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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
23 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0023

James E. Rier, Jr.
COMMISSIONER

July 11, 2014

Dr. Patrick Gallagher
Northpoint Bible College
320 South Main St.
Haverhill, MA 01835

Re: State of Maine Approval Re: Online / Distance Education Programs

Dear Dr. Gallagher:

This letter is confirmation that the Maine Department of Education has determined that the Northpoint Bible College qualifies for a religious exemption under Maine law based on the information provided by the institution, and is therefore allowed to offer online courses to Maine residents without submitting to a formal authorization process.

Maine law, Title 20-A M.R.S.A., Section 10705, allows an out-of-state educational institution to offer courses of programs for academic credit leading to degree-completion requirements only if authorized to do so by the State Board of Education. Section 10708(4) however, grants an exemption from this requirement for non-profit religious educational institutions that meet the following criteria:

- A. The educational institution must be substantially owned, operated or supported by a bona fide church or religious organization.
- B. The educational programs of the educational institution must be primarily designed for, aimed at, and attended by persons who seek to learn the particular religious faith or belief of the church or religious organization under paragraph A.
- C. The programs under paragraph B must be intended to prepare students to assume leadership positions in, or enter in some other vocation closely related to the particular faith of the church or religious organization under paragraph A.

Based on the information you provided in response to our Online Service Provider Notification Form, Northpoint Bible College qualifies for the exemption from authorization set forth in Title 20-A M.R.S.A., Section 10708(4).

Please be aware of the additional provisions of Section 10708(4), a copy of which is enclosed. That section requires a disclaimer to be included in materials provided to potential applicants and to the general public. It also states circumstances under which the exemption may not apply.

Please contact me if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Anita Bernhardt
Director, Standards and Instructional Support

Enclosure

SECTION HISTORY

1981, c. 693, §§5,8 (NEW). 1987, c. 395, §A85 (AMD). 2007, c. 572, Pt. A, §13 (AMD).

20-A §10708. EXEMPTIONS

This chapter does not apply to educational institutions which: [1981, c. 693, §§5, 8 (NEW) .]

1. **Prior to September 18, 1981.** Had been authorized by the Legislature or the state board to grant undergraduate or graduate degrees prior to September 18, 1981 and are offering additional or different degrees at the same level;

[2009, c. 274, §12 (AMD) .]

2. **Federal reservations.** Offer programs or courses that are conducted solely on a federal reservation over which the Federal Government has exclusive jurisdiction. The commissioner shall authorize exempt status under this subsection;

[2005, c. 85, §1 (AMD) .]

3. **Noncredit courses.** Offer courses or programs that are not for academic credit; and

[2005, c. 85, §1 (AMD) .]

4. **Religious, nonpublic, educational institution.** Meet the following criteria.

A. The educational institution must be substantially owned, operated or supported by a bona fide church or religious organization. [2005, c. 85, §2 (NEW) .]

B. The educational programs of the educational institution must be primarily designed for, aimed at and attended by persons who seek to learn the particular religious faith or beliefs of the church or religious organization under paragraph A. [2005, c. 85, §2 (NEW) .]

C. The programs under paragraph B must be intended to prepare students to assume leadership positions in, or enter into some other vocation closely related to, the particular faith of the church or religious organization under paragraph A. [2005, c. 85, §2 (NEW) .]

The exemption under this subsection does not apply to any educational institution that represents to any student or prospective student that the major purpose of its program is to prepare the student for a vocation not closely related to the particular religious faith of the educational institution or to provide the student with a general educational program substantially equivalent to the educational programs offered by schools or departments or branches of schools that are not exempt from this section. Any educational institution receiving an exemption under this subsection must inform all applicants of its exempt status in writing and must prominently display the following statement on all written materials, including, but not limited to, any electronic materials, made available to potential applicants or to the general public: "Pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 10708, subsection 4, this institution is not required to obtain authorization from either the State Board of Education or the Maine State Legislature in order to: (1) use the name "junior college," "college" or "university," (2) offer courses or programs for academic credit or (3) confer degrees."

[2005, c. 85, §2 (NEW) .]

SECTION HISTORY

1981, c. 693, §§5,8 (NEW). 2005, c. 85, §§1,2 (AMD). 2009, c. 274, §12 (AMD) .