

Paterno gone, but questions remain

Written by Administrator
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STATE COLLEGE, Pa. (AP) — The most tumultuous week Penn State has ever endured is drawing to a close.

Questions, however, still linger.

Gov. Tom Corbett will be on hand Friday to help the board of trustees navigate a course through the turmoil from a child sex-abuse scandal that has engulfed the state's largest university and led to the firing of the university's legendary coach Joe Paterno.

Corbett, an ex-officio member of the board, will participate in Friday's regularly scheduled trustees meeting, where a committee will be appointed to investigate the "circumstances" that led to the indictments of former defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky, as well as two university officials. It's the first time the board has met publicly since forcing out Paterno and president Graham Spanier amid the unfolding child sex abuse scandal.

Paterno and Spanier were fired Wednesday night, four days after a grand jury report charged Sandusky with a series of sexual assaults stretching back to the late 1990s.

The grand jury report alleges Sandusky assaulted eight boys — including one he allegedly raped in the university's football facility shower. Much of the alleged inappropriate contact with seven victims happened on Penn State's campus, where Sandusky maintained an office as an emeritus professor following his retirement.

Authorities said Sandusky met many of his alleged victims through The Second Mile, a charity he founded to help at-risk youth.

The indictment also charged the school's athletic director and a vice president with perjury and failure to report the assaults.

"Certainly every Pennsylvanian who has any knowledge of this case, who has read the grand jury report, feels a sense of regret and a sorrow to also see careers end," Corbett said after arriving on campus Thursday.

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Earlier in the day, Tom Bradley was introduced as interim head coach, marking the first time in almost a half-century the Nittany Lions have been guided by anyone other than Paterno.

"We're obviously in a very unprecedented situation," said Bradley, who was Paterno's lead assistant for the last 11 seasons. "I have to find a way to restore the confidence."

The committee has no timetable.

And no shortage of questions to answer — from how much Paterno actually knew to the future of his staff, including assistant coach Mike McQueary, who told Paterno but not police about seeing

Sandusky in a shower with a young boy in 2002.

"We intend to be as responsible as we can and make whatever changes are necessary," board vice chair John Surma said.

McQueary, now the team's wide receivers coach, won't be present for the final home game of the season Saturday against Nebraska because of what the university said were "multiple threats."

Elsewhere, in forums online, and in comments on other websites, others called for McQueary to be fired, but the assistant coach could be protected as a whistleblower.

Gerald J. Williams, a partner at a Philadelphia law firm, said Pennsylvania law is broad in protecting a person who reports wrongdoing, as long as that person is part of a governmental or quasi-governmental institution, of which Penn State would be one.

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That protection includes any kind of adverse employment action — such as being fired, demoted, ostracized or punished — although a court, ultimately, would determine whether the person is protected if they bring a claim, Williams said.

The penalty on an employer can include monetary damages, attorneys' fees and reinstatement of the employee, he said.

Sandusky, Paterno's onetime heir apparent, has been charged with molesting eight boys over 15 years. Athletic director Tim Curley and university vice president Gary Schultz have been charged with perjury and failure to report the 2002 assault to police, as required by state law.