

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 54th Legislature (2014)

3 HOUSE BILL 2352

By: Kern

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5  
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to higher education; amending 70 O.S.  
8 2011, Sections 4103 and 4104, which relate to private  
9 educational institutions; providing an exemption from  
10 certain accreditation requirements for religious,  
11 theological or faith-based institutions that meet  
12 certain criteria; authorizing the issuance of a  
13 certain letter; prohibiting religious, theological or  
14 faith-based institutions from distributing certain  
15 advertisement or marketing material; establishing  
16 limitations on diplomas or degrees offered by  
17 religious, theological or faith-based institutions;  
18 providing an effective date; and declaring an  
19 emergency.

20 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

21 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 4103, is  
22 amended to read as follows:

23 Section 4103. ~~A~~ A. Except as otherwise provided in subsection  
24 B of this section, a private educational institution shall be  
25 accredited under rules promulgated and adopted by the Oklahoma State  
26 Regents for Higher Education unless such institution is accredited  
27 by a national or regional accrediting agency which is recognized by  
28 the Secretary of the United States Department of Education as a

1 reliable authority as to the quality of education or training  
2 offered by institutions of higher education for the purposes of the  
3 Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

4 B. A religious, theological or faith-based institution shall be  
5 exempt from the accreditation requirements set forth in subsection A  
6 of this section if the institution annually verifies and submits  
7 related evidence to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education  
8 that:

9 1. The name of the institution includes a religious modifier or  
10 the name of a religious patriarch, saint, person or symbol of the  
11 church;

12 2. The institution offers only educational programs that  
13 prepare students for religious vocations as ministers, professionals  
14 or laypersons in the categories of ministry, counseling, theology,  
15 education, administration, music, fine arts, media communications or  
16 social work;

17 3. The titles of degrees issued by the institution cannot be  
18 confused with secular degree titles. For this purpose, each degree  
19 title shall include a religious modifier that immediately precedes,  
20 follows or is included within any of the following degrees:

21 Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor  
22 of Science, Master of Arts, Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy,  
23 and Doctor of Education. The religious modifier shall be placed on  
24 the title line of the degree, on the transcript and whenever the

1 title of the degree appears in official school documents or  
2 publications;

3 4. The duration of all degree programs offered by the  
4 institution is consistent with the standards of the Oklahoma State  
5 Regents for Higher Education; and

6 5. The consumer practices of the institution are consistent  
7 with any consumer practice requirements established by the Oklahoma  
8 State Regents for Higher Education.

9 C. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may provide  
10 the institution a letter stating that the institution has met the  
11 requirements of state law and is not subject to governmental  
12 oversight.

13 D. A religious, theological or faith-based institution meeting  
14 the criteria set forth in subsection B of this section shall be  
15 prohibited from distributing marketing or advertising material  
16 indicating an endorsement from the State of Oklahoma, the Oklahoma  
17 State Regents for Higher Education or any other agency or agent of  
18 the state regarding the education offered by the institution,  
19 degrees or diplomas granted by the institution, or the institution  
20 itself.

21 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 4104, is  
22 amended to read as follows:

23 Section 4104. A A. Except as otherwise provided in subsection  
24 B of this section, a private educational institution shall grant

1 only those degrees authorized by the Oklahoma State Regents for  
2 Higher Education unless approved otherwise by a national or regional  
3 accrediting agency which is recognized by the Secretary of the  
4 United States Department of Education as a reliable authority as to  
5 the quality of education or training offered by institutions of  
6 higher education for the purposes of the Higher Education Act of  
7 1965, as amended.

8 B. A religious, theological or faith-based institution meeting  
9 the criteria established in subsection B of Section 4103 of this  
10 title shall grant only degrees or diplomas in areas of study that  
11 contain on their face in the written description of the title of the  
12 degree or diploma being conferred a religious modifier as provided  
13 for in paragraph 3 of subsection B of Section 4103 of this title.

14 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective July 1, 2014.

15 SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation  
16 of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby  
17 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and  
18 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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