

Riekeman Sues Palmer

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Dr. Guy Riekeman, president of Life University, is suing the Palmer Chiropractic University Foundation over a dispute concerning his departure last year as chancellor of the Palmer Chiropractic University System.¹ Dr. Riekeman claims that he is owed full pay and benefits for 12 months following the termination of his contract. He argues that the termination was without cause and that Palmer is required to compensate him accordingly.²

According to court documents filed in Scott County District Court of Iowa, Dr. Riekeman says that the Palmer Board of Trustees adopted resolutions in February 2004 that effectively "stripped" him of the "power and authority to effectively serve as chancellor." Dr. Riekeman then told the board that if the resolutions were put into place, he would, "find the working conditions intolerable" and consider himself "constructively terminated."²

Effective Feb. 6, 2004, the board received and accepted Dr. Riekeman's resignation.³ His departure sparked public protests and an unofficial vote of "no confidence" in the board from many students and alumni; several alumni said they would withdraw their financial support and cease student referrals to the university.⁴

Only a month after leaving Palmer, Dr. Riekeman was named president of Life University. A portion of a March 4, 2004 statement from the Palmer Board of Trustees, released two days after that announcement, addressed suggestions that he was forced out of his position as chancellor of the Palmer University System:

"The board took the action required to ensure that its oversight role was preserved, that its policies were followed and that communication was properly restored. There was no intent to force Dr. Riekeman to leave Palmer."⁴

After learning of the current lawsuit, Palmer released a statement asserting that Dr. Riekeman "tendered his resignation as chancellor of the Palmer Chiropractic University System in February 2004, which the Palmer Board of Trustees accepted" and that "following his departure, Dr. Riekeman petitioned Palmer for payment of 90 days' worth of wages based on a claim of voluntary termination. That claim has already been denied."²

Recent controversy surrounding the Palmer Board of Trustees' actions is not limited to the Riekeman lawsuit; on March 1, 2005, the board cut ties with the Palmer College of Chiropractic International Alumni Association, after a protracted dispute that apparently began as a disagreement over whether the association should have a voting seat on the board.⁵ As of press time, the board has requested a court order against the alumni association's use of the Palmer logo, name and crest.⁶

References

1. *Riekeman, Guy vs Palmer Chiropractic University Foundation*. Filed in Scott County District Court, April 18, 2005.
2. Former president sues Palmer. *The Quad-City Times*, April 20, 2005.
3. Riekeman resigns Palmer presidency; board of trustees announces governance changes. *Dynamic Chiropractic*, March 11, 2004: www.chiroweb.com/archives/22/06/18.html.
4. Riekeman takes over at Life University. *Dynamic Chiropractic*, April 8, 2004: www.chiroweb.com/archives/22/08/05.html.
5. Palmer College disassociates from alumni assoc. *Dynamic Chiropractic*, April 9, 2005: www.chiroweb.com/archives/23/08/12.html.
6. Palmer College takes alumni group to court. *The Quad-City Times*, March 21, 2005.

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