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment).
6. Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Numbers by State ([Child Welfare Information Gateway](#))Ñ
listing of phone numbers by state to call and report child abuse.

If you or someone you know has been the victim of sexual abuse, we encourage you to seek trauma informed therapy. Trauma specialists use multifaceted treatment modalities, including CBT, EMDR and IFS, to help clients process and heal from various forms of trauma. Clinicians are located in every state and throughout the world, and they are trained to help you find hope and healing. To learn more about trauma informed care from the Christian perspective, please consider one of the links below:

<https://everettchristiancounseling.com/what-is-trauma-informed-care-and-who-would-benefit-from-it/>

<http://www.dianelangberg.com/videos/>

**This story was updated on February 12, 2021 with additional external resources.*



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