



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

May 10, 2016

Charles Bartlett  
President  
World Baptist Fellowship  
3001 W. Division  
Arlington, TX 76012

Dear Rev. Bartlett:

Thank you for your letter, dated December 22, 2015, to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Arlington Baptist College (College) of Arlington, Texas, from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance. I have determined that OCR needs further information to process this request.

Both Title IX itself and the Department's implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provide that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Under the regulation, an educational institution that wishes to claim the exemption may do so by submitting in writing to the Assistant Secretary a statement by the highest ranking official of the institution (e.g., college president), identifying the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specifying the provisions of Title IX or its regulations that conflict with the tenets of the religious organization.

If you would like OCR to make a determination regarding the College's eligibility for a religious exemption, please provide such a written statement from the highest-ranking official of the College. Further details about the substantive standards for an exemption are below, and the College should feel free to provide any explanation or supporting documentation that may be helpful to OCR's understanding.

An educational institution will normally be considered to be controlled by a religious organization if one or more of the following conditions is true:

- (1) It is a school or department of divinity, defined as an institution or a department or branch of an institution whose program is specifically for the education of students to prepare them to become ministers of religion or to enter upon some other religious vocation, or to prepare them to teach theological subjects; or

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

- (2) It requires its faculty, students or employees to be members of, or otherwise espouse a personal belief in, the religion of the organization by which it claims to be controlled; or
- (3) Its charter and catalog, or other official publication, contains explicit statement that it is controlled by a religious organization or an organ thereof or is committed to the doctrines of a particular religion, and the members of its governing body are appointed by the controlling religious organization or an organ thereof, and it receives a significant amount of financial support from the controlling religious organization or an organ thereof.

An institution controlled by a religious organization is exempt from Title IX only to the extent that compliance with Title IX would not be consistent with the religious tenets of the controlling organization. For that reason, OCR asks an educational institution seeking an exemption to specify the provisions of Title IX or its regulations that conflict with the tenets of the religious organization.<sup>1</sup> Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at (202) 453-6048.

Sincerely,



Seth M. Galanter  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary

cc: D.L. Moody, President, Arlington Baptist College

---

<sup>1</sup> The Department's Title IX regulations are available at [www.ed.gov/policy/rights/reg/ocr/edlite-34cfr106.html](http://www.ed.gov/policy/rights/reg/ocr/edlite-34cfr106.html).



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

February 11, 2015

Evans P. Whitaker, Ph.D.  
President  
Anderson University  
316 Boulevard  
Anderson, South Carolina 29621

Dear President Whitaker:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your January 7, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681, for Anderson University (University) of Anderson, South Carolina. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University is controlled by the South Carolina Baptist Convention (Convention), which is a "Southern Baptist general body whose constituency is the cooperating Southern Baptist churches of South Carolina." Your letter enclosed a copy of the University's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. The Articles of Incorporation state that the University's board of directors "shall be appointed by South Carolina Baptist Convention in session."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion." In support of this request, you cite to The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, a statement of faith adopted by the Convention. According to your letter, that statement of faith explains that the tenets of the Convention are that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as the means for procreation, that God created people in male and female form, and that the "gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation." You further cite the Convention's belief that one should "speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death."

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the University from "engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission's sexual orientation, transgendered status, marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, sex outside marriage, pregnancy and abortion; ... from subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics; [or] from making all employment decisions... in a

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination based on marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or abortion:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

February 11, 2015

William K. Thierfelder  
President  
Belmont Abbey College  
100 Belmont-Mt. Holly Road  
Belmont, NC 28012

Dear President Thierfelder:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your January 16, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681, for Belmont Abbey College (College) of Belmont, North Carolina. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The Department's implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explains that the College is owned by and affiliated with the Southern Benedictine Society of North Carolina, Inc., the members of which are Benedictine Monks. Your letter further explains that "[t]he Monks founded the college on the basis of, and as an expression of, their Catholic faith" and that "the Monks and the College also believe that the Church was founded by Jesus Christ and given authority by him to interpret the Word of God and to teach with binding authority on questions of faith and morals."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from provisions of Title IX to the extent that it prohibits discrimination based on gender identity. In support of this request, you cite Biblical passages that reflect the College's and Monks' belief "that human beings, fashioned by God in His own image and likeness, are thus created male and female (Genesis 1:27)" and that "heterosexual creation of human beings expresses God's creative intention (Matthew 19:4)." Your letter further explains that, because of these religious tenets, the College does not "support or affirm the resolution of tension between one's biological sex and the experience of gender by the adoption of psychological identity discordant with one's birth sex, nor attempts to change one's birth sex by surgical intervention, nor conduct or dress consistent with an identity other than one's biological birth sex."

Your exemption request points to a recent OCR resolution agreement in which a school district agreed to allow a transgender male student to use the restroom, locker room, and living facilities consistent with the student's gender identity, and to play on boys' athletic teams. You explain that the College would not be able to make similar accommodations consistent with its Catholic beliefs. Instead, your letter explains that the College will "make institutional decisions... regarding housing, student admission and retention,

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

appropriate conduct, employment, hiring and retention, and other matters” consistent with the tenets of the Southern Benedictine Society of North Carolina.

We interpret these statements as a request for exemption from the following provisions in the Department’s Title IX regulations to the extent that they prohibit discrimination based on gender identity:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

July 29, 2015

Dr. Gregg Chenoweth  
President  
Bethel College  
1001 Bethel Circle  
Mishawaka, IN 46545

Dear Dr. Chenoweth:

I write to respond to your May 1, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Bethel College (College) of Mishawaka, Indiana, from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the College "is a private, Christian evangelical College" that was "established in 1947, as a Christian liberal arts college by the Missionary Church." According to your letter, the College's Articles of Incorporation require "that the controlling majority of the Trustees governing the College must be members in good standing of the Missionary Church" and the Bylaws of the College require "that the President of the Missionary Church shall be an ex-officio member of the Board. In addition, the President of Bethel College is an ex officio member of the denominational Board of Trustees." Your letter explains that most of the tenets of the Missionary Church are codified in the Missionary Church Constitution (Constitution). The College uses the Constitution "as a reference for behavioral and doctrinal standards expected of the College, its students, faculty, and other employees...and follows Biblical principles in its policies and practices applicable to Christian education, and to its students and employees." You

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-4100  
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.*

further state that students “are required to attend chapel regularly” and that “The Covenant of Lifestyle requires students and employees to follow the Code of Conduct established by the College,” which “incorporated the Christian standards of behavior directed by Biblical principles and the tenets of the Missionary Church.”

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX to the extent those provisions “would require the College to allow males and females to reside in the same housing, to visit within the housing of the opposite sex without restrictions, to allow an unmarried male and female to live together, or to allow a person with gender identity issues to be treated as a member of the sex which they have assigned to themselves...” or “would require that the College not discriminate in discipline, admissions, hiring, and employment decisions, in matters such as employment leaves for pregnancy, childbirth, and elective termination of pregnancy, or on the basis of pre-marital sex, unmarried pregnancy, extra-marital sex, or homosexual activity.” In support of this request, you cite to the Constitution and Biblical principles that state “that God created two sexes, male and female; that marriage is between one man and one woman; and that extramarital sex, premarital sex, and the practice of homosexuality are sinful behaviors, and therefore prohibited.” You letter further explains that it is the position of the College, “based upon its religious beliefs taken from Biblical principles and the Doctrine of the Missionary Church, that a person cannot change his or her birth sex.” Finally, you state that the “College’s Christian religious beliefs, which are based upon the Bible and the tenets of the Missionary Church, also prohibit elective abortion, pre-marital sex, extra-marital sex, and homosexual behavior for students and employees.”

You state that, for these reasons, the College is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “so that the College may discriminate on religious grounds in regard to its students and employees, in keeping with its religious beliefs and the tenets of the Missionary Church:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21(b)(iii) (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21(c) (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51(a) (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51(b)(6) (governing employment); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions).

The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20202

December 22, 2014

Barry H. Corey  
President  
Biola University  
13800 Biola Avenue  
La Mirada, CA 90639

Dear President Corey:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your November 14, 2014, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Biola University of La Mirada, California from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance. We are processing your request and have determined that we need further information.

Subsection (a)(3) of Title IX, 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a)(3), and the Department's implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provide that Title IX and its regulations do not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would not be consistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Such educational institutions are allowed to claim an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of the Department's Title IX regulations that conflict with a specific tenet of the controlling religious organization.

Your letter included sufficient information regarding the provisions of the Department's Title IX regulations from which the University requests exemption. But your letter did not identify the religious organization that controls the University. Your letter describes the University as "a Christian evangelical institution," but does not name a specific religious organization. An educational institution will normally be considered to be controlled by a religious organization under Title IX if one or more of the following conditions prevail:

- (1) It is a school or department of divinity, defined as an institution or a department or branch of an institution whose program is specifically for the education of

[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

- students to prepare them to become ministers of religion or to enter upon some other religious vocation, or to prepare them to teach theological subjects; or
- (2) It requires its faculty, students or employees to be members of, or otherwise espouse a personal belief in, the religion of the organization by which it claims to be controlled; or
  - (3) Its charter and catalog, or other official publication, contains an explicit statement that it is controlled by a religious organization or an organ thereof or is committed to the doctrines of a particular religion, and the members of its governing body are appointed by the controlling religious organization or an organ thereof, and it receives a significant amount of financial support from the controlling religious organization or an organ thereof.

If you would like OCR to make a determination regarding the University's religious exemption request, please let us know the specific religious organization that controls the University. Feel free to provide any explanation or supporting documentation that may be helpful to OCR's understanding. If you no longer desire a religious exemption determination, please simply let us know your wish to withdraw the request at this time so that we may close the request file.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at (202) 453-6048.

Sincerely,



Seth Galanter  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

October 26, 2015

Dr. Barbara C. McMillin  
President  
Blue Mountain College  
P.O. Box 160  
Blue Mountain, MS 38610

Dear Dr. McMillin:

I write to respond to your August 12, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Blue Mountain College (College) of Blue Mountain, Mississippi from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explains that the College, "a Southern Baptist institution of higher education," "is controlled by a religious organization. That organization is the Mississippi Baptist Convention . . . whose constituency is the cooperating Southern Baptist churches of Mississippi." Your letter states that "[p]ursuant to the College's Charter, the Mississippi Baptist Convention controls the College by electing the College's board of trustees."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, and gender identity." In support of this request, you cite to the Word of God, which your letter states is the Convention's religious authority. According to your letter, the Word of God teaches that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as the means for procreation. You letter further states that the Convention has declared that "God's design was the creation of two distinct and

complementary sexes, male and female.”

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention’s religious tenets for the College to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the College from “engaging in recruiting, admissions, and financial assistance under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission’s sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, and sex outside marriage[; . . . from] subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics[; or from] making all employment decisions. . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the College is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, and gender identity in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.22 (governing preferences in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, or gender identity and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations

fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

July 10, 2015

J. Randall O'Brien  
President  
Carson-Newman University  
1646 Russell Avenue  
Jefferson City, TN 37760

Dear President O'Brien:

I write to respond to your May 1, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Carson-Newman University (University) of Jefferson City, Tennessee, from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University, "a Southern Baptist institution of higher education," "is controlled by a religious organization. That organization is the Tennessee Baptist Convention." Although it did not contain the enclosures that it referenced, your letter explains that the University's purpose is "[t]o operate, maintain, and build up a Christian institution of learning and training...[and] to establish, expand, and affirm faith in an omnipotent, omniscient, benevolent Creator revealed in Jesus Christ." Your letter states that "...the University's Bylaws give the [Tennessee Baptist] Convention the right to have those persons who have been elected by the Convention appointed to thirty-six of the University's trustee (director) positions. The other two board of trustee positions are filled by designated directors, the President of the University and the Executive Director-Treasurer of the Convention. All board members must be Baptists. This group of persons constitutes the governing body of the University."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion.” In support of this request, you cite to The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, the most recent statement of faith adopted by the Convention. According to your letter, that statement of faith explains that the tenets of the Convention are that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as the means for procreation, that God made people in male and female form, and that the “gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God’s creation.” You further cite the Convention’s belief that one should “speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.”

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention’s religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the University from “engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission’s sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, sex outside marriage, pregnancy, and abortion[; . . . from] subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics[; . . . or from] making all employment decisions...in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention’s religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Lhamon', is positioned above the typed name.

Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

February 11, 2015

Jairy C. Hunter, Jr.  
President  
Charleston Southern University  
9200 University Boulevard  
P.O. Box 118087  
Charleston, SC 29423-8087

Dear President Hunter:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your December 8, 2014, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681, for Charleston Southern University (University) of Charleston, South Carolina. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University "is governed and controlled by its Board of Trustees, which consists of twenty-five members who are elected by the South Carolina Baptist Convention." Your letter enclosed a copy of the University's Bylaws. Article II of those Bylaws state that one of the objectives of the institution is to "[o]perate a Baptist, liberal arts university."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from certain provisions of Title IX to the extent that application of those provisions would not be consistent with the South Carolina Baptist Convention's religious tenets. In support of this request, your letter cites several religious tenets that conflict with the application of the Title IX regulations listed below. Specifically, your letter explains that the University, consistent with the Southern Baptist Convention's<sup>1</sup> statement on transgender individuals, "affirms that a person cannot change his/her birth gender and so must be treated as such; rather than a self-identified gender, which would be inconsistent with the University's religious beliefs." Additionally, your letter states that the University views "all forms of sexual intimacy that occur outside the covenant of heterosexual marriage, even when consensual" as inconsistent with the tenets of the Southern Baptist Convention and that the "University's religious beliefs prohibit pre-marital sex and elective abortion." You state that, for these reasons, application of certain provisions in Title IX "would be inconsistent with the religious beliefs and practices of the South Carolina Baptist Convention and Charleston Southern University."

---

<sup>1</sup> Your letter explains that the University is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention via its controlling organization, the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the following provisions of Title IX to the extent that compliance would conflict with the South Carolina Baptist Convention's religious tenets:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21(b)(iii) and (c) (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51(a) and (b)(6) (governing employment); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions).

The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

March 15, 2016

Donald S. Fox  
Chief Executive Officer and President-Elect  
Clear Creek Baptist Bible College  
300 Clear Creek Road  
Pineville, KY 40977

Dear Dr. Fox:

I write to respond to your February 16, 2016, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Clear Creek Baptist Bible College (College) of Pineville, Kentucky, from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the College, "a Southern Baptist institution of higher education," "is controlled by a religious organization. That organization is the Kentucky Baptist Convention... whose constituency is the cooperating Southern Baptist churches of Kentucky." Your letter states that "[p]ursuant to the College's Charter and Bylaws, the Convention controls the College in part by exercising its right to elect the entire elected membership of the board of directors of the College, the governing body of the College."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent those provisions conflict with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion." In support of this request, you cite to *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, the most recent statement of faith adopted by the Convention. According to your letter, that statement of faith explains that the tenets of the Convention are that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as the

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

means for procreation, that God made people in male and female form, that the “gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God’s creation,” and that Christians should oppose adultery and homosexuality.

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention’s religious tenets for the College to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the College from “(1) engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission’s sexual orientation, transgender status, marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, and sex outside marriage, pregnancy and abortion...; (2) subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics...; and (3) making all employment decisions... in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the College is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent those regulation[s] require the College to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, gender identity, pregnancy and abortion in a manner that conflicts with the religious tenets of the Convention:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31 (governing education programs or activities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.34 (governing access to classes and schools);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.36 (governing counseling and use of appraisal and counseling materials);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.38 (governing employment assistance to students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.39 (governing health and insurance benefits and services);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.56 (governing fringe benefits);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, gender identity, pregnancy or abortion, and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

June 28, 2016

William L. Armstrong  
President  
Colorado Christian University  
8787 West Alameda Avenue  
Lakewood, CO 80226

Dear President Armstrong:

I write to respond to your November 4, 2014, letter to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Colorado Christian University (University or CCU) of Lakewood, Colorado from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. In response to a request from OCR on December 5, 2014, you submitted further information on December 22, 2014 about the University's eligibility for an exemption from Title IX. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

Title IX and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provide that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your December letter explains that the University "requires all of its faculty and employees to espouse a personal belief in the evangelical Christian faith. Every applicant for any position at CCU must sign an Application Acknowledgement agreeing to abide by CCU's Statement of Faith and Statement of Lifestyle Expectations, and to adhere to traditional biblical values. . . . If an individual is offered a job at CCU, he or she must execute the Statement of Faith and the Statement of Lifestyle Expectations before the hiring process is complete."

As stated in your November letter, you request an exemption to the extent that Title IX or its implementing regulations "are interpreted to reach gender identity discrimination." In support of this request, you explain that the University's Employee Lifestyle Expectations include the following: "Members of the CCU community are expected to refrain from engaging in,

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

advocating, teaching, supporting, encouraging, defending, or excusing homosexuality, transvestitism, transvestite behavior, transgenderism and transgender behavior.” Your letter also describes an October 2010 policy, adopted by the University’s Board of Trustees, which states that “although some Christians may take other positions concerning transvestitism and/or transgenderism, CCU’s position is clear as to both. As a matter of religious faith, conviction, and exercise, Colorado Christian University adheres to the Biblical admonitions against both transvestitism and transvestite behavior, as set forth in Deuteronomy 22:5, and transgenderism and transgender behavior, as set forth in Genesis 1:27.”

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent they are interpreted to reach gender identity discrimination:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.22 (governing preference in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31 (governing education programs or activities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.34 (governing access to classes and schools);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.36 (governing counseling);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.38 (governing employment assistance to students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.39 (governing health insurance benefits and services);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.43 (governing standards for measuring skill or progress in physical education classes); and
- 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.51-106.61 (governing employment).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets identified in your request, OCR is obligated to identify a controlling organization to contact to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the

institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

December 5, 2014

William L. Armstrong  
President  
Colorado Christian University  
8787 West Alameda Avenue  
Lakewood, CO 80226

Dear President Armstrong:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your November 4, 2014, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Colorado Christian University of Lakewood, Colorado from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance. We are processing your request and have determined that we need further information.

Subsection (a)(3) of Title IX, 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a)(3), and the Department's implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provide that Title IX and its regulations do not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would not be consistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Such educational institutions are allowed to claim an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of the Department's Title IX regulations that conflict with a specific tenet of the controlling religious organization.

Your letter included sufficient information regarding the provisions of the Department's Title IX regulations from which the University requests exemption. But your letter did not identify the religious organization that controls the University. Your letter describes the University as "a Christ-centered learning community" and states that it identifies as a "Christian institution," but does not name a specific religious organization. An educational institution will normally be considered to be controlled by a religious organization under Title IX if one or more of the following conditions prevail:

- (1) It is a school or department of divinity, defined as an institution or a department or branch of an institution whose program is specifically for the education of students to prepare them to become ministers of religion or to enter upon some other religious vocation, or to prepare them to teach theological subjects; or

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

- (2) It requires its faculty, students or employees to be members of, or otherwise espouse a personal belief in, the religion of the organization by which it claims to be controlled; or
- (3) Its charter and catalog, or other official publication, contains an explicit statement that it is controlled by a religious organization or an organ thereof or is committed to the doctrines of a particular religion, and the members of its governing body are appointed by the controlling religious organization or an organ thereof, and it receives a significant amount of financial support from the controlling religious organization or an organ thereof.

If you would like OCR to make a determination regarding the University's religious exemption request, please let us know the specific religious organization that controls the University. Feel free to provide any explanation or supporting documentation that may be helpful to OCR's understanding. If you no longer desire a religious exemption determination, please simply let us know your wish to withdraw the request at this time so that we may close the request file.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at (202) 453-6048.

Sincerely,



Seth Galanter  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

July 29, 2015

Dr. J. Derek Halvorson  
President  
Covenant College  
14049 Scenic Highway  
Lookout Mountain, GA 30750

Dear Dr. Halvorson:

I write to respond to your May 28, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Covenant College (College) of Lookout Mountain, Georgia, from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the College "was founded in 1955 as a Christ-centered institution of higher education, emphasizing liberal arts. It is an agency of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and is governed by a Board of Trustees elected by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America." Your request explains that "[t]he Presbyterian Church in America and Covenant College—as one of its agencies—understand the Bible to be the infallible written Word of God...[and] both the Denomination and the College affirm that the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms provide the most adequate and comprehensive expression of the system of doctrine taught in the Bible."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX and its accompanying regulations "to the extent that they are interpreted to curtail the College's freedom to respond to transgender individuals in accordance with its theologically-grounded convictions." In support of this request you cite to the College's Statement on Sexual Identity and Conduct (Statement), which you assert is consistent with the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms. The Statement provides that "[t]he creation of human beings

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

was a special creative act of God. God created human beings, male and female...As such, students are not to adopt a gender identity different from one gifted them by their Creator. This gendered ordering of creation is to be accepted, honored, and reflected in sexual intimacy.”

Your request also notes that “the EEOC has begun openly declaring that the ban on ‘sex’ discrimination in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 also forbids discrimination on the basis of ‘sexual orientation.’ It is conceivable that the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights could interpret Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 the same way.” Your letter states “[t]o the extent these suppositions are correct, it appears as though compliance with Title IX, if interpreted by ED OCR to reach sexual orientation ‘discrimination,’ would also be inconsistent with the theological commitment of Covenant College. The College, therefore, also seeks exemption on this basis.” In support of this request, you cite the following language from the Presbyterian Church of America’s Fifth General Assembly in 1977: “The act of homosexuality is a sin according to God’s Word;...In light of the Biblical view of its sinfulness, a practicing homosexual continuing in this sin would not be a fit candidate for ordination or membership in the Presbyterian Church in America.”

Finally you request an exemption from Title IX to the extent that it restricts the College’s freedom to apply and enforce its Statement on Human Life. In support of this request, you cite to the Presbyterian Church of America’s Position Paper on Abortion which states, “the intentional killing of an unborn child is a violation of God’s command and authority” and the College’s Statement of Community Beliefs which, according to your letter, states that the College “strongly oppose[s] abortion since it devalues and destroys human life.”

You state that, for these reasons, the College is requesting an exemption from Title IX and the following implementing regulations “to the extent they are interpreted to reach gender identity or sexual orientation discrimination, and to the extent they restrict the College’s freedom to apply and enforce its Statement on Human Life:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.22 (governing preferences in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(governing education programs or activities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.34 (governing access to classes and schools);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.36 (governing counseling and use of appraisal and counseling materials);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.38 (governing employment assistance to students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.39 (governing health and insurance benefits and services);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.43 (governing standards for measuring skill or progress in physical education classes); and
- 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.51-61 (governing employment).

The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

January 27, 2016

Dr. Barry Creamer  
President and CEO  
Criswell College  
4010 Gaston Ave.  
Dallas, Texas 75246

Dear Dr. Creamer:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your September 28, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Criswell College (College) of Dallas, Texas from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance. We are processing your request and have determined that we need further information.

Section 901(a)(3) of Title IX, 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a)(3), and the Department's implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provide that Title IX and its regulations do not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would not be consistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Such educational institutions are allowed to claim an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of the Department's Title IX regulations that conflict with a specific tenet of the controlling religious organization.

An educational institution will normally be considered to be controlled by a religious organization under Title IX if one or more of the following conditions prevail:

- (1) It is a school or department of divinity, defined as an institution or a department or branch of an institution whose program is specifically for the education of students to prepare them to become ministers of religion or to enter upon some other religious vocation, or to prepare them to teach theological subjects; or
- (2) It requires its faculty, students or employees to be members of, or otherwise espouse a personal belief in, the religion of the organization by which it claims to be controlled; or

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

- (3) Its charter and catalog, or other official publication, contains an explicit statement that it is controlled by a religious organization or an organ thereof or is committed to the doctrines of a particular religion, and the members of its governing body are appointed by the controlling religious organization or an organ thereof, and it receives a significant amount of financial support from the controlling religious organization or an organ thereof.

Your letter states that the College is affiliated with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, a state branch of the Southern Baptist Convention. Your letter also states that the "College's Articles of Faith consist of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000," which is "the official statement of faith of the Southern Baptist Convention." As such, according to your letter, the College "has aligned itself with the doctrines and values expressed" in the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

Although your letter states that the College is "affiliated" with the Convention, it does not state that the College is controlled by the Convention. Thus, OCR requires further information to determine whether the Convention's relationship with the College meets the standard for "control" as described above. If you would like OCR to make a determination regarding the College's religious exemption request, please provide additional clarification regarding whether the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention or another religious organization controls the College. Feel free to provide any explanation or supporting documentation that may be helpful to OCR's understanding. If you no longer wish to pursue your request for an exemption at this time, please let us know and we will treat your request as withdrawn.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at (202) 453-6048.

Sincerely,



Seth Galanter  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

May 4, 2015

Lawrence Ressler, Ph.D.  
Interim President  
East Texas Baptist University  
1 Tiger Drive  
Marshall, TX 75670

Dear Dr. Ressler:

I write to respond to your February 27, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for East Texas Baptist University (University) of Marshall, Texas, from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University "is controlled by a religious organization. That organization is the Baptist General Convention of Texas." Your letter states that "[p]ursuant to the University's Certificate of Formation and Bylaws, the Baptist General Convention of Texas controls the University in part by exercising its right to select a majority of the membership of the board of directors of the University, the governing body of the University." Your letter sets forth the University's mission, which states in part that the University "is an institution affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas since 1912."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion." In support of this request, you cite to *On Sexual Ethics*, a resolution adopted by the Convention in 2009. According to your letter, that resolution states that "the Bible teaches that the ideal for sexual behavior is the marital union between husband and wife and that all other sexual relations – whether premarital, extramarital, or homosexual – are contrary to God's purposes and thus sinful." You further cite the Convention's religious belief that "gender is based on biological attributes and is seen as a gift from God and immutable." Your letter states that the "Convention has declared on six occasions its religious beliefs opposing abortion." Finally, you cite to the Baptist Faith and Message, which, according to your letter, states that "[m]arriage is the uniting of one man and one woman."

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the University from "engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission's sexual

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.*

orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, sex outside marriage, pregnancy, and abortion[; . . .] from subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student behaviors[; or from] making all employment decisions . . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee behaviors.”

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20202

OCT 22 2014

Fr. Sean O. Sheridan  
President  
Franciscan University of Steubenville  
1235 University Blvd.  
Steubenville, OH 43952

Dear Fr. Sheridan:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your August 27, 2014, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Franciscan University of Steubenville (University) of Steubenville, Ohio from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

Title IX and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provide that Title IX does not apply to educational institutions controlled by a religious organization to the extent application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explains that the University is a "Catholic co-educational institution of higher education" that is "owned and controlled by a religious organization of the Catholic faith," specifically the "Franciscan Friars of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus."

Your exemption request points to a recent OCR resolution agreement in which a school district agreed to allow a transgender male student to use the restroom, locker room, and living facilities consistent with the student's gender identity, and to play on boys' athletic teams. You explain that the requirements of that resolution agreement are "opposed to Franciscan University's Catholic mission and identity and to the tenets of the Catholic Church." Specifically, you cite to Catholic theology that asserts that "human beings are created male or female" and that the "tenets of the Catholic Church are violated by manipulating one's God-given sex or gender and/or by attempting to identify as the sex or gender opposite to one's God-given sex/gender."

You state that, for these reasons, the University seeks an exemption from Title IX to the extent that it is interpreted as it was in the OCR resolution agreement described above. We interpret

this statement as a request for exemption from provisions 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.32 (governing housing), 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms), and 106.41 (governing athletics). The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they require a recipient to treat students consistent with their gender identity, but doing so would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and its implementing regulations other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

October 13, 2015

Dr. Richard Kriegbaum  
President  
Fresno Pacific University  
1717 S. Chestnut Ave.  
Fresno, CA 93702

Dear Dr. Kriegbaum:

I write to respond to your June 2, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681, for Fresno Pacific University (University) of Fresno, California. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request stated that throughout its history, the University "has always maintained its sponsorship by the Conferences of Mennonite Brethren Churches, and now specifically the Pacific District Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches." Your request also stated that the University "has always existed for the purpose of providing education consistent with the beliefs of the Mennonite Brethren denomination." Your letter explains that the University's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws "provide that . . . persons who are elected and serve as delegates to the Convention of the Pacific District Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches . . . shall have the authority to elect sixty percent (60%) of the voting members of the Board of Trustees of Fresno Pacific University." Your letter further notes that the University's Bylaws "state that the Confession of Faith of the Pacific District Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches shall be the Confession of Faith of Fresno Pacific University and that no amendment to the Articles of

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

Incorporation or Bylaws of Fresno Pacific University may be made which would conflict with the Confession of Faith of the Pacific District Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.”

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX “to the extent that they are interpreted to address gender identity discrimination and to the extent that they restrict the University’s freedom to enforce its Values and Behavioral Standards statement and otherwise conduct Fresno Pacific University in accordance with the Confession of Faith.” In support of this request you cite to the Confession of Faith of the United States Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, which states that “God created them [humans] male and female in the image of God. ... Disciples maintain sexual purity and marital faithfulness and reject immoral premarital and extramarital relationships and all homosexual practices. ... Marriage is a covenant relationship intended to unite a man and a woman for life. At creation, God designed marriage for companionship, sexual union and the birth and nurture of children. Sexual intimacy rightfully takes place only within marriage.” Your letter also cites to the University’s Values and Behavioral Standards statement, by which all students are required to abide, and which provides that “[p]hysical intimacy is reserved for individuals within a marriage covenant. Cohabitation with a boyfriend/girlfriend, or members of the opposite sex, outside of the marriage relationship is prohibited. Certain sexual behaviors are prohibited. These include but are not limited to: fornication, adultery, and same-sex romantic relations.” Your letter explains that the University “maintains gender-specific housing and allows members of one gender to be present in residence halls of the other only during specified hours and then only with the door remaining open.”

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from “Title IX and the following regulations (in their current or future forms) to the extent that they are interpreted to address gender identity discrimination and to the extent that they restrict the University’s freedom to enforce its Values and Behavioral Standards statement and otherwise conduct Fresno Pacific University in accordance with the Confession of Faith:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.22 (governing preferences in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(governing education programs or activities)
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.34 (governing access to classes and schools);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.35 (governing access to institutions of vocational education);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.36 (governing counseling and use of appraisal and counseling materials);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.38 (governing employment assistance to students)
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.39 (governing health and insurance benefits and services)

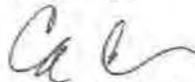
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.43 (governing standards for measuring skill or progress in physical education classes); and
- 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.51-61 (governing employment).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they are interpreted to address gender identity discrimination and to the extent that they conflict with the University's Values and Behavioral Standards statement or the Confession of Faith.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

October 26, 2015

William J. Edgar  
Interim President  
Geneva College  
3200 College Avenue  
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Dear President Edgar:

I write to respond to your August 12, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Geneva College (College) of Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the College "was established in 1848 by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA). The College continues to be owned and controlled by the church through a Board of Corporators, all of the members thereof are members of the denomination appointed by the Synod of the RPCNA. Trustees of the College are elected by the Board of the Corporators on the condition they support the mission of the College and its continuing relationship with the church."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX and its accompanying regulations "to the extent they are interpreted to reach sexual orientation or gender identity discrimination, and to the extent they restrict the College's freedom to apply and enforce its policies and beliefs on the sanctity of human life." In support of this request you explain that "[t]he College adheres to the confessional standards of the Westminster Confession of Faith and its catechisms." Your letter explains that RPCNA's Constitution states that "When men [and women] understand the message of the Bible, they must earnestly seek to obey that message in all that they think and do." Specifically, your letter cites to Biblical passages that say that "God

created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Your letter also explains that the 2010 Constitution of the RPCNA states that “[p]remarital sex relations or promiscuous sex practices as well as homosexuality and other perversions of the natural order are violations of God’s law and purpose.” According to your letter, “[t]he College understands that matters related to practice of homosexuality and unnatural gender identity are forbidden by the Constitution of the RPCNA and by scripture.” Finally, your letter explains that the 2013 Constitution of the RPCNA states that “[u]nborn children are living creatures in the image of God . . . . Unborn children are to be treated as human persons in all decisions and actions involving them. Deliberately induced abortion, except possibly to save the mother’s life, is murder.”

You state that, for these reasons, the College is requesting an exemption from Title IX and the following implementing regulations “to the extent they are interpreted to reach sexual orientation or gender identity discrimination, and to the extent they restrict the College’s freedom to apply and enforce its policies and beliefs on the sanctity of human life:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.22 (governing preferences in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31 (governing education programs or activities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.34 (governing access to classes and schools);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.36 (governing counseling and use of appraisal and counseling materials);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.38 (governing employment assistance to students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.39 (governing health and insurance benefits and services);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.43 (governing standards for measuring skill or progress in physical education classes); and
- 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.51-61 (governing employment).

The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges

that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

May 23, 2014

Dr. Robin Baker  
President  
George Fox University  
414 N. Meridian St.  
Newberg, Oregon 97132

Dear Dr. Baker:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your March 31, 2014, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for George Fox University (University) of Newberg, Oregon from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to educational institutions controlled by religious organizations to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the institution's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University, which is owned by the Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends (part of the Quaker movement), is "a Christ-centered community" that is "committed to providing a Christian education." You note that four of the University's seven Board of Trustees members must be Friends. You state that the University's biblical belief is that human beings are created male and female, and that the University "cannot in good conscience support or encourage an individual to live in conflict with biblical principles."

Your exemption request points to a recent OCR resolution agreement in which a school district agreed to allow a transgender male student to use the restroom, locker room, and living facilities consistent with the student's gender identity, and to play on boys' athletic teams. You explain that the University "would not be able to make similar accommodations consistent with [your] religious beliefs." You further state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from Title IX and its

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

Dr. Robin Baker, George Fox University  
May 23, 2014  
Page 2 of 2

implementing regulation to the extent that they prohibit discrimination based on gender identity. We interpret this statement as a request for exemption from provisions 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.32 (governing housing), 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms), and 106.41 (governing athletics). The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they require a recipient to treat students consistent with their gender identity, but doing so would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

October 30, 2015

Dr. Anthony W. Allen  
President  
Hannibal-LaGrange University  
2800 Palmyra Road  
Hannibal, MO 63401

Dear Dr. Allen:

I write to respond to your August 27, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Hannibal-LaGrange University (University) of Hannibal, Missouri from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University, "a Southern Baptist institution of higher education," "is controlled by a religious organization. That organization is the Missouri Baptist Convention . . . whose constituency is the cooperating Southern Baptist churches of Missouri." Your letter states that "[p]ursuant to the University's Charter, the Missouri Baptist Convention controls the University in part by exercising its right to elect the entire membership of the board of directors of the University, the governing body of the University."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, and gender identity." In support of this request, you cite to The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, the most recent statement of faith adopted by the Convention. According to your letter, that statement of faith explains that the tenets of the Convention are that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as

the means for procreation, that God made people in male and female form, and that the “gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God’s creation.”

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention’s religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the University from “engaging in recruiting, admissions, and financial assistance under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission’s sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, and sex outside marriage[; . . . from] subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics[; or from] making all employment decisions. . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, and gender identity in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.22 (governing preferences in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, or gender identity and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a

complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

January 13, 2016

Dr. Lanny Hall  
President  
Hardin-Simmons University  
Box 16000  
Abilene, Texas 79698

Dear Dr. Hall:

I write to respond to your October 20, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Hardin-Simmons University (University) of Abilene, Texas from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University, "a Baptist institution of higher education," "is controlled by a religious organization, the Baptist General Convention of Texas . . . whose constituency is the cooperating Baptist churches of Texas." Your letter states that "[p]ursuant to the University's Articles of Incorporation, . . . [t]he Baptist General Convention of Texas controls the University in part by exercising its right to select a majority of the board of trustees of the University, the governing body of the University."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion." In support of this request, you cite to the Baptist Faith and Message, which expresses the "religious tenets of the Convention." According to your letter, the Baptist Faith and Message

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

states that “It is God[']s unique gift . . . to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel for sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.” You explain that the Baptist Faith and Message states that “Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord.” Your letter further states that the “Convention has declared ‘. . . the Bible teaches that the ideal for sexual behavior is the marital union between husband and wife and that all other sexual relations- whether premarital, extramarital, or homosexual- are contrary to God’s purposes and thus sinful.’” You also explain that the “Convention has declared its religious belief that ‘gender is based on biological attributes and is seen as a gift from God and immutable.’”

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention’s religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the University from “engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission’s sexual orientation, transgendered status, marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, sex outside marriage, pregnancy, and abortion[; . . . from] subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics[; or from] making all employment decisions. . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

April 24, 2015

William N. Ellis  
President and CEO  
Howard Payne University  
1000 Fisk Street  
Brownwood, Texas 76801-2715

Dear President Ellis:

I write to respond to your March 25, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681, for Howard Payne University (University) of Brownwood, Texas. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University "is controlled by Baptists," in particular, the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Your letter states that "Every member of the board of trustees must be a member of a Baptist church. The majority of the members of the board of trustees are elected by the Convention."

Your letter requests a religious exemption "from provisions of Title IX to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the religious tenets of the Baptist General Convention of Texas . . . regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgender status), pregnancy, and abortion."

In support of this request, you state that "Messengers to the Convention's annual meetings have reaffirmed the view of Scripture on the sacredness and dignity of all human life, both born and

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

unborn, and supported legislation prohibiting abortion except to save the life of the mother or in cases of incest or rape.” You also cite to a Resolution on Transgender Issues that the Executive Board of the Convention adopted in February 2015 that, according to your letter, states that “gender is based on biological attributes and is seen as a gift from God and immutable” and that the Convention affirms “that in creation God made male and female as biological gender assignment.” Finally, you cite to the Baptist Faith and Message, adopted by the Convention in 1988. According to your letter, that statement of faith states that “Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman” and that it provides “the channel for sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.”

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention’s religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the College from “engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission’s sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, sex outside marriage, pregnancy and abortion: . . . [f]rom subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics[; or from] making all employment decisions. . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, gender identity, pregnancy and abortion in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions);

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marriage status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

May 13, 2016

Dr. David Wright  
President  
Indiana Wesleyan University  
4201 South Washington Street  
Marion, Indiana 46953

Dear Dr. Wright:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your March 18, 2016, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Indiana Wesleyan University (University) of Marion, Indiana from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance. We are processing your request and have determined that we need further information.

Section 901(a)(3) of Title IX, 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a)(3), and the Department's implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provide that Title IX and its regulations do not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would not be consistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Such educational institutions are allowed to claim an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of the Department's Title IX regulations that conflict with a specific tenet of the controlling religious organization.

An educational institution will normally be considered to be controlled by a religious organization under Title IX if one or more of the following conditions prevail:

- (1) It is a school or department of divinity, defined as an institution or a department or branch of an institution whose program is specifically for the education of students to prepare them to become ministers of religion or to enter upon some other religious vocation, or to prepare them to teach theological subjects; or
- (2) It requires its faculty, students or employees to be members of, or otherwise espouse a personal belief in, the religion of the organization by which it claims to be controlled; or

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

- (3) Its charter and catalog, or other official publication, contains an explicit statement that it is controlled by a religious organization or an organ thereof or is committed to the doctrines of a particular religion, and the members of its governing body are appointed by the controlling religious organization or an organ thereof, and it receives a significant amount of financial support from the controlling religious organization or an organ thereof.

Your letter states that the University was “founded by The Wesleyan Church to provide higher education within a Christian environment for Wesleyan youth, and remains an institution of The Wesleyan Church to this day.”

Although your letter states that the University was founded by and is an institution of the Wesleyan Church, it does not sufficiently state that the University is controlled by the Church. Thus, OCR requires further information to determine whether the Church’s relationship with the University meets the standard for “control” as described above. If you would like OCR to make a determination regarding the University’s religious exemption request, please provide additional clarification regarding whether the Wesleyan Church or another religious organization controls the University. Feel free to provide any explanation or supporting documentation that may be helpful to OCR’s understanding. If you no longer wish to pursue your request for an exemption at this time, please let us know and we will treat your request as withdrawn.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at (202) 453-6048.

Sincerely,



Seth M. Galanter  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

January 6, 2016

Dr. Derry Connolly  
President  
John Paul the Great Catholic University  
200 West Grand Avenue  
Escondido, CA 92025

Dear Dr. Connolly:

I write to respond to your August 25, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for John Paul the Great Catholic University (University) of Escondido, California from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University "is a non-profit institution of higher education . . . dedicated both to creativity, leadership, and entrepreneurship and to being faithfully Catholic – living the Gospel of Jesus." Your letter explains that the University's mission is to "impact culture for Christ by forming students as creators and innovators, leaders and entrepreneurs at the intersections of media, business and theology, guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ as preserved by His Catholic Church." Your letter states that the University's "educational philosophy is grounded in the Catholic Church's teachings, sacred traditions, and Scripture. Every faculty member commits to harmony with Catholic Church teachings in speech and action and the University expects all trustees, faculty, and staff to 'celebrate the positive spiritual and entrepreneurial components of its mission and to eschew betraying or obstructing what the institution is striving to build.'" Your letter explains that the commitment to live in harmony with the teachings of the Catholic Church extends to "both applicants and existing faculty."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent they are

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

interpreted to reach gender identity or sexual orientation discrimination, and to the extent they restrict [the University's] freedom to apply and enforce its Policy on Human Sexuality." In support of this request, you explain that the University adopted its Policy on Human Sexuality on May 15, 2015. Although your letter did not enclose the Policy on Human Sexuality as referenced, according to your letter, the Policy on Human Sexuality states that "[i]n accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ as preserved by His Catholic Church, the [University] community believes that God created all humans – male and female in His image and likeness and with equal dignity, and that due to sin and human brokenness, our experience of our sex and gender is not always as God designed . . . The [University] policy on gender identity affirms that one's gender is based upon one's biological sex . . . and holds firmly that any tension between one's biological sex and experience of gender identity should not be resolved through medical intervention or adoption of dress or practices of the opposite biological sex." The Policy on Human Sexuality further states that "the [University] community believes that marriage is between one man and one woman for life . . . [and] [i]n agreement with the Catechism of the Catholic Church . . . affirm[s] that 'human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception.'"

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions "to the extent they are interpreted to reach gender identity or sexual orientation discrimination, and to the extent they restrict [the University's] freedom to apply and enforce its Policy on Human Sexuality." Based on the supporting statements in your letter, OCR interprets this to include regulatory provisions that prohibit discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, and parental status.

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.22 (governing preferences in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31 (governing education programs or activities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.34 (governing access to classes and schools);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.36 (governing counseling and use of appraisal and counseling materials);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.38 (governing employment assistance to students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.39 (governing health and insurance benefits and services);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.43 (governing standards for measuring skill or progress in physical education classes); and
- 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.51-61 (governing employment).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they that prohibit discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, and parental status.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Lhamon', is positioned above the typed name.

Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

April 29, 2015

David E. Potts  
President  
Judson College  
302 Bibb Street  
Marion, AL 36756

Dear President Potts:

I write to respond to your February 17, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Judson College (College) of Marion, Alabama, from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the College, "a Southern Baptist institution of higher education," "is controlled by a religious organization. That organization is the Alabama Baptist State Convention." Your letter enclosed a copy of the College's charter, which states that the College is "a distinctly Christian Liberal Arts College for Women. As an entity of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, Judson affirms its denominational loyalty, and accepts its responsibility to its Baptist constituency and to the total community and state." (Article III, Section 1(a)). The charter further explains that "[t]o be nominated for the office of trustee, a member must be in good standing of a cooperating Alabama Baptist church." (Article V, Section A). You also enclosed a copy of the College's bylaws, which state that the "management of the College shall be vested in a Board of Trustees consisting of not more than 32 rotating members plus such other honorary life members as shall be elected by the Alabama Baptist State Convention." (Article I, Section 1).

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets

400 MARYLAND AVE, S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion.” In support of this request, you cite to The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, the most recent statement of faith adopted by the Convention. According to your letter, that statement of faith explains that the tenets of the Convention are that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as the means for procreation, that God made man in male and female form, and that the “gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God’s creation.” You further cite the Convention’s belief that one should “speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.”

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention’s religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the College from “engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission’s sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, sex outside marriage, pregnancy, and abortion[; . . .] from subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics[; or from] making all employment decisions. . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the College is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

April 22, 2014

Jerry L. Falwell, Jr.  
Chancellor and President  
Liberty University  
1971 University Boulevard  
Lynchburg, VA 24515

Dear Mr. Falwell:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your January 16, 2014, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Liberty University (University) of Lynchburg, Virginia from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681-1688, as it relates to imposing discipline on students who have abortions. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance. The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.40(b) prohibits a recipient from discriminating against any student on the basis of a student's pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy or recovery therefrom.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to educational institutions controlled by religious organizations to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the institution's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University was founded "as a ministry of the Thomas Road Baptist Church ('TRBC')" and that the University's Articles of Incorporation state that the University's purpose is "to glorify God by 'equipping men and women in higher education in fidelity to the Christian faith expressed through the Holy Scriptures, the orthodox religious and moral foundation of that education being a central and perpetual purpose and mission.'" You note that faculty members must affirm the University's Doctrinal Position before instructing students, and that faculty, staff, and undergraduate residential students are required to attend convocation services. Your request states that "the policy regarding student abortions reflects a bona fide and sincerely-held religious conviction, maintained in accordance with the established religious tenets upon which Liberty University was founded. The genuine religious and historic Biblical basis for opposing abortion, as derived from Holy Scripture is . . . held out unequivocally as TRBC doctrine."

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

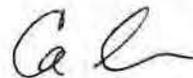
The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

You further state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from Title IX and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b) to allow the University to maintain a policy allowing for the discipline of students who have an abortion. Because 34 C.F.R. § 106.40(b) is the provision that would be most applicable to such a policy, we instead interpret your request as a request for a religious exemption from 34 C.F.R. § 106.40(b). Based on the foregoing considerations, the University is exempt from the requirements of 34 C.F.R. § 106.40(b) governing termination of pregnancy.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. E. Lhamon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

July 31, 2015

Dr. Rick Brewer  
President  
Louisiana College  
1140 College Drive  
Box 583  
Pineville, LA 71359

Dear President Brewer:

I write to respond to your July 17, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Louisiana College (College) of Pineville, Louisiana, from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the College is "affiliated with the Louisiana Baptist Convention." According to your letter, the College's Articles of Incorporation provide that "[t]he college is governed and controlled by its Board of Trustees, which consists of thirty-three members, who are elected by the Louisiana Baptist Convention . . . These elected members of the Board are members in good standing of a Baptist church in Louisiana cooperating with the Louisiana Baptist Convention." Your letter also states that "[t]he college follows biblical principles in its policies and practices applicable to Christian education, and to its students and employees."

Your letter requests an exemption from the provisions of Title IX to the extent they prohibit discrimination based on marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion so that the College "may make decisions consistent with its religious beliefs and principles in regard to its students and employees." In support of this

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

request, you state that the College follows the “teachings of the Bible and the beliefs of the Baptist Church” and refer to The Baptist Faith and Message as the College’s statement of faith. According to your request, these teachings and beliefs provide “that God created two sexes, male and female; that marriage is between one man and one woman for a lifetime; and that extramarital sex, premarital sex, and the practice of homosexuality are sinful behaviors, and therefore prohibited.” Your letter explains that “employees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Louisiana College’s Christian values. As such, employment of someone who identifies as being of the opposite sex from their birth gender and who expresses that identification . . . is against the college’s religious beliefs.” Your letter further explains that “[t]he college’s religious beliefs prohibit pre-marital sex and elective abortion.” Finally, your letter states that “if students and/or employees exhibit behavior, which is not in keeping with the College’s mission and vision, then the College may impose sanctions up to, and including, expulsion from the college or termination of employment.”

You state that, for these reasons, the College is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions so that “the College may make decisions consistent with its religious beliefs and principles in regard to its students and employees:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21(b)(1)(iii) (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21(c) (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51(a) (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51(b)(6) (governing employment); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions).

The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

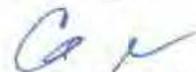
Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical

Dr. Rick Brewer – page 3

impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Lhamon', is positioned above the typed name.

Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

JUN 19 2013

Dr. Marty Marriott  
President  
Maranatha Baptist Bible College  
745 West Main Street  
Watertown, Wisconsin 53094

Dear President Marriott:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested for Maranatha Baptist Bible College (College), of Watertown, WI, a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to educational institutions controlled by religious organizations to the extent application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the institution's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the sections of the Title IX regulation that conflict.

In your request for a religious exemption from Title IX, you explained that the College is controlled by Baptist principles. The information you provided indicated the College is controlled by a constituency of independent Baptist churches that practice tenets of biblical teachings and morals. The College requires applicants to submit a clear salvation testimony.

Your request explained that the College has the primary purpose of training Christian leaders in the local church and the world; it is because of biblical teaching concerning the requirements of church leaders that the College requests the Title IX exemption. You have supplied information that establishes that the admissions policy at the College does not allow consideration of applications of persons who are divorced as consistent with the tenets of the religious organization that controls the institution. Students admitted to the College are also expected to abide by the College's "Personal Life and Testimony" policies, which prohibit obtaining or assisting someone to obtain an abortion. The College's Admissions website indicates it does not process applications from divorced individuals or individuals married to a divorced person. The College's application forms request medical information regarding pregnancy.

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

You claim that the policies you identify would violate certain sections of the regulation implementing Title IX absent a religious exemption. Specifically, you are seeking an exemption from the provision of the Title IX implementing regulation 34 C.F.R. §106.21(c), to the extent that the provision prohibits the application of any admission rules concerning the marital status of a student or applicant that treats persons differently based on sex and discrimination in admissions based on termination of pregnancy.

Based on the foregoing considerations, the College is exempted from the requirements of 34 C.F.R. §106.21(c) of the Title IX regulation as it pertains to the application of any admission rules concerning the marital status of a student or applicant that treats persons differently based on sex and discrimination in admissions based on termination of pregnancy to the extent that compliance with the Title IX regulation conflicts with the religious tenets followed by the institution.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from any section of the Title IX regulation not specifically mentioned. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. I regret the delay in responding to your original request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Seth Galanter  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

October 13, 2015

Dr. Lee Royce  
President  
Mississippi College  
Box 4001  
101 Nelson Hall  
Clinton, MS 39058

Dear Dr. Royce:

I write to respond to your September 11, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Mississippi College (College) of Clinton, Mississippi from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the College, "a Southern Baptist institution of higher education," "is controlled by a religious organization. That organization is the Mississippi Baptist Convention . . . whose constituency is the cooperating Southern Baptist churches of Mississippi." Your letter states that "[p]ursuant to the College's Charter, the Mississippi Baptist Convention controls the College by electing the College's board of trustees."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy and abortion." In support of this request, you cite to the Convention's religious authority, the Bible. According to your letter, that Bible teaches that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as the means for procreation and that "[c]hildren, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord." Your letter further states that the Convention has declared that "[t]he union of one man and one woman is the only form of marriage prescribed in

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

the Bible . . . [t]he Bible affirms that all human life, both born and preborn, is a person bearing the image of God”; and “God’s design was the creation of two distinct and complementary sexes, male and female.”

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention’s religious tenets for the College to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the College from “engaging in recruiting, admissions, and financial assistance under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission’s sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, pregnancy, abortion, and sex outside marriage[; . . . from] subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics[; or from] making all employment decisions. . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the College is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, pregnancy, abortion, and gender identity in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention:”

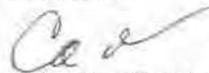
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.22 (governing preferences in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, pregnancy, abortion, and gender identity and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

January 4, 2016

Dr. R. Alton Lacey  
President  
Missouri Baptist University  
One College Park Drive  
Saint Louis, MO 63141

Dear Dr. Lacey:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your June 18, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Missouri Baptist University (formerly Missouri Baptist College) of St. Louis, Missouri from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance. We are processing your request and have determined that we need further information.

Section 901(a)(3) of Title IX, 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a)(3), and the Department's implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provide that Title IX and its regulations do not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would not be consistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Such educational institutions are allowed to claim an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of the Department's Title IX regulations that conflict with a specific tenet of the controlling religious organization.

An educational institution will normally be considered to be controlled by a religious organization under Title IX if one or more of the following conditions prevail:

- (1) It is a school or department of divinity, defined as an institution or a department or branch of an institution whose program is specifically for the education of students to prepare them to become ministers of religion or to enter upon some other religious vocation, or to prepare them to teach theological subjects; or
- (2) It requires its faculty, students or employees to be members of, or otherwise espouse a personal belief in, the religion of the organization by which it claims to be controlled; or
- (3) Its charter and catalog, or other official publication, contains an explicit statement that it is controlled by a religious organization or an organ thereof or is committed to the doctrines of a particular religion, and the members of its

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

governing body are appointed by the controlling religious organization or an organ thereof, and it receives a significant amount of financial support from the controlling religious organization or an organ thereof.

Your letter enclosed a copy of a letter involving an earlier religious exemption request granted by OCR to Missouri Baptist College on April 19, 1996. That OCR letter stated that your earlier exemption request

indicate[d] that the Missouri Baptist College is controlled by the Missouri Baptist Convention. . . . The College is controlled by the Missouri Baptist Convention, and all members of the Board of Trustees of Missouri Baptist College are elected by the Convention. The Convention fosters the College and provides it substantial support.

Based on that description, OCR determined that “[t]his relationship between the Missouri Baptist Convention and the College establish that Missouri Baptist College is controlled by a religious organization as is required for consideration for exemption.”

The information provided in the University’s 2015 letter differs from the information described in the 1996 OCR letter. Your 2015 letter states that “[s]ince its foundation the University has maintained a close, symbiotic relationship with the Baptist community of believers and is governed by trustees who are members of Baptist churches in Missouri. The board of trustees of Missouri Baptist University consists of twenty-seven persons, seventy-five percent (75%) of whom are required by the University’s Articles of Incorporation to be members of Baptist churches located in Missouri.”

Given these different descriptions, OCR requires further information to determine whether the University’s relationship with the Missouri Baptist Convention continues to meet the standard for “control” as described above. If you would like OCR to make a determination regarding the University’s religious exemption request, please provide additional clarification regarding whether the Missouri Baptist Convention or another religious organization controls the University. Feel free to provide any explanation or supporting documentation that may be helpful to OCR’s understanding. If you no longer wish to pursue your request for an exemption at this time, please let us know and we will treat your request as withdrawn.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at (202) 453-6048.

Sincerely,



Seth Galanter  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

May 4, 2015

Randall J. Pannell  
Acting CEO and Vice President of Academic Affairs  
North Greenville University  
P.O. Box 1892  
Tigerville, SC 29688

Dear Mr. Pannell:

I write to respond to your February 9, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for North Greenville University (University) of Tigerville, South Carolina, from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University is "governed and controlled by its Board of Trustees, which consists of twenty-five members who are elected by the South Carolina Baptist Convention." Your letter enclosed a copy of the University's Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation, which also states that the University's trustees "shall be appointed by the South Carolina Baptist Convention." (Section 9). You also attach the University's 2014-2015 Catalogue, which states that the University is "[a]ffiliated with and committed to the South Carolina Baptist Convention" and that an "education at North Greenville University is regarded as preparation for effective Christian service and witness. The Bible, as the inspired and infallible Word of God, is the solid foundation of the curriculum and the basis of the philosophy of education and of life."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from certain provisions of Title IX where compliance "would be inconsistent with the deeply held religious beliefs and practices of the South Carolina Baptist Convention and North Greenville University." In support of this request, you cite to the Southern Baptist Convention's statement of faith, *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, passages from the University's Student and Employee Handbooks, and the Bible. According to your letter, the statement of faith explains that the tenets of the Convention provide that "Christians should oppose ... all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography" and "speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception until natural death." You also cite the Southern Baptist Convention's statement on transgender identity, which according to your letter "affirm[s] God's good design that gender identity is determined by biological sex and not by one's self-perception." In further support of the request for exemption related to human sexuality, you state that "the teachings of the Bible and the beliefs of the Baptist Church, both of which are followed by the University, are that God

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.*

created two sexes, male and female; that marriage is between one man and one woman; and that extramarital sex, premarital sex, and the practice of homosexuality are sinful behaviors, and are therefore prohibited.”

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions to the extent that they would require the University to act in a manner that is inconsistent with the Convention’s religious tenets:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21(b)(iii) (governing different treatment on the basis of sex in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21(c) (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing the use of different rules of behavior or sanctions based on sex);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing the use of different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51(a) (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51(b)(6) (governing leaves of absence from employment for pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, and termination of pregnancy); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

August 18, 2014

Dr. David Alexander  
President  
Northwest Nazarene University  
623 S. University Boulevard  
Nampa, Idaho 83686

Dear Dr. Alexander:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your July 29, 2014, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Northwest Nazarene University (University) of Nampa, Idaho from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University "is grounded in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, and is an educational expression of the Northwest region of the Church of the Nazarene." The letter explains that the school is "assigned by the Church of the Nazarene to serve seven districts of the denomination" and that its "Board of Trustees is elected from the members of the seven districts." Your letter states that the University's Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation require all members of the University's Board of Trustees to be members of the Church of Nazarene and that half of the Board members must be clergy. Your letter further explains that the University's "faculty and staff are required to profess faith and are prohibited from professing views not in harmony with the Articles of Faith of the Church of the Nazarene." In addition, students are expected to maintain a lifestyle that is consistent with the directives and guidelines established by the General Assemblies of the Church and published in the Church of Nazarene Manual.

You state that the University and the Church of Nazarene's belief, based on biblical interpretation, is that human beings are created male and female, and that the University

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

“reject[s] all attempts at construing sexuality or sexual identity by medically altering the human body . . . or . . . practicing behaviors characteristic of the opposite sex as morally objectionable and sinful.” You refer to the Church of Nazarene’s Manual as evidence of the Church’s belief that homosexuality is a sin. Additionally, because the Manual states that the Church is opposed to abortion, the University also opposes the “intentional termination of a pregnancy absent a very few compelling circumstances.”

Your exemption request points to a recent OCR resolution agreement in which a school district agreed to allow a transgender male student to use the restroom, locker room, and living facilities consistent with the student’s gender identity, and to play on boys’ athletic teams. You explain that the University “would not be able to make similar accommodations consistent with [its] religious beliefs and convictions.” You further state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination based on gender identity: 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions); 106.32 (governing housing), 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms), and 106.41 (governing athletics). The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they require a recipient to treat students consistent with their gender identity, but doing so would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Your request also seeks a “religious exemption from any regulation prohibiting discrimination against a student on account of termination of pregnancy.” We interpret that as a request for exemption from 34 C.F.R. § 106.40(b). The University is exempt from this provision to the extent that compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

December 16, 2014

David Wesley Whitlock  
President  
Oklahoma Baptist University  
500 West University  
OBU Box 61241  
Shawnee, OK 74804

Dear President Whitlock:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your November 24, 2014, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Oklahoma Baptist University (University) of Shawnee, Oklahoma from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University "is a Southern Baptist institution of higher education" and stated that it is controlled by the Baptist General Convention of the State of Oklahoma. Your letter enclosed a copy of the University's charter, which states that the University's purpose is "to encourage, support, provide, and maintain Christian education and to engage in Christian undertakings which are in keeping with the purpose of the Baptist General Convention of the State of Oklahoma." You also enclosed a copy of the University's bylaws, which state that the "Board of Trustees of the University shall consist of thirty Trustees who shall be elected by the Baptist General Convention of the State of Oklahoma," (Article II, Section 1.) The bylaws further state that the "President of the University must be an active member of a church affiliated with The Baptist General Convention of the State of Oklahoma." (Article V, Section 2.)

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX that "would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion." In support of this request, you cite to The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, the most recent statement of faith adopted by the Convention. According to your letter, that statement of faith explains that the tenets of the Convention are that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as the means for procreation, that God made man in male and female form, and that the "gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation." You further cite the Convention's belief that one should "speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death."

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination based on marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20202

OCT 22 2014

John deSteiguer  
President  
Oklahoma Christian University  
2501 E. Memorial Road  
Edmond, OK 73013

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your September 5, 2014, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Oklahoma Christian University (the University) of Edmond, Oklahoma from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

Title IX and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provide that Title IX does not apply to educational institutions controlled by religious organizations to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explains that the University is controlled by the Churches of Christ and that its "mission is to transform lives for Christian faith, scholarship and service." You state that each full-time faculty member must be a member in good standing of the Churches of Christ, and that inactive or token membership in the church is grounds for dismissal. Additionally, your letter references a requirement in the University's Articles of Incorporation that each member of the University's Board of Trustees must be "an active, faithful member, in good standing, of a local congregation of the Church of Christ."

Among the religious tenets followed by the University and its controlling organization (the Churches of Christ) is that "gender identity is given by God and is revealed in one's birth sex." You also state that the University, in compliance with the religious tenets of its controlling organization, adheres to the belief that "all sexual relations outside of a heterosexual marriage covenant are sin." Your letter cites to several Biblical passages in support of these tenets.

Based on these tenets, your letter seeks an exemption from Title IX and the following provisions of its implementing regulation to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation:

[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admissions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31 (governing education programs or activities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.34 (governing access to classes and schools);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.38 (governing employment assistance to students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.39 (governing health insurance benefits and services);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment and hiring of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.55 (governing job classification and structure);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment actions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation or require a recipient to treat students consistent with their gender identity, but doing so would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and its implementing regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

December 22, 2014

Everett Piper  
President  
Oklahoma Wesleyan University  
2201 Silver Lake Road  
Bartlesville, OK 74006

Dear President Piper:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your November 14, 2014, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Oklahoma Wesleyan University (University) of Bartlesville, Oklahoma from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University "was founded by The Wesleyan Church to provide higher education within a Christian environment for Wesleyan youth, and is owned and operated by The Wesleyan Church to this day."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX that would "curtail the University's freedom to respond to transgender individuals in accordance with its religious convictions and those of The Wesleyan Church." In support of this request, you cite to The Wesleyan Church statement entitled "A Wesleyan View of Gender Identity and Expression." According to your letter, the statement sets forth The Wesleyan Church's tenets related to gender identity, specifically that "[g]ender differentiation is sacred." Your exemption request points to a recent OCR resolution agreement in which a school district agreed to allow a transgender male student to use the restroom, locker room, and living facilities consistent with the student's gender identity, and to play on boys' athletic teams. You explain that, to the extent that this agreement indicates that Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity, compliance "would be inconsistent with the religious tenets of [the University] and The Wesleyan Church."

Your letter also requests an exemption from the Title IX provisions related to abortion. In support of this request, you cite to The Wesleyan Church's statement on "Sanctity of Life." You explain that the University has adopted a "Statement on Human Life" that prohibits "all members of the [University] community from promoting or participating in any act of, or related to, aborting a child whether such a child is pre-birth or post-birth."

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.*

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or abortion:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.22 (governing preference in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31 (governing sex discrimination in education programs or activities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.34 (governing access to classes and schools);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.36 (governing counseling);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.38 (governing employment assistance to students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.39 (governing health and insurance benefits and services);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.43 (governing standards for measuring skill or progress in physical education classes); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51-61 (governing employment).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



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](http://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.*



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

March 24, 2016

Kenneth W. Hagin  
Senior Pastor and President  
Rhema Bible Training College  
P.O. Box 50126  
Tulsa, OK 74150-0126

Dear President Hagin:

I write to respond to your January 6, 2016, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Rhema Bible Training College (College) of Tulsa, Oklahoma, from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explains that the College is "a seminary for the training of ministers of the Gospel," and "is under the corporate umbrella of and is fully controlled by Rhema Bible Church." Your letter requests a religious exemption from certain provisions of Title IX "to the extent they are interpreted to reach sexual orientation and gender identity issues." In support of this request, you cite to the statement of beliefs of Rhema Bible Church, which states that the Church accepts "the New Covenant, as recorded in the New Testament . . . as [its] infallible guide in matters pertaining to conduct and doctrine." According to your letter, Rhema Bible Church believes that "God instituted marriage between male and female as the foundation of the family" and that "God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged other than in the context of marriage between a man and a woman." Your letter further explains that "God's design was the creation of two distinct and complementary sexes, male and female" and "a person cannot change their birth gender."

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

You explain that it would not be consistent with Rhema Bible Church's religious tenets for the College to comply with Title IX to the extent Title IX regulations reach sexual orientation and gender identity issues. You state that, for these reasons, the College is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions "to the extent they are interpreted to reach sexual orientation and gender identity":

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31 (governing education programs or activities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.34 (governing access to classes and schools);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions).

The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

May 23, 2014

Robin Keith Dummer, Ed.D.  
Interim President  
Simpson University  
2211 University View Drive  
Redding, California 96003

Dear Dr. Dummer:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Simpson University (University) of Redding, California from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to educational institutions controlled by religious organizations to the extent application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the institution's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict.

Your request explained that the University, which is owned by and affiliated with the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination, is a Christ-centered learning community and that its identity as a Christian institution is central to all its programs. You state that the University's biblical beliefs allow only for heterosexual, biologically determined male and female identities and that the University rejects any attempt by an individual to change his or her gender identity as immoral and sinful.

You supplied information explaining that any individual who violates campus standards regarding gender identity would be subject to discipline, including expulsion. Your exemption request points to a recent OCR resolution agreement in which a school district agreed to allow a transgender male student to use the restroom, locker room, and living facilities consistent with the student's gender identity, and to play on boys' athletic teams. You explain that the University "would not be able to make similar

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

Dr. Robin Keith Dummer, Simpson University

May 23, 2014

Page 2 of 2

accommodations consistent with [your] religious beliefs.” You further state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from Title IX and its implementing regulation to the extent that they prohibit discrimination based on gender identity. We interpret these statements as a request for exemption from provisions 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions), 106.32 (governing housing), 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms), and 106.41 (governing athletics). The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they require a recipient to treat students consistent with their gender identity, but doing so would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. I regret the delay in responding to your original request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

May 24, 2016

Dr. Don Dowless  
President  
Shorter University  
315 Shorter Avenue  
Rome, Georgia 30165

Dear Dr. Dowless:

I write to respond to your January 14, 2016, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Shorter University (University) of Rome, Georgia from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University, "a Southern Baptist institution of higher education," "is controlled by a religious organization. That organization is the Georgia Baptist Convention . . . whose constituency is the cooperating Southern Baptist churches of Georgia." Your letter states that "[p]ursuant to the University's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, the Georgia Baptist Convention controls the University in part by exercising its right to select the entire membership of the Board of Trustees of the University."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's and the University's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion."

In support of this request, you cite to *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, the most recent

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

statement the Convention's tenets. According to your letter, that statement explains that the tenets of the Convention are that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as the means for procreation, that God made people in male and female form, that the "gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation," and that Christians should oppose adultery and homosexuality and "should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death." Your letter further states that the Convention issued a resolution stating that "the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention . . . affirm God's good design that gender identity is determined by biological sex and not by one's self-perception."

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the University from "engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission's sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, pregnancy, abortion[; from] subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics[; or from] making all employment decisions. . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics."

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions "to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, gender identity, pregnancy and abortion in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention and the University":

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

January 13, 2016

Daniel L. Akin  
President  
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary  
120 South Wingate Street  
Wake Forest, NC 27587

Dear President Akin:

I write to respond to your December 18, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (Seminary) of Wake Forest, North Carolina from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the Seminary, "a Southern Baptist institution of higher education," "is controlled by a religious organization. That organization is the Southern Baptist Convention . . . whose constituency is the cooperating Southern Baptist churches of North America." Your letter states that "[p]ursuant to the Seminary's Charter and Bylaws, the Southern Baptist Convention controls the Seminary in part by exercising its right to select the entire membership of the board of directors of the Seminary, the governing body of the Seminary."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion." In support of this request, you cite to "The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, a statement of faith adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention." According to your letter, The

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

Baptist Faith and Message 2000 states that “It is God’s unique gift . . . to provide for the man and woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means of procreation of the human race.” Your letter further states that God created people “male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God’s creation. . . . Christians should oppose . . . all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery [and] homosexuality . . . [and] should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.”

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention’s religious tenets for the Seminary to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the Seminary from “engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission’s sexual orientation, transgendered status, marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, pregnancy, and abortion[; . . . from] subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of the students[’] characteristics[; or from] making all employment decisions. . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the Seminary is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, pregnancy, abortion, and gender identity in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The Seminary is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

January 13, 2016

Dr. Loren Gresham  
President  
Southern Nazarene University  
6729 Northwest 39th Expressway  
Bethany, OK 73008

Dear Dr. Gresham:

I write to respond to your November 12, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Southern Nazarene University (University) of Bethany, Oklahoma from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University is "grounded in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition of the South Central Region of Church of the Nazarene" and that upon "hypothetical dissolution, assets are to be distributed for purposes associated with the Church of the Nazarene." In your letter, you cite to a requirement in the University's Bylaws that "[t]he Board of Trustees is elected from the members of the ten districts [of the denomination of the Church of the Nazarene] and at least half of the Board membership is comprised of clergy ordained in the Church [of the Nazarene]." You also cite to the University's Faculty Handbook, which, according to your letter, sets forth that "faculty are required to be in full accord with the doctrines, practice and Christian objectives of the University. Further, faculty are prohibited from professing views not in harmony with the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene or the Policies adopted by the Board of Trustees. Students are required to behave in accordance with lifestyle expectations consistent with the Church of the Nazarene."

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX “insofar as they prohibit discrimination based on gender identity [or . . .] on account of termination of pregnancy.” In support of this request, you cite to the Bible, the Covenant of Christian Character of the Church of the Nazarene as set forth in the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene (Manual), and the Pastoral Perspectives on Homosexuality issued by the General Superintendents of the Church of the Nazarene. According to your letter, the “University and its denomination believe that human beings are fashioned by God in His own image, and are created male and female” and so the University “reject[s] all attempts at construing sexuality or sexual identity by medically altering the human body, cross dressing, or similarly practicing behaviors characteristic of the opposite sex as morally objectionable and sinful.” Your letter also states that in accordance with the Manual, “[t]he University and the denomination also believe in the sanctity of life and by doctrine and policy strongly oppose intentional termination of pregnancy absent a very few compelling circumstances.”

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “insofar as they prohibit discrimination based on gender identity:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment).

Your letter also requests, for the reasons described above, an exemption from “any regulation prohibiting discrimination against a student on account of termination of pregnancy.” OCR interprets this as a request for an exemption from the following regulation:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or termination of pregnancy and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

March 24, 2015

Todd S. Voss  
President  
Southern Wesleyan University  
907 Wesleyan Drive  
P.O. Box 1020  
Central, South Carolina 29630

Dear President Voss:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your January 20, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681, for Southern Wesleyan University (University) of Central, South Carolina. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University "was founded by The Wesleyan Church to provide higher education within a Christian environment for Wesleyan youth, and is owned and operated by The Wesleyan Church to this day." Your letter references the University's website that states that the University "is a sponsored higher education institution of The Wesleyan Church."<sup>1</sup> Your letter also references the website of The Wesleyan Church where the University is listed as one of five Wesleyan institutions in the United States and Canada.<sup>2</sup>

Your letter requests a religious exemption from provisions of Title IX that would "curtail the University's freedom to respond to transgender individuals in accordance with its religious convictions and those of The Wesleyan Church." In support of this request, you cite to The Wesleyan Church's statement entitled "A Wesleyan View of Gender Identity and Expression." According to your letter, the statement sets forth The Wesleyan Church's tenets related to gender identity, specifically that "[g]ender differentiation is sacred." Your exemption request points to a recent OCR resolution agreement in which a school district agreed to allow a transgender male student to use the restroom, locker room, and living facilities consistent with the student's gender identity, and to play on boys' athletic teams. You explain that, to the extent that this agreement indicates that Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity, compliance "would be inconsistent with the religious tenets of [the University] and The Wesleyan Church."

<sup>1</sup> Southern Wesleyan University, <http://www.swu.edu/about-swu/>

<sup>2</sup> The Wesleyan Church, Wesleyan Colleges and Universities, <http://www.wesleyan.org/college>  
400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

Your letter also requests an exemption from the Title IX provisions related to abortion. In support of this request, you cite to The Wesleyan Church's statement on "Sanctity of Life." You explain that the University has adopted a "Statement on Human Life" that "prohibit[s] all members of the [University] community from promoting or participating in any act of, or related to, aborting a child whether such a child is pre-birth or post-birth."

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or abortion:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.22 (governing preference in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31 (governing sex discrimination in education programs and activities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.34 (governing access to classes and schools);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.36 (governing counseling);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.38 (governing employment assistance to students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.39 (governing health and insurance benefits and services);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.43 (governing standards for measuring skill or progress in physical education classes); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51-61 (governing employment).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

July 29, 2015

C. Pat Taylor  
President  
Southwest Baptist University  
1600 University Ave.  
Bolivar, MO 65613

Dear President Taylor:

I write to respond to your July 8, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Southwest Baptist University (University) of Bolivar, Missouri from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University, "a Southern Baptist institution of higher education," "is controlled by the Missouri Baptist Convention . . . whose constituency is the cooperating Baptist churches of Missouri." Your letter states that "[p]ursuant to the University's Charter, the Missouri Baptist Convention controls the University in part by exercising its right to elect the entire membership of the board of directors of the University, the governing body of the University."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, and gender identity." In support of this request, you cite to The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, the most recent statement of faith adopted by the Convention. According to your letter, that statement of faith explains that the tenets of the Convention are that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as the means for procreation, that God made people in male and female form, and that the "gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation."

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.*

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the University from "engaging in recruiting, admissions, and financial assistance under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission's sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, and sex outside marriage[; . . . from] subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics[; or from] making all employment decisions. . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics."

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions "to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, and gender identity in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention:"

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.22 (governing preferences in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

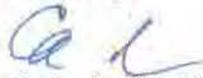
The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, or gender identity and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges

that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Lhamon', is positioned above the typed name.

Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

JUN 27 2014

Dr. Brent Ellis  
President  
Spring Arbor University  
106 E. Main St.  
Spring Arbor, MI 49283

Dear Dr. Ellis:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your correspondence to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Spring Arbor University (University) of Spring Arbor, Michigan from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to educational institutions controlled by a religious organization to the extent application of Title IX would be not be consistent with the religious tenets of such organization. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict.

Your request explained that the University is “an evangelical Christian university affiliated with the Free Methodist Church” that “emphasizes Christian principles of religion in its community and campus life.” Your letter states that students are required to attend chapel regularly and must pass Christian Perspective courses in order to graduate. According to the University’s Articles of Incorporation, the majority of members of the University’s Board of Trustees must be members of the Free Methodist Church. Your letter explains that “the University is under the control of the Free Methodist denomination through the Church members who serve as Trustees and have the majority voice on the Board, and through the President of the University, who must be a member of the Free Methodist Church.”

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

You state that the University's Code of Conduct is based on Biblical principles and the tenets of the Free Methodist Church, and that all students and employees are required to follow the Code of Conduct or risk sanctions, including dismissal from the University or termination of employment. Among the religious tenets followed by the University and its controlling organization (the Free Methodist Church) are "that God created two sexes, male and female" and that a person cannot change his or her sex assigned at birth. You also assert that the University, in compliance with the religious tenets of its controlling organization, "adhere[s] to the requirement of heterosexuality" and does not condone premarital cohabitation or extramarital sexual relationships.

Your letter states that, because of these tenets, a transgender student would not be permitted to live in University housing, play on athletic teams, share restrooms, or use locker rooms with individuals of the transgender student's gender identity. Your letter further states that transgender individuals would not be eligible for employment with the University. Your letter also provides that transgender individuals "would not be permitted to engage in dating or sexual activity with a person of their birth sex, because this behavior is considered to be homosexual in nature, based upon the University's religious beliefs." On this basis, your letter requests an exemption from Title IX and the following provisions of its implementing regulation to the extent that these provisions prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment).

The University is exempt from the provisions listed above to the extent that they prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation or require a recipient to treat students consistent with their gender identity, and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Additionally, your letter states the tenets of the Free Methodist Church "also prohibit elective abortion, pre-marital sex, extra-marital sex, and homosexual behavior, for students and employees." On this basis, you request an exemption from Title IX and the following provisions of its implementing regulation to the extent that they would require the University to "retain pregnant unmarried employees or employees who elect to terminate their pregnancy, to admit pregnant unmarried students, to retain unmarried students who elect to terminate their pregnancy, to allow unmarried students of the opposite sex to live together, to retain pregnant, unmarried students and to allow them to live in University housing, and to allow homosexual students to live together":

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21(b)(iii) (governing differential treatment on the basis of sex);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21(c) (governing admissions prohibitions on the basis of marital or parental status);

Dr. Brent Ellis, President  
Spring Arbor University  
June 24, 2014  
Page 3 of 3

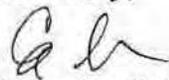
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51(a) (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51(b)(6) (governing the granting of pregnancy-related leave); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions).

The University is exempt from the provisions listed immediately above, to the extent that they require the University to treat pregnancy, abortion, sexual orientation, and pre-marital or extra-marital sexual relationships in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of its controlling organization.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and its implementing regulations other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education

cc: Diane Y. Bower, Esq., Marcoux Allen



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

March 24, 2015

D. Gregory Main  
President  
St. Gregory's University  
1900 West MacArthur Street  
Shawnee, Oklahoma 74804

Dear President Main:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your March 3, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681, for St. Gregory's University (University) of Shawnee, Oklahoma. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University is "owned by the St. Gregory's Abbey, a community of Catholic Benedictine monks."

Your letter requests exemption from provisions of Title IX "to the extent they are interpreted to reach gender identity discrimination." In support of this request, you cite to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which, according to your letter, states that "'Being man' or 'being woman' is a reality which is good and willed by God." Your exemption request points to a recent OCR resolution agreement in which a school district agreed to allow a transgender male student to use the restroom, locker room, and living facilities consistent with the student's gender identity, and to play on boys' athletic teams. You explain that, to the extent that this agreement indicates that Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity, compliance "would be inconsistent with the religious tenets of St. Gregory's."

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admissions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.22 (governing preference in admissions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31 (governing sex discrimination in education programs or activities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.34 (governing access to classes and schools);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.36 (governing counseling);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.38 (governing employment assistance to students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.39 (governing health insurance benefits and services);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.43 (governing standards for measuring skill or progress in physical education classes); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51-106.61 (governing employment).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

January 8, 2015

Dr. Jules Glanzer  
President  
Tabor College  
400 South Jefferson  
Hillsboro, KS 67063

Dear Dr. Glanzer:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your December 3, 2014, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681, for Tabor College (College) of Hillsboro, Kansas. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request stated that the College was founded "by members of the Mennonite Brethren and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren faiths" and that it "has always existed for the purpose of providing education consistent with the beliefs of the Mennonite Brethren denomination." Your letter explains that the College's Bylaws state that "the corporate owners of the college are 'the church congregations which are members of the Central District Conference, the Southern District Conference, the Latin American District Conference and the North Carolina District Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches,'" and require that "a majority of the Board of Directors be elected by these four district conferences." Your letter further notes that the Bylaws of the College require that any "doctrinal statement or other rules and/or regulations issued by the Corporation or the College shall be in complete harmony with" the Confession of Faith of the United States Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches (Confession of Faith).

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

Your exemption request points to a recent OCR resolution agreement in which a school district agreed to allow a transgender male student to use the restroom, locker room, and living facilities consistent with the student's gender identity, and to play on boys' athletic teams. You explain that "[b]ecause of its deeply held faith-based convictions regarding the distinctiveness of males and females, Tabor College would not be able to provide the kind of accommodation required" in that resolution agreement. You state that, for these reasons, the University seeks an exemption from Title IX to the extent that Title IX prohibits discrimination based on gender identity. Specifically, you cite to the Confession of Faith, which states that "God created them [humans] male and female in the image of God." Your letter states that the College cannot "support or encourage an individual to live in conflict with biblical principles in any area, including gender and gender identity." We interpret these statements as a request for exemption from provisions 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.32 (governing housing), 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms), and 106.41 (governing athletics). The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they require a recipient to treat students consistent with their gender identity, but doing so would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

December 22, 2014

Thomas A. Kinchen  
President  
The Baptist College of Florida  
5400 College Drive  
Graceville, FL 32440-1898

Dear President Kinchen:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your December 4, 2014, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681, for The Baptist College of Florida (College) of Graceville, Florida. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the College "is subject to the direction and control of a religious organization. That organization is the Florida Baptist Convention." Your letter enclosed a copy of the College's Charter and Bylaws. Article II of the College's Charter states that the College's purpose is to be a "religious, educational, benevolent, and charitable body, medium, institution, trustee and agency, serving and doing the will of the Florida Baptist Convention in the matter of its operating, conducting, and managing The Baptist College of Florida, Inc., for and on its behalf, and in holding in trust the assets and properties of The Baptist College of Florida, Inc., for its use, maintenance and operation in accordance with the instruction, direction and authorization of the Florida Baptist Convention." Your request further explained that "[p]ursuant to the College's Charter and Bylaws, the Florida Baptist Convention controls the

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

[College] in part by exercising its right to select the entire elected membership of the board of directors of the College, the governing body of the College.”

Your letter requests a religious exemption from provisions of Title IX “to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention’s religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy and abortion.” In support of this request, you cite to The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, the most recent statement of faith adopted by the Convention. According to your letter, that statement of faith explains that the tenets of the Convention are that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as the means for procreation, that God made man in male and female form, and that the “gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God’s creation.” You further cite the Convention’s belief that one should “speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.”

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention’s religious tenets for the College to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the College from “engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission’s sexual orientation, transgendered status, marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, sex outside marriage, pregnancy and abortion; ... from subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics; [or] from making employment decisions... in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the College is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination based on marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or abortion:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

July 31, 2015

Robert M. Myers  
President  
Toccoa Falls College  
P.O. Box 800777  
107 Kincaid Drive  
Toccoa Falls, GA 30598

Dear President Myers:

I write to respond to your July 8, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Toccoa Falls College (College) of Toccoa Falls, Georgia from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the institution's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explains that the College is an affiliate college of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) and, as such, "adheres doctrinally to the beliefs of the denomination." According to your letter, the College requires all members of the College community, including students and faculty, to adhere to its policy on the Faith Community and Mission of the College (Policy). The Policy, which was included with your letter, explains that the College "has adopted the statement of faith set forth in the C&MA Manual." According to the Policy, the College's representatives are "expected to (i) model these [C&MA's] biblical beliefs and standards for others, (ii) perform all of their responsibilities as a service to God and (iii) comply with the following obligations: . . . affirm their agreement with the C&MA's statement of faith and other biblical beliefs[. . .] endeavor to conduct themselves in a manner that affirms biblical standards of conduct in accordance with theirs and the C&MA's biblical beliefs . . . [, and] be ready, willing, and able to lead or contribute to distinctly Christian activities such as worship or prayer services." The Policy further provides that the College may dismiss a representative from his or her position if the representative does not comply with these obligations.

Your exemption request states that the Policy provides that "God created human beings, male

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.*

and female . . . As such, students are not to adopt a gender identity different from the one gifted them by their Creator. This gendered ordering of creation is to be accepted, honored, and reflected in sexual intimacy.” Your request explains that “compliance with Title IX, as interpreted by ED OCR to reach transgender ‘discrimination,’ would be inconsistent with the religious tenets of Toccoa Falls College.”

Your request also points to a recent EEOC determination letter in which “the EEOC has begun openly declaring that the ban on ‘sex’ discrimination in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 also forbids discrimination on the basis of ‘sexual orientation.’” You explain that if Title IX were “interpreted by ED OCR to reach sexual orientation ‘discrimination,’ [compliance] would also be inconsistent with the religious tenets of Toccoa Falls College.”

Your exemption request also states that the College’s policies provide for the sanctity of human life. According to your letter, the policies state that the College “subscribes to the biblical belief that all life is sacred from conception to death . . . The college accordingly believes that no procedures should be performed for the primary objective of terminating a pregnancy . . . except in rarest circumstances where other biblical, moral principles prevail, such as where it is medically impossible to save the life of both the mother and the child. The college’s beliefs further prohibit paying for or otherwise facilitating such procedures.”

You state that, for these reasons, the College is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent they are interpreted to reach gender identity or sexual orientation discrimination, and to the extent they restrict the College’s freedom to apply and enforce its beliefs and policy regarding human life:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.22 (governing preferences in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(governing education programs or activities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.34 (governing access to classes and schools);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.36 (governing counseling and use of appraisal and counseling materials);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.38 (governing employment assistance to students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.39 (governing health and insurance benefits and services);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.43 (governing standards for measuring skill or progress in physical education classes); and
- 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.51-61 (governing employment).

The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation, or restrict the College's freedom to apply and enforce its beliefs and policy regarding human life and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

June 10, 2016

Emir Caner  
President  
Truett McConnell University  
100 Alumni Drive  
Cleveland, Georgia 30528

Dear President Caner:

I write to respond to your May 24, 2016, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Truett McConnell University (University) of Cleveland, Georgia, from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University, "a Southern Baptist institution of higher education," "is controlled by a religious organization. That organization is the Georgia Baptist State Convention . . . whose constituency is the cooperating Southern Baptist churches of Georgia." Your letter states that "[p]ursuant to the University's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, the Georgia Baptist State Convention controls the University, in part by exercising its right to select the entire membership of the board of directors of the University, the governing body of the University." Additionally, your letter explains that the University "requires all full-time teaching faculty to sign and affirm the Baptist Faith and Message 2000."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion." In support of this request, you cite to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, the most recent statement of faith adopted by the Convention. According to your letter, that statement of faith explains that the tenets of the Convention are that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as the means for procreation, that God made people in male and female form,

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

that the “gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God’s creation,” and that “Christians should oppose . . . adultery [and] homosexuality . . . [and] should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.”

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention’s religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the University from “engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission’s sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, sex outside marriage, pregnancy, and abortion. . . ; subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics . . . ; and making all employment decisions . . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent the regulation would require the [University] to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, gender identity, pregnancy and abortion in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.36 (governing counseling and use of appraisal and counseling materials);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.38 (governing employment assistance to students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.39 (governing health and insurance benefits and services);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.56 (governing fringe benefits);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'CEL', is positioned above the typed name.

Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

March 24, 2015

Samuel W. Oliver, Ph.D.  
President  
Union University  
1050 Union University Drive  
Jackson, Tennessee 38305-3697

Dear President Oliver:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your January 19, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681, for Union University (University) of Jackson, Tennessee. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University "is controlled by a religious organization. That organization is the Tennessee Baptist Convention." Your letter states that "the trustees of Union University are elected by and responsible to the Tennessee Baptist Convention." Your letter also references the University's Bylaws (2.1.1. Control and Management) which state "[t]he Charter vests the control of the affairs of Union University in its Board of Trustees, which consists of not fewer than eighteen nor more than thirty-six in number, elected by the Tennessee Baptist Convention."

Your letter requests a religious exemption "from provisions of Title IX to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), pregnancy, and abortion." In support of this request, you cite to *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, the most recent statement of faith affirmed by the Tennessee Baptist Convention. According to your letter, that statement of faith explains that the tenets of the Convention are that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as the means for procreation, that God made man in male and female form, and that the "gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation." You further cite the Convention's belief that one should "speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death."

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the College from "engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission's sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), marital status, past and

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

present practices regarding marriage, sex outside marriage, pregnancy and abortion; . . . from subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics[; or from] making all employment decisions. . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, The University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, gender identity, pregnancy and abortion in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marriage status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

January 8, 2016

Thomas W. Keefe  
President  
University of Dallas  
1845 East Northgate Drive  
Irving, Texas 75062

Dear President Keefe:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your July 23, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for the University of Dallas (University) of Irving, Texas from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance. We are processing your request and have determined that we need further information.

Section 901(a)(3) of Title IX, 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a)(3), and the Department's implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provide that Title IX and its regulations do not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would not be consistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Such educational institutions are allowed to claim an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of the Department's Title IX regulations that conflict with a specific tenet of the controlling religious organization.

An educational institution will normally be considered to be controlled by a religious organization under Title IX if one or more of the following conditions prevail:

- (1) It is a school or department of divinity, defined as an institution or a department or branch of an institution whose program is specifically for the education of students to prepare them to become ministers of religion or to enter upon some other religious vocation, or to prepare them to teach theological subjects; or
- (2) It requires its faculty, students or employees to be members of, or otherwise espouse a personal belief in, the religion of the organization by which it claims to be controlled; or

- (3) Its charter and catalog, or other official publication, contains an explicit statement that it is controlled by a religious organization or an organ thereof or is committed to the doctrines of a particular religion, and the members of its governing body are appointed by the controlling religious organization or an organ thereof, and it receives a significant amount of financial support from the controlling religious organization or an organ thereof.

Your letter states that the University is “shaped by the long tradition of Catholic learning and acknowledges its commitment to the Catholic Church and its teachings.” It does not, however, state that the University is controlled by the Catholic Church. Thus, OCR requires further information to determine whether the University's relationship with the Catholic Church meets the standard for "control" as described above.

If you would like OCR to make a determination regarding the University's religious exemption request, please provide additional clarification regarding whether the Catholic Church or another religious organization controls the University. Feel free to provide any explanation or supporting documentation that may be helpful to OCR's understanding. If you no longer wish to pursue your request for an exemption at this time, please let us know and we will treat your request as withdrawn.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at (202) 453-6048.

Sincerely,



Seth Galanter  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

March 24, 2015

Dr. Randy O'Rear  
President and CEO  
University of Mary Hardin-Baylor  
900 College Street  
Belton, Texas 76513

Dear Dr. O'Rear:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your January 29, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681, for the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor (University) of Belton, Texas. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University is "controlled by a religious organization, the Baptist General Convention of Texas." Your request stated that pursuant to the University's Restated Certificate of Formation, "the Baptist General Convention of Texas controls the University in part by exercising its right to select a majority of the board of directors of the University, the governing body of the University."

Your letter requests exemption from provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgender status), pregnancy, and abortion." In support of this request, you cite to *On Sexual Ethics*, a resolution adopted by the Convention in 2009. According to your letter, that resolution states that "the Bible teaches that the idea for sexual behavior is the marital union between husband and wife and that all other sexual relations – whether premarital, extramarital, or homosexual – are contrary to God's purposes and thus sinful." You further cite the Convention's religious belief that "gender is based on biological attributes and is seen as a gift from God and immutable." Finally, you cite to the Baptist Faith and Message, which, according to your letter, states that "[m]arriage is the uniting of one man and one woman."

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the University from "engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission's sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, sex outside marriage, pregnancy, and abortion; [... f]rom subjecting

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.*

students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics[; or from] making all employment decisions . . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions to the extent that they “would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, gender identity (including but not limited to transgender status), pregnancy and abortion in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets” of the Baptist General Convention of Texas:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admissions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31 (b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31 (b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

May 4, 2015

Mark Foley, Ph.D.  
President  
University of Mobile  
5735 College Parkway  
Mobile, AL 36613

Dear Dr. Foley:

I write to respond to your March 18, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for the University of Mobile (University) of Mobile, Alabama, from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University, "a Southern Baptist institution of higher education," "is controlled by a religious organization. That organization is the Alabama Baptist State Convention." Your letter states that "pursuant to the University's Charter and Bylaws, the Alabama Baptist State Convention controls the University in part by exercising its right to select the entire membership of the board of directors of the University, the governing body of the University."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion." In support of this request, you cite to The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, the most recent statement of faith adopted by the Convention. According to your letter, that statement of faith explains that the tenets of the Convention are that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as the means for procreation, that God made people in male and female form, and that the "gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation." You further cite the

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.*

Convention's belief that one should "speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death."

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the University from "engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission's sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, sex outside marriage, pregnancy, and abortion[; . . .] from subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics[; or from] making all employment decisions. . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics."

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions "to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention:"

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If

the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'C. Lhamon'.

Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

March 24, 2015

Dr. Larry L. Cockrum  
Chief Executive Officer and President-Elect  
University of the Cumberlands, Inc.  
6191 College Station Drive  
Williamsburg, KY 40769

Dear Dr. Cockrum:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your January 19, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681, for University of the Cumberlands, Inc. (University) of Williamsburg, Kentucky. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University is "controlled by a religious organization. That organization is the Kentucky Baptist Convention." Your letter explains that "pursuant to the University's Charter and Bylaws, the Kentucky Baptist Convention controls the University in part by exercising its right to select the entire elected membership of the board of directors of the University, the governing body of the University."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, and abortion." In support of your request, you cite The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, the most recent statement of faith adopted by the Convention. According to your letter, that statement of faith explains that the tenets of the Convention are that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as the means for procreation, that God made man in male and female form, and that the "gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation." You further cite the Convention's belief that one should "speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death."

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the University from "engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission's sexual orientation, transgendered status, marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, sex outside marriage, pregnancy and abortion; [... from] subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics[; or from] making all employment decisions...in a

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.*

manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, gender identity, pregnancy and abortion in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets” of the Kentucky Baptist Convention:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admissions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marriage status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization’s religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

May 24, 2016

Daniel Stevens  
President  
Virginia Baptist College  
4105 Plank Road  
Fredericksburg, VA 22407

Dear President Stevens:

I write to respond to your February 26, 2016, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Virginia Baptist College (College or VBC) of Fredericksburg, Virginia, from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that, according to the College's Mission Statement, the College exists "to equip men and women for dynamic Christian service and leadership in Bible-believing churches by providing higher education that emphasizes academic excellence, spiritual development, and preparation for ministry, both lay and professional." Your letter identifies "Faith Baptist Church as VBC's host church" and a provider of "significant financial support to VBC." Your letter further explains that the College Board Manual requires board members to "be Christians who attend independent Baptist churches and must sign the VBC Doctrinal Statement." Additionally, the Board Manual states that "it shall be the policy of Virginia Baptist College to elect, if he should choose to serve, the pastor of the host church (Faith Baptist Church of Fredericksburg, VA) to the office of chairman of the Board." The Board Manual goes on to require that "all students must sign a written statement stating that they have read, understand and will support the College Doctrinal Statement" and to "sign adherence to a written Standard of Conduct each

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

year.” As described in the Board Manual, the Standard of Conduct “is based on the teachings and principles of Scripture. Its purpose is to aid in the development of personal holiness and discipline exemplified in a lifestyle that glorifies God.” According to your letter, “both Faith Baptist Church and the College affirm that the Doctrinal Statement provides the most adequate and comprehensive articulation of the system of doctrine taught in the Bible.”

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX “to the extent they are interpreted to reach gender identity or sexual orientation discrimination, and to the extent they restrict the College’s freedom to apply and enforce its beliefs regarding the sanctity of life.” In support of this request, your letter cites the College’s Statement of Human Sexuality, which according to your letter is consistent with the Doctrinal Statement described above. The Statement of Human Sexuality states that “individual gender is assigned by God and determined at conception” and “to intentionally alter or change one’s physical gender or to live as a gender other than the one assigned at conception is to reject God’s right as Creator to assign gender to His creatures.” The Statement of Human Sexuality also states that “sexual intimacy is designed by God to be expressed solely within a marriage between one man and one woman.” Lastly, it states that “human life begins at conception” and “[a]bortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life.”

Your letter states that, for these reasons, the College is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions to the extent that they are interpreted to reach gender identity or sexual orientation discrimination, and to the extent they restrict the College’s freedom to apply and enforce its beliefs regarding the sanctity of life:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.22 (governing preference in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31 (governing education programs or activities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.34 (governing access to classes and schools);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.36 (governing counseling and use of appraisal and counseling materials);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.38 (governing employment assistance to students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.39 (governing health and insurance benefits and services);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.43 (governing standards for measuring skill or progress in physical education); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51-61 (governing employment).

The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation or restrict the College's freedom to apply and enforce its beliefs regarding the sanctity of life, and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

October 5, 2015

Dr. Paul Armes  
President  
Wayland Baptist University  
1900 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Plainview, TX 79072

Dear Dr. Armes:

I write to respond to your August 26, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for Wayland Baptist University (University) of Plainview, Texas from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University, "a Southern Baptist institution of higher education," "is controlled by a religious organization, the Baptist General Convention of Texas . . . whose constituency is the cooperating Southern Baptist churches of Texas." Your letter states that "[p]ursuant to the University's Bylaws . . . the Baptist General Convention of Texas controls the University in part by exercising its right to select a majority of the board of directors of the University, the governing body of the University."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, and gender identity (including but not limited to transgender status), pregnancy, and abortion." In support of this request, you cite to various statements of the Convention, including the resolution "On Sexual Ethics" adopted by the Convention in 2009, a Convention declaration on gender, and a 1988 addition to

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

the Convention's statement of Baptist Faith and Message, which expresses the religious tenets of the Convention as they relate to "the family." According to your letter, the Convention's Resolution on Sexual Ethics provides that "the Bible teaches that the ideal for sexual behavior is the marital union between husband and wife and that all other sexual relations – whether premarital, extramarital, or homosexual – are contrary to God's purpose and thus sinful." Your letter states that "[t]he Convention has declared its religious belief that 'gender is based on biological attributes and is seen as a gift from God and immutable.'" (Although your letter states that this declaration was attached to your correspondence to OCR, it was not.) Your letter also states that the addition to the Baptist Faith and Message adopted by the Convention provides that "[m]arriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. . . and the means for the procreation of the human race. . . Children from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord." Finally, according to your letter, "[s]ince 1980, the Convention has declared on six occasions its religious beliefs opposing abortion."

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the University from "engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission's sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, sex outside marriage, pregnancy, and abortion[; . . . from] subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics[; or from] making all employment decisions. . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics."

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions "to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, gender identity (including but not limited to transgender status), pregnancy, and abortion in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention:"

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgender status), pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

January 13, 2016

Tommy King  
President  
William Carey University  
WCU Box 1  
498 Tuscan Avenue  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

Dear President King:

I write to respond to your November 30, 2015, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for William Carey University (University) of Hattiesburg, Mississippi from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the University, "a Southern Baptist institution of higher education," "is controlled by the Mississippi Baptist Convention . . . whose constituency is the cooperating Southern Baptist churches of Mississippi." Your letter states that "[p]ursuant to the University's Restated Articles of Incorporation, . . . [t]he Mississippi Baptist Convention controls the University by electing the University's board of trustees who govern the institution."

Your letter requests a religious exemption from the provisions of Title IX "to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, pregnancy, abortion, and gender identity in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention." In support of this request, you cite to the "University's Statement of Faith and Practice which reflects the University's understanding of the Convention's expectations of the University arising out of the Convention's religious tenets."

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.*

According to your letter, “the Bible teaches: . . . It is God’s unique gift . . . to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.” Your letter further states that “[t]he Convention has declared: The union of one man and one woman is the only form of marriage prescribed in the Bible as God’s perfect design for the family. The Bible affirms that all human life, both born and preborn, is a person bearing the [image] of God. God’s design was the creation of two distinct and complementary sexes, male and female which designate the fundamental distinction that God has embedded in the very biology of the human race.”

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention’s religious tenets for the University to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the University from “engaging in recruiting, admissions, and financial assistance under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission’s sexual orientation, gender identity (including but not limited to transgendered status), marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, pregnancy, abortion, and sex outside marriage[; . . . from] subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics[; or from] making all employment decisions. . . in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the University is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions “to the extent the regulation would require the institution to treat marriage, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, pregnancy, abortion, and gender identity in a manner that is inconsistent with the religious tenets of the Convention:”

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.22 (governing preferences in admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.34 (governing access to classes and schools);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.36 (governing counseling and use of appraisal and counseling materials);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37 (governing financial assistance);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.38 (governing employment assistance to students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.39 (governing health insurance benefits and services);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.43 (governing standards for measuring skills or progress in physical

- education classes);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
  - 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
  - 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
  - 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions);
  - 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries); and
  - 34 C.F.R. § 106.61 (governing sex as a bona-fide occupational qualification).

The University is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

December 22, 2014

Dr. Thomas O. Jones  
President  
Williams Baptist College  
P.O. Box 3733  
Walnut Ridge, AR 72476

Dear Dr. Jones:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to your November 17, 2014, letter to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681, for Williams Baptist College (College) of Walnut Ridge, Arkansas. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance.

The implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provides that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the controlling organization's religious tenets. Therefore, such educational institutions are allowed to request an exemption from Title IX by identifying the provisions of Title IX that conflict with a specific tenet of the religious organization. The request must identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution and specify the tenets of that organization and the provisions of the law and/or regulation that conflict with those tenets.

Your request explained that the College "is owned and operated by a religious organization. That organization is the Arkansas Baptist State Convention." Your letter enclosed a copy of the College's Constitution and Bylaws. Article II of the Constitution designates the Arkansas Baptist State Convention as the College's sole member and Article IV provides that the Arkansas Baptist State Convention will select the entire elected membership of the Board of Trustees, the governing body of the College.

Your letter requests a religious exemption from provisions of Title IX "to the extent application of those provisions would not be consistent with the Convention's religious tenets regarding

400 MARYLAND AVE, S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1100  
[www.ed.gov](http://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.*

marriage, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy and abortion.” In support of this request, you cite to The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, the most recent statement of faith adopted by the Convention. According to your letter, that statement of faith explains that the tenets of the Convention are that marriage is between one man and one woman and serves as the means for procreation, that God made man in male and female form, and that the “gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God’s creation.” You further cite the Convention’s belief that one should “speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.”

You explain that it would not be consistent with the Convention’s religious tenets for the College to comply with Title IX to the extent that it prohibits the College from “engaging in recruiting and admissions under a policy which called for the consideration of an applicant for admission’s sexual orientation, transgendered status, marital status, past and present practices regarding marriage, sex outside marriage, pregnancy and abortion; ... from subjecting students to rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment because of these student characteristics; [or] from making employment decisions... in a manner which takes into consideration these employee characteristics.”

You state that, for these reasons, the College is requesting an exemption from the following regulatory provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination based on marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.21 (governing admission);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.23 (governing recruitment of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4) (governing different rules of behavior or sanctions);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(7) (governing the limitation of rights, privileges, advantages, or opportunities);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.32 (governing housing);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.33 (governing comparable facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (governing different rules based on marital or parental status of students);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41 (governing athletics);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.51 (governing employment);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.52 (governing employment criteria);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.53 (governing recruitment of employees);
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.57 (governing the consideration of marital or parental status in employment decisions); and
- 34 C.F.R. § 106.60 (governing pre-employment inquiries).

The College is exempt from these provisions to the extent that they prohibit discrimination on the basis of marital status, sex outside of marriage, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, or abortion and compliance would conflict with the controlling organization's religious tenets.

Please note that this letter should not be construed to grant exemption from the requirements of Title IX and the regulation other than as stated above. In the event that OCR receives a complaint against your institution, we are obligated to determine initially whether the allegations fall within the exemption here granted. Also, in the unlikely event that a complainant alleges that the practices followed by the institution are not based on the religious tenets of the controlling organization, OCR is obligated to contact the controlling organization to verify those tenets. If the organization provides an interpretation of tenets that has a different practical impact than that described by the institution, or if the organization denies that it controls the institution, this exemption will be rescinded.

I hope this letter responds fully to your request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education