

1 ENGROSSED SENATE  
2 BILL NO. 262

By: Dahm of the Senate

3 and

4 Brumbaugh of the House

5 An Act relating to higher education; amending 70 O.S.  
6 2011, Section 4104, which relates to degrees offered  
7 by private institutions; exempting from certain  
8 requirements religious degrees issued by certain  
9 institutions; requiring religious degrees and  
10 associated documents to contain certain modifier;  
11 requiring religious organizations offering degrees to  
12 be accredited; providing criteria for accrediting  
13 service or company; providing an effective date; and  
14 declaring an emergency.

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

16 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 4104, is  
17 amended to read as follows:

18 Section 4104. A. A private educational institution shall grant  
19 only those degrees authorized by the Oklahoma State Regents for  
20 Higher Education unless approved otherwise by a national or regional  
21 accrediting agency which is recognized by the Secretary of the  
22 United States Department of Education as a reliable authority as to  
23 the quality of education or training offered by institutions of  
24 higher education for the purposes of the Higher Education Act of  
1965, as amended.

B. 1. This section shall not apply to religious degrees which  
are used solely for religious purposes within a religious

1 organization or any institution of higher education whose primary  
2 purpose is to provide religious training or theological education  
3 and which is exempt from taxation pursuant to the provisions of  
4 Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, 26 U.S.C., Section  
5 501(c)(3).

6 2. Each degree title offered pursuant to this subsection shall  
7 include a religious modifier. The religious modifier must be placed  
8 on the degree, on the transcript and wherever the title of the  
9 degree appears in official school documents or publications.

10 3. Each religious organization offering degrees pursuant to  
11 this subsection shall be accredited by an accrediting service or  
12 company that has been in operation for a minimum of five (5) years  
13 and is in operation in more than one state within the United States.  
14 The accrediting service or company shall perform regular reviews of  
15 the religious organization using best practices.

16 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2017.

17 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation  
18 of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby  
19 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and  
20 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

1 Passed the Senate the 7th day of March, 2017.

2  
3 \_\_\_\_\_  
4 Presiding Officer of the Senate

5 Passed the House of Representatives the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_,  
6 2017.

7  
8 \_\_\_\_\_  
9 Presiding Officer of the House  
10 of Representatives