



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

March 21, 2016

Andrew K. Benton
President & CEO
Office of the President
Pepperdine University
Malibu, CA 90263-4451

Dear President Benton:

I write to respond to your January 27, 2016, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which Pepperdine University (Pepperdine) of Malibu, California seeks to disclaim a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681, that it was previously granted.

Pepperdine requested a religious exemption from certain provisions of the Title IX regulations in 1976 and OCR granted this request by letter dated August 27, 1985. Your current letter indicates that Pepperdine, while still “controlled . . . through its affiliation with the Churches of Christ,” is committed to complying with Title IX without exemption. Based on your letter withdrawing the religious exemption request, Pepperdine University is no longer exempt from Title IX under 34 C.F.R. § 106.12.

Your letter further requests that OCR remove Pepperdine from any internal or external lists of institutions holding a Title IX religious exemption or, alternatively, include this withdrawal in any public disclosure of its Title IX exemption materials. At times, OCR must produce to members of the public lists of institutions that currently hold exemptions or have requested exemptions in the past. If OCR produces such lists, it will take steps to ensure that Pepperdine’s status is accurately reflected. In addition, OCR plans to post requests for religious exemptions and OCR’s responses to these requests on our website. Pepperdine’s 1976 request letter and 2016 withdrawal letter, as well as OCR’s responses, will be posted with other exemption materials.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "CEL", representing Catherine E. Lhamon.

Catherine E. Lhamon
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100
www.ed.gov

The Department of Education’s mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.