

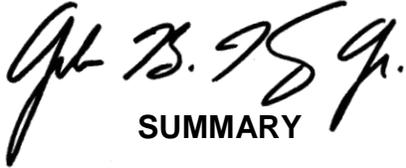


**TO:** The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

**FROM:** John L. D'Agati 

**SUBJECT:** Renewal of Permission to Operate in New York State: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

**DATE:** March 3, 2014

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**   
SUMMARY

**Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)**

Should the Board of Regents renew the permission of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, to offer courses from its Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program in New York City?

**Reason(s) for Consideration**

Required by State regulation

**Proposed Handling**

The question will come before the full Board at its March 2014 meeting where it will be voted on and action taken.

**Procedural History**

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, seeks renewal of its permission to offer courses from its Master of Divinity (M. Div.) program in New York City. The Regents granted such permission in 1996 and renewed it in February 2001, January 2004 and again in January 2009. Pursuant to Section 224 of the Education Law, Regents action is needed to renew the Seminary's permission to operate in New York State.

## **Background Information**

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was established in 1859. It offers graduate-level professional programs through the doctorate. The Seminary has an enrollment of about 3,400 students. It operates an extension center at the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association, 236 West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street, Manhattan, at which students may take up to 64 of the 90 semester hours of coursework in the Seminary's Master of Divinity (M. Div.) program. To complete the program, students must go to the Seminary's main campus in Kentucky.

The Seminary is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as well as by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. In 2013, the two accreditors conducted a joint visit to the Seminary, including its New York City location. They renewed the Seminary's accreditation for a period of ten years.

The Department has determined that The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's activities in New York and the courses it has been offering meet satisfactory academic standards. In Manhattan, the Seminary offers three courses each semester. Faculty from the Seminary's main campus and adjunct faculty, approved by the Seminary's president and academic administration, teach the courses. A total of 19 faculty have taught in Manhattan since the last approval in January 2009. Of these, 17 were full-time faculty from the main campus; two of the nine adjuncts were from the New York City area. Facilities at the Baptist Association building can accommodate up to 30 students in three classrooms and include a basic theology library. Students also have borrowing privileges at General Theological Seminary's library.

The Seminary sought authorization to offer courses in New York City because it believed that none of the seminaries in the City offered graduate theological education that embraced all evangelical Protestant Christian values. Since the last approval, in January 2009, 49 students have taken courses at the extension center. For the spring 2014 semester, 19 students are enrolled at the center. The Seminary does not plan to increase either its enrollment or the number or diversity of courses offered. Therefore, the Department determined that there was no potential effects on other institutions and waived the need to canvass degree-granting institutions on this request.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that effective March 11, 2014, permission be granted to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, to offer courses from its Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program, for a period beginning on February 1, 2014 and ending on January 31, 2019.