



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

September 13, 2016

John MacArthur
President
The Master's College
21726 Placerita Canyon Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91321

Dear President MacArthur:

I am writing in response to your February 8, 2016, letter to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), in which you requested a religious exemption for The Master's College and Seminary (College) of Santa Clarita, 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.

Title IX and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. § 106.12 provide that Title IX does not apply to an educational institution that is controlled by a religious organization to the extent that the 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.

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.

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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 states that the College is a “private, Christian, liberal arts college and pastoral seminary that is directly associated with Grace Community Church of Sun Valley.” It does not, however, state whether and how the College is controlled by Grace Community Church. Thus, OCR requires further information to determine whether the College’s relationship with Grace Community Church 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 Grace Community Church 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 further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Seth Galanter".

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