

THE BRANCH
COLLEGE OF MINISTRY

POLICIES MANUAL

8344 Clairemont Mesa Blvd

Suite 100

San Diego, Ca 92111

(858) 384 - 6679

Revised 1/6-17

Table of Contents

SECTION 1 – General Policies

- SECTION 1.1 – Introduction
- SECTION 1.2 – Policy Against Sexual Harassment and Other Unlawful Discrimination
- SECTION 1.3 – Smoking
- SECTION 1.4 – Drugs and Alcohol Policy
- SECTION 1.5 – Conflict of Interest
- SECTION 1.6 – Workplace Violence
- SECTION 1.7 – Weapons/Firearms Policy

SECTION 2 – Institution-wide Policies

- SECTION 2.1 – Open Door Policy
- SECTION 2.2 – Scheduling Policy
- SECTION 2.3 – Child Abuse
- SECTION 2.4 – Parking
- SECTION 2.5 – Evacuation Procedures

SECTION 3 – Academic Policies

- SECTION 3.1 – GPA Standard
- SECTION 3.2 – Grades and Grade Points
- SECTION 3.3 – Writing Standards
- SECTION 3.4 – Academic Probation and Dismissal Policies
- SECTION 3.5 – Repeating Courses
- SECTION 3.6 – Transfer Credit Policies
- SECTION 3.7 – Discipline and Appeal Procedures for Academic Related Violations
- SECTION 3.8 – Leave of Absence
- SECTION 3.9 – Holds
- SECTION 3.10 – Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

SECTION 4 – Faculty Policies

- SECTION 4.1 – At Will Employment
- SECTION 4.2 – Employment
- SECTION 4.3 – Workload
- SECTION 4.4 – Payroll Checks
- SECTION 4.5 – Job Postings
- SECTION 4.6 – Exit Interview
- SECTION 4.7 – Personnel Records
- SECTION 4.8 – Employee Relations and Grievances
- SECTION 4.9 – Academic Due Process and Grievance Policies
- SECTION 4.10 – Termination of Employment
- SECTION 4.11 – Instructional Policies

- SECTION 4.12 – Academic Advising Procedures**
- SECTION 4.13 – Grading, Incomplete and Grade Change**
- SECTION 4.14 – Independent Study Option**
- SECTION 4.15 – Textbook adoption and management**
- SECTION 4.16 – Procedures for the procurement of equipment and supplies**
- SECTION 4.17 – Academic Integrity**
- SECTION 4.18 – Relationships with Students**
- SECTION 4.19 – The Faculty Evaluation System**
- SECTION 4.20 – Faculty Organization**
- SECTION 4.21 – Faculty Meetings**
- SECTION 4.22 – Handbook Review Committee**
- SECTION 4.23 – Faculty Member Duties and Responsibilities**
- SECTION 4.24 – Administration and Staff Duties and Responsibilities**

SECTION 5 – Student Services Policies

- SECTION 5.1 – Student Rights**
- SECTION 5.2 – Open Door Admission Policy**
- SECTION 5.3 – Registration**
- SECTION 5.4 – Financial Aid Services**
- SECTION 5.5 – Social/Behavioral Standards**
- SECTION 5.6 – Student Complaint Procedures**
- SECTION 5.7 – Commencement**
- SECTION 5.8 – Student Records**
- SECTION 5.9 – Library**
- SECTION 5.10 – Lost and Found**
- SECTION 5.11 – Students with Disabilities**
- SECTION 5.12 – Student Clubs and Organizations**
- SECTION 5.13 – Scholarships**
- SECTION 5.14 – Fire and Safety Drills**
- SECTION 5.15 – Grade Appeal**

SECTION 6 – Financial Policies

- SECTION 6.1 – Deposits**
- SECTION 6.2 – Finance and Accounting**
- SECTION 6.3 – Purchasing and Payment**
- SECTION 6.4 – Financial Reporting**
- SECTION 6.5 – Forms**
- SECTION 6.6 – Payment of Accounts**
- SECTION 6.7 – Outstanding Balances**
- SECTION 6.8 – Uncollectible Accounts**
- SECTION 6.9 – Refund Policy**
- SECTION 6.10 – Audits/Non-Credits**
- SECTION 6.11 – Disposition/Holding of Checks**
- SECTION 6.12 – Tax Compliance**
- SECTION 6.13 – Tuition**

SECTION 6.14 – Financial Assistance

SECTION 7 – Facilities and Equipment Policies

SECTION 7.1 – Facilities

SECTION 7.2 – Equipment

SECTION 8 – Board Policies

SECTION 8.1 – Duties and Responsibilities of Members

SECTION 8.2 – Number of Members

SECTION 8.3 – Qualifications, Representation, and Method of Selection of Members

SECTION 8.4 – Organizational Structure

SECTION 8.5 – Length of Service of Members and Officers

SECTION 8.6 – Procedures

SECTION 8.7 – Board Self-Evaluation Procedures

SECTION 1.1 Introduction

The Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM) serves as the primary reference guide for campus operating policies and procedures which apply to academic, administrative, research, and service units. The policies connect the campuses mission to the everyday actions of its community, clarify the institutions expectations of its individual members, mitigate institutional risk, enhance efficiency, and support the college's compliance with laws and regulations.

SECTION 1.2 Policy Against Sexual Harassment and Other Unlawful Discrimination

It is the policy of the college to maintain a work and academic environment that is free of sexual harassment and discriminatory actions based on race, color, age, and sex.

1. Unlawful Discrimination

Unlawful discrimination is strictly prohibited by the college and will not be tolerated. Treating an employee or student differently in the terms or conditions of his or her employment or education on the basis of the employee's or student's race, color, age, sex or any other protected status constitutes unlawful discrimination.

2. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that is illegal under both federal and California state law and is strictly prohibited by the college. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

Submission to such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic advancement or participation in college programs or activities, or is used as a basis for employment or academic decisions affecting the individual; or

Rejection of such advances, requests or conduct affects a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic advancement or participation in college programs or activities, or is used as a basis for employment or academic decisions affecting the individual; or

Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work, academic performance, education, or participation in college programs or activities, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, work or academic environment.

Sexual harassment does not refer to words or actions of a welcome nature. It refers to behavior that is not welcome and occurs in a variety of situations which share a common element: the inappropriate introduction of sexual activities or comments into the work or academic

environment. Harassing conduct need not be motivated by sexual desire in order to constitute unlawful sexual harassment.

Depending upon the circumstances and how they impact the workplace or academic environment, examples of sexual harassment include but are not limited to such conduct as the following:

verbal abuse, insults, jokes, comments or innuendo of a sexual nature that include lewd, obscene or sexually suggestive displays or remarks;

physical contact, such as touching, hugging, kissing, patting, or pinching, that is uninvited and unwanted by the other person;

the requests or demands for sexual favors accompanied by implicit or explicit promised rewards or threats concerning an individual's employment status or educational status;

repeated unwelcome social invitations, sexual flirtations, advances, propositions or unwanted requests for sexual favors;

threatened, attempted, or completed physical sexual assault;

indecent exposure;

romantic involvement (even if consensual) between supervisors and subordinates that impacts the workplace and/or other individuals in areas such as assignments, advancements and benefits; or

romantic involvement (even if consensual) between supervisors and students they supervise that impacts the academic environment and/or other students in areas such as assignments, grades and academic benefits.

3. Employee, Faculty and Student Responsibilities

Each employee, faculty member, administrator and student of the College is personally responsible for ensuring that his or her conduct does not sexually harass or unlawfully discriminate against anyone in the workplace. Each employee, faculty member, administrator and student is responsible for cooperating in any investigation of alleged sexual harassment or unlawful discrimination if requested to do so by the person conducting the investigation.

Any person who observes an incident that may constitute sexual harassment or unlawful discrimination or who otherwise becomes aware of such an incident should immediately notify one of the investigator(s) listed below.

4. Procedures for Addressing Complaints of Violations of This Policy

Procedure

If an individual believes that he/she has been subjected to discrimination or sexual or other harassment prohibited by this policy, whether by a supervisor, a co-worker, faculty member, student, vendor, contractor or any other person with whom he/she comes in contact at the college, the individual should report the incident promptly to the Student Dean and Academic Dean of the college.

If the particular circumstances make a discussion with or a complaint to the Student Dean or Academic Dean of the college inappropriate (for example, the complaint involves the Student Dean or Academic Dean, or the employee fears retaliation by the Student Dean or Academic Dean), the employee should bring the matter immediately to the President. Any person who receives a complaint of sexual harassment or discrimination from an employee or student, or who otherwise knows or has reason to believe that an employee or student has been subjected to sexual harassment or discrimination, is expected to report the incident promptly to the Student Dean and Academic Dean of the college.

The following is an outline of the procedure generally followed once a complaint has been brought to the attention of the College:

- A prompt and impartial investigation of the complaint is conducted by the college Investigators or by their designee. (For example, for a complaint against a student, this would be the Dean of Students.) This investigation will consist of (but will not necessarily be limited to) interviews of the individual who made the complaint, of the person or persons against whom the complaint was made and of other individuals who may have witnessed the reported incident or incidents.
- Upon completion of the investigation, the person who conducted the investigation will meet individually with the individual who made the complaint and the individual or individuals against whom the complaint was made, to report the results of the investigation and, where a remedy is determined to be appropriate, to inform the parties of the steps that will be taken to remedy the situation.

5. Disciplinary Action

In the event that the investigation reveals that sexual harassment, discrimination, or other inappropriate or unprofessional conduct (even if not unlawful) has occurred, further action will be taken, including disciplinary action, such as but not limited to reprimand, change in work assignment, loss of privileges, mandatory training or suspension and/or immediate termination.

6. No Retaliation for Filing A Complaint Of Sexual Harassment Or Unlawful Discrimination

Retaliation against any individual for making a complaint of sexual harassment or of any unlawful discrimination or for assisting in the investigation of such a complaint is illegal and will not be tolerated. Any acts of retaliation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, such as but not limited to reprimand, change in work assignment, loss of privileges, mandatory training or suspension and/or immediate termination.

SECTION 1.3 Smoking

The Branch College of Ministry is a smoke free campus. This policy applies to all people coming onto the college's property.

SECTION 1.4 Drugs and Alcohol Policy

Illegal or improper use of alcohol will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of illegal drugs by any person on the property of The Branch College of Ministry is prohibited. Such action shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

SECTION 1.5 Conflict of Interest

To view the full policy, see the Academic Dean for The Branch College of Ministry Conflict of Interest Policy

1. Duty to disclose in connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
2. Determining whether a conflict of interest exists after disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the governing board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.
3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest
 - a. An interested person may make a presentation at the governing board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
 - b. The chairperson of the governing board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
 - c. After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether the college can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
 - d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or

arrangement is in the college's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

4. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy

a. If the governing board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

b. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

SECTION 1.6 Workplace Violence

The Branch College of Ministry seeks to maintain a safe, healthy and secure work environment. It is the college's goal to create a workplace free from violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior. Employees play a major role in the college's efforts by complying with this policy, contributing to a respectful atmosphere, treating all threats seriously, and reporting incidents immediately.

The Branch College of Ministry treats reports of threatening behavior or violence seriously and will take appropriate action in response. The college has the right to search any area or property, including personal property, in order to investigate reports of workplace violence.

Prohibited Conduct and Behavior:

The Branch College of Ministry will not tolerate any workplace violence, whether carried out by coworkers, visitors, former employees, or other individuals. The college expressly prohibits violence, threats, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior on its property. Violence or threatening behavior can include physical acts of violence, gestures, intimidating presence, oral or written statements, sexual assaults and weapons possession.

The college will initiate appropriate action in response to reports of such incidents, which may include, but is not limited to, immediate removal from The Branch College of Ministry property, suspension, termination and/or referral for criminal prosecution. All employees are required to cooperate in any investigations the college conducts in response to reports or acts of workplace violence.

Reporting Incidents:

All employees are responsible for reporting workplace violence and can do so without the fear of reprisal or criticism. Community members should not ignore violent, threatening, harassing, intimidating or other disruptive behavior.

SECTION 1.7 Weapons/Firearms Policy

The Branch College of Ministry has a zero tolerance policy regarding firearms, weapons, and simulated weapons on campus. Firearms and other types of weapons, including simulated weapons, are not allowed on Branch College property or at sponsored events off-campus. Possession, use, or threatened use of firearms, ammunition, explosives, or other objects used as weapons is prohibited. Standard pocket knives are not considered weapons.

1. Persons who possess a concealed weapons permit are NOT exempt from this policy.
2. Anyone who observes or has knowledge of someone violating this policy should immediately report the incident to the Academic Dean.
3. Failure to adhere to the college's firearms/weapons policy or failure to cooperate in an investigation is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination or dismissal.

SECTION 2.1 – Open Door Policy

Faculty and students alike are encouraged to stop by whenever they feel the need to meet and ask questions, discuss issues, offer suggestions or seek advice.

SECTION 2.2 – Scheduling Policy

In order to reserve a room on campus, individuals or groups should first make a written request with the appropriate day, time, and room they wish to reserve to the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean is responsible for scheduling spaces on campus. All reservations in any college room will be considered tentative until confirmed by the Academic Dean.

SECTION 2.3 – Child Abuse

It is the policy of The Branch College of Ministry, and a requirement of California law, that all faculty and staff report cases of suspected child abuse to the California Department of Human Services, or a law enforcement agency. The obligation to report child abuse applies whether knowledge of suspected abuse comes about as a result of your work for The Branch College of Ministry, or in the regular course of your daily life, and should also be made even if the child or family member does not wish to file a report.

Suspected abuse of minor children (under age 18) should be reported to the California Department of Human Services by calling (661) 631-6011. During non-business hours, reports should be made by calling law enforcement at 911. Child abuse occurring on The Branch College's campus must, in addition to the above, be reported to the President at 858-384-6679.

SECTION 2.4 – Parking

Faculty and Students are free to park in the appropriate assigned spaces outside The Branch College of Ministry's building.

1. It is the faculty/student's responsibility to know and abide by Parking Regulations. Lack of knowledge of these regulations is not justification for appealing a citation.
2. Disabled Parking Spaces: require a State disabled permit.
3. Restricted Areas: A vehicle parked in a fire lane, no-parking area, reserved space, sidewalk, driveway, landscaped area, crosswalk, etc., is subject to immediate towing at the owner's expense. These restricted areas are in effect 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

4. Theft/Damage to Vehicles: The Branch College of Ministry is not responsible for theft from or damage to vehicles parked on the college campus; however, if your vehicle is damaged or items are stolen, contact the Office of the Registrar to immediately to initiate an investigation/report.

5. Sleeping in vehicles overnight on campus is prohibited.

SECTION 2.5 – Evacuation Procedures

In case of earth tremors, it is generally considered safest to remain in the building. Instruct students to get under desks or stand in doorways if falling debris seems imminent. Stay away from windows, tall shelving and hot surfaces. Exit from the area only after danger of falling debris seems to have passed.

Exit by the nearest door. WALK, DO NOT RUN

SECTION 3.1 – GPA Standard

Students must maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA to remain in good academic standing, and to be eligible for graduation. Student grades will be posted on the BCOM website within 3-weeks after the end of the term.

SECTION 3.2 – Grades and Grade Points

The Branch College of Ministry uses the 4-point grading system, subject to the teacher's requirements, homework, tests, class participation, attendance and any make-up work to be established by the teachers. These requirements will be clearly articulated in each course syllabus.

Letter grades correspond to the following numerical grade points:

Points = Grade		
4.0 = A	2.8 = B-	1.5 = D+
3.8 = A-	2.5 = C+	1.0 = D
3.5 = B+	2.0 = C	0.8 = D-
3.0 = B	1.8 = C-	0.0 = F

A grade of “C” or better must be earned in each course in order for it to be credited toward a degree. Courses may be repeated until a grade of “C” or better is attained.

SECTION 3.3 – Writing Standards

Quality of Writing: Written assignments should be undertaken as though you were preparing them for publication, even if only for publication in your church or denomination. This discipline should help to improve the quality of your writing. Emphasis in this class will always be placed on the quality rather than the quantity of your work. Good and lucid writing will be rewarded, and poor and obscure writing will be downgraded. It is an important matter of communication. Clarity and precision of language make communication easier and understanding more pleasurable.

Format and Writing Style: All assignments should be typed and written according to the Turabian (Chicago Style; CMS) guidelines (unless otherwise indicated by the course instructor) and demonstrate a professional academic writing style. Papers should include notations (footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical notations), and a bibliography or works cited that follow the format for bibliographical references. Writing workshops are offered periodically, and a sample Turabian format paper is available online and on campus.

Recommended Writing Resources: Turabian, K. *A Manual for Writers of Research papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Seventh Edition* (University of Chicago Press, 2007); *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition (University of Chicago Press, 2003); Strunk & White, *The Elements of Style*, 4th edition (Longman, 1999).

Plagiarism: Anyone who plagiarizes (i.e., presents as one's own work something which has been taken from someone else) may receive an automatic failure on that piece of work and a warning. (Plagiarism can involve the taking of an idea or structure of a written work as well as the actual copying of what is written.) A second like offense will result in failure ("F") for the final course grade. An "F" for cheating/plagiarism in a subsequent course may result in suspension from the college, at the discretion of the Academic Dean.

SECTION 3.4 – Academic Probation and Dismissal Policies

Academic probation is a status designed to provide the student whose GPA has fallen below the College's minimum standard of 2.0, with a means to raise his or her GPA above 2.0.

A student is placed on academic probation if his or her GPA has fallen below 2.0. The following steps will be initiated at the end of the semester for which the student's GPA drops below 2.0:

1. The Dean of Students makes contact informing the student of his or her academic probation status and requesting a face-to-face meeting prior to registering for any further courses.
2. At this meeting academic probation is explained to the student and a strategy is developed for improving the student's GPA.
3. The student may register for a maximum of nine units each semester while on academic probation. The limit on the number of classes for each semester is determined by the Dean of Students on a case-by-case basis.
4. The student's instructors will participate in the probationary process by providing progress reports to the student dean on the third, fifth, and twelfth weeks of the semester to the Dean of Students.
5. The student will meet with the Dean of Students on the third, fifth, and twelfth weeks of the semester and discuss progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy. The progress reports from the instructors will be included in these meetings.

While on academic probation students:

1. Are not eligible to apply for scholarship

2. Are not eligible for tuition installment plan

Once the student's GPA is 2.0 or greater he or she will be removed from academic probation and the above eligibilities will be reinstated. A student may remain on academic probation as long as the GPA improves. If there is no improvement in the GPA after two semesters the student will be ineligible to enroll for a period of one year (Students on academic probation may take classes for non-credit while on enrollment ineligibility status).

Forms will include:

1. Academic probation tracking form, which will include the beginning GPA, notes from the initial meeting and follow-up meetings, recommendation from the Dean of Students (i.e. maximum number of classes allowed for each semester), attachments including the strategic plan for improving GPA, and instructor's updates.
2. Instructor's academic probation update form, which will include test scores, assignment grades, notes of any student/teacher consultations, and recommendations.

If the student's GPA does not reach 2.0 after two consecutive semesters, or if the student receives an instructor initiated drop resulting from poor academic performance while on Academic Probation status, the student will be dismissed from the college. This will be indicated on any transcripts issued from the college.

In order to be readmitted to the college, the student must wait one year, then petition for readmission by arranging a meeting with the Academic Dean. It is entirely the responsibility of the student to request this meeting.

Readmission to the college will be granted at the discretion of the Academic Dean, based on evidence of potential for student success as determined in a meeting with the Academic Dean. If desired, the student may still take non-credit courses at the college while readmission is pending.

Upon readmission, the student must repay the application fee.

Process for Appeal

If a student disagrees with the final grade submitted by the instructor, the following are circumstances in which they may appeal:

- An error in calculating the grade
- Failure of instructor to notify students clearly and promptly of the criteria for grade determination
- Assignment of a grade based on reasons other than the announced criteria and standards

- Assignment of a grade based on factors other than student achievement, i.e. prejudice or discrimination
- Inconsistently or inequitably applied standards for evaluation of student academic performance

Contact Persons/Student Responsibilities:

- The student must appeal to the Instructor within four (4) weeks of the final grade posting.
- If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the student/instructor meeting, they may appeal to the Academic Dean.
- The Academic Dean will consider both the student's appeal and the instructor's recommendation, and then make a final decision to either change the grade or leave the grade as posted.

Attendance: A student who misses 3 or more classes will be automatically dropped from the course unless arrangements have been made previously with the instructor due to emergency or extreme circumstances. A student who misses class is responsible for all class notes, assignments and any exams that occurred during their absence. It may or may not be possible to make up these assignments, at the discretion of the instructor. Excused absences (that do not fall under the definition of emergency or extreme circumstances) will not count against the "automatic drop" policy, but the grade will reflect a reduction for such absences for each class period missed.

Readings: Assigned readings are mandatory and should be completed in advance of the classes for which they are scheduled in the syllabus. Knowledge of the readings will be critical for understanding the lectures and subsequent discussions, and for preparing for the final examination.

Late Papers: All papers are due at the prescribed dates specifically listed in this syllabus. Each paper is due prior to the start of the class period. (Example, if it is an evening class, then the paper shall be due by 6pm. If an afternoon class, then the paper shall be due by 1pm.) No late papers will be accepted. Failure to turn in a paper on time will result in a 0 grade for that paper. Extenuating circumstances will be the sole reason that a paper can be turned in late, but prior written approval to the instructor is needed.

Completion of Work: All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. Extended due dates will be granted only in cases of hardship such as hospitalization or emergency absence from class. Unless such a situation arises immediately before a deadline, arrangements cannot be made after the fact without receiving a reduction in your grade. A similar policy applies with regard to course incompletes.

Incomplete: If the student finds they will be unable to complete the course within the allotted time period they may request an Incomplete from the instructor. To request an Incomplete the student must obtain an Incomplete Form either from the website or the Branch College office. They are to complete this form and submit it to the instructor for approval by the last class session. Students are ineligible to request an Incomplete for a class after the last class session. The instructor will then file the Incomplete Form with the Administrations office. The student has a maximum of 4 weeks from the last class to complete all course work. If the course work is not completed within the allotted time period the student will receive the grade earned as a result of not completing the course work.

SECTION 3.5 – Repeating Courses

Curriculum courses with earned grades of “D” or “F” may be repeated. Courses with earned grades of “C” or higher may be repeated only by special permission from the Academic Dean. When courses are repeated, the highest earned grade and hours will be computed in the cumulative grade point average. The first course (grade and hours) will be shown on the transcript and will not be included in the cumulative grade point calculations. If a student receives three “F” grades for the same course, the student must wait at least two academic terms before repeating the course. Exceptions may be made by the instructor or Academic Dean.

SECTION 3.6 – Transfer Credit Policies

The BCOM, at the discretion of the administration, may accept up to 90 units from another college or university providing the course descriptions and grades are comparable to BCOM standards. Typically, Community College and undergraduate course work will be considered in the transfer process.

- Please note that at least the last 30 units must be completed at the BCOM to receive the Bachelor’s Degree.
- The maximum allowable transfer units for each program is 90 units.

Institutional Transfer Options

If a school is accredited by an agency approved by either the US Department of Education (USDE) or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), all courses that fit our curriculum will be transferred. If a school is accredited by an accrediting agency that is not approved by USDE or CHEA, no credits will be accepted (even if other criteria are met).

SECTION 3.7 - Discipline and Appeal Procedures for Academic Related Violations

Overview

The Academic Dean and Student Dean are responsible for implementing student discipline procedures for academic dishonesty. The college is committed to providing an excellent educational experience for all students. Academic integrity is an essential component to this level of education. The academic penalty for academic-related violations should be clearly stated by the instructor in each course syllabus and review at the beginning of the first class meeting. Academic penalties may range from a verbal warning to a failing grade in the course and must be consistently applied. These procedures only apply to academic-related violations, defined and outlined herein.

Definition of Academic-Related Violations

These procedures cover the following academic-related violations

1. Plagiarism;
2. Cheating;
3. Aiding Acts of Academic Dishonesty; and
4. Violations of Normal Classroom Behavior

Instructor's Investigation

An instructor suspecting an incident of an academic-related violation shall follow these steps to address the concern:

1. The instructor suspecting the alleged violation shall first present concerns to the student and provide an opportunity for the student to explain or refute the concerns.
2. The student will be allowed to comment on the evidence or to present evidence to clarify the issue in question.
3. Based on the evidence presented and the student's comments, the instructor shall determine whether or not an academic-violation has occurred. This determination will result in one of the following findings:
 - a. An academic-related violation did not take place and the issue is resolved.
 - b. An act of academic dishonesty did occur.

Instructor's Determination

1. The instructor will communicate his/her findings via Populi to the student's official College email address within three (3) working days of the initial meeting with the student. The instructor shall inform the student of the imposed academic sanctions. The instructor will also

inform the student of his/her appeal rights including the name and contact information of the Academic Dean.

2. The instructor will immediately report findings of academic-related violations and the imposed academic sanction to the Academic Dean.

Appeal to the Dean

1. A student who disagrees with an instructor's decision may appeal to the Academic Dean. This appeal must be submitted in writing within three (3) working day of receipt of the instructor's decision and describe with specificity why the student believes the instructor's findings were in error.

2. The Academic Dean will review the appeal and the instructor's findings and will communicate with the parties as needed before ruling on an appeal.

3. After considering the evidence, the Academic Dean will confirm, modify, or overturn the instructor's decision.

4. The Academic Dean will inform the student via Populi and phone of the decision within five (5) working days of the receipt of the student's appeal.

Appeal to the President

1. A student who disagrees with the Academic Dean's decision may appeal to the President. This appeal must be submitted in writing within three (3) working days of receipt of the Academic Dean's decision and describe, with specificity, why the student believes the Academic Dean's findings to be in error.

2. The President will review the appeal and previous findings and will communicate with parties as needed before ruling on an appeal.

3. After considering the evidence, the President will confirm, modify, or overturn the Academic Dean's decision.

4. The President will inform the student via Populi and phone of the decision within five (5) working days of the receipt of the student's appeal.

5. The President's decision is final.

SECTION 3.8 – Leave of Absence

Students may take a leave of absence for up to one year and must notify the Academic Dean. Any time longer than one year will require the student to re-apply into The Branch College of Ministry. Students should log onto the Branch College website to apply.

SECTION 3.9 – Holds

Students who fail to pay will have their final grade for that semester withheld until they are able to pay the full amount.

SECTION 3.10 – Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students who disclose or wish to disclose a disability should be referred to the Academic Dean. Students must provide medical documentation of their disability to the Academic Dean. Documentation should not be given to faculty or staff.

After a student has registered with the proper authorities and provided the necessary documentation, the Academic Dean will prepare an accommodation letter to be delivered to the instructor. If the course instructor has not received an accommodation letter for a student, dated in the current semester, there is no obligation to provide accommodations. For equity reasons alone, students should not receive special accommodations unless their needs have been formally documented.

SECTION 4.1 At Will Employment

Faculty are not under contract but are employed at will. They may leave at any time for any reason or be terminated any time for any reason, but there is an expectation that they would finish instructing the class they began unless otherwise are unable. The academic year for the college is from August to the following July and shall be reflected in the faculty contracts.

SECTION 4.2 Employment

Recruitment

Vacated Positions

Requests to hire new full-time faculty for vacated positions shall be submitted in writing with appropriate justification by the Academic Dean to the President and the Board of Trustees.

New Positions

Requests for new full-time faculty positions shall be submitted in writing with appropriate justification by the Academic Dean to the President and the Board of Trustees.

Recruitment Process

When approvals are granted by the Office of the President to conduct searches, the recruitment process shall be a cooperative effort by the Academic Dean and the President. The Academic Dean will be responsible to prepare a position description which describes the position to be filled including essential functions and secondary duties, and enumerates the qualifications that candidates must possess to assume that position. The Academic Dean will work with the President to advertise the position appropriately. All applicants must complete an application. The Academic Dean should form a check list of criteria for his own use by which all applicants will be evaluated and the list should include those criteria most likely to predict success at The Branch College of Ministry.

References should be contacted by phone. The conversation should be guided by the checklist of criteria and other information the reference wishes to give. Communication related to each applicant should be documented and put in each applicant's file stored on the Branch College's server.

After evaluating all applications and conducting phone interviews with the most promising applicants, the Academic Dean shall recommend one final candidate to the President to be invited for a campus visit and interview with the President. All phases of the hiring process will be appropriately documented.

Interview Process

The Academic Dean will be responsible to develop the schedule of activities for the campus visit and serve as host/hostess to the applicants during their stay. The interview schedule should include time for candidates to be with students, faculty, and the President. All final interviews are to be conducted by the Office of the President.

Appointment

Offers of appointment to the faculty shall be issued by the President in writing and shall include information about rank, salary, prerequisites, and other conditions and contingencies of employment.

After a position is filled, all applicants will be informed by the Academic Dean. The file containing original documents of the person hired should go to the Academic Dean.

SECTION 4-3 Workload

Introduction

A full-time faculty position establishes The Branch College of Ministry as the primary place of employment for the faculty member and assures that College-related responsibilities will require the major portion of the faculty member's professional effort.

College Obligations

Employment outside the College must not interfere with the professor's obligations or reduce the performance at The Branch College of Ministry. If service to The Branch College of Ministry or faculty performance is evaluated as less than satisfactory by the Academic Dean or the President, the faculty member may be required to discontinue outside employment or commitments.

Office Hours

Office hours will take place between the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at The Branch College of Ministry offices. Each faculty member will be responsible for posting their specific hours within this time frame on the syllabus for each class they instruct.

SECTION 4.4 Payroll Checks

Faculty will be paid bi-weekly during the academic school year.

SECTION 4.5 Job Postings

Job postings will be posted on The Branch College of Ministry website, classrooms, and Facebook, and any other means the President and Academic Dean deem necessary. The application for the job postings will remain on the college website and be posted by the Academic Dean.

SECTION 4.6 Exit Interview

Employees terminating employment should schedule an employment exit interview with the Academic Dean.

The employee should inform the Academic Dean at least 2 weeks in advance of the employee's last day of work. A written letter of resignation should be submitted by the employee to the Academic Dean.

SECTION 4.7 Personnel Records

An employee may review or obtain a copy of their personnel file by submitting a written request to the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean will schedule an appointment during normal business hours for the employee to review the personnel file, or will provide a copy of the employee's personnel file within five (5) business days of the receipt of the employee's request.

Keeping Your Records Up-To-Date:

- To insure prompt and proper record keeping, employees/faculty are responsible for notifying the Academic Dean in writing of any change in status: name, address, telephone, marital and family status, emergency contact information, etc.
- All name changes must be accompanied by an official state or court document.
- If an employee wishes to change the number of dependents listed for income tax purposes, a new W-4 form must be completed and filed with the CFO (Payroll Office).

SECTION 4.8 Employee Relations and Grievances

The College has established processes for handling faculty grievances. The nature of the grievance dictates which process applies to the situation, as follows:

1. Grievances related to behavior of other employees, including discrimination or harassment, are to be directed into Populi at any time and sent to the Academic Dean and the President.
2. Grievances related to academic and/or contractual issues such as academic freedom, Faculty Handbook policies, and/or academic integrity are to be directed into Populi at any time and sent to the Academic Dean and the President.
3. Complaints that a faculty member has about his/her supervisor that do not fall into either of the above bullet points should be referred to the President.
4. Complaints about the College's structures/processes for handling grievances should be addressed with the President.

The College encourages faculty members to pursue informal means of resolution with the appropriate party or parties before utilizing the formal processes listed above. The College prohibits retaliation against any employee who brings a grievance in good faith.

SECTION 4.9 – Academic Due Process and Grievance Policies

Occasionally, situations arise in the academic community in which a faculty member seeks an objective review of a conflict. The following process has been developed to help ensure that all members of the community can follow an orderly process when seeking resolution of concerns that could not be resolved through informal processes. In all cases, faculty should seek to resolve conflicts directly with the individual parties. Only when all such attempts have been exhausted should formal procedures be initiated.

Grievance Procedure:

1. The faculty member must first seek to resolve the conflict informally with the parties directly involved, meeting with the other party or parties as soon as possible after the event causing the conflict. If the faculty member is not comfortable approaching the parties alone, he/she may ask the Academic Dean or a faculty colleague to sit in on the conversation as an informal mediator. If the concern persists, the faculty member should discuss the issue with the President, seeking resolution as a final step before filing a formal grievance.
2. If the faculty member has been unsuccessful in resolving the matter informally, and has discussed it with the Academic Dean, the faculty member may formally file a grievance by completing a Grievance Request Form (obtained from the Academic Dean). The form must be submitted to the Academic Dean.
3. Within ten (10) working days after receipt of the request, the Academic Dean will meet with the faculty member and review the Grievance Request Form to ensure complete information has been provided. The Academic Dean will then determine the next steps for the grievance.

SECTION 4.10 – Termination of Employment

1. Dismissal of a faculty member will be preceded by:

- a. Discussion between the faculty member and appropriate administrative officers, looking toward a mutual understanding.
- b. A written notice of termination is presented to the faculty member, including date of termination.

SECTION 4.11 – Instructional Policies

1. Syllabus

- a. For each class taught, the faculty member must prepare a course instruction plan (syllabus) following the college's syllabus guidelines. These guidelines are available from the Academic Dean. Faculty are required to update their syllabi annually to ensure compliance with current policies and/or new syllabus requirements.
- b. Faculty must submit their syllabi to the Academic Dean at the beginning of each semester. The Academic Dean is responsible for reviewing syllabi for courses offered to ensure they are consistent with the college and that course outcomes are aligned with the overall program outcomes.
- c. Core student learning outcomes are established for each course by the college and approved by the President. Each faculty has the responsibility of maintaining the integrity of core Student Learning Outcomes across in their specific course offering.
- d. In keeping with our Christian commitment, faculty are expected to actively engage in faith integration in each course taught at The Branch College of Ministry where appropriate. Faculty are also highly encouraged to begin their classes with prayer and/or a devotion.

2. Copyright Policy

All faculty members are expected to comply with copyright laws in teaching at The Branch College and when providing written materials for their syllabus or other materials distributed in the course as handouts or electronic files or electronically posted files.

3. Early, Late, or Make-up Exams

- a. A faculty member should develop a policy on late or make-up examinations and include it on the course instruction plan.
- b. Early final examinations are strongly discouraged. In extreme cases, the faculty member should consult with the Academic Dean of the college for any exceptions.

4. Student Attendance Requirements

A student who misses 3 or more classes will be automatically dropped from the course unless arrangements have been made previously with the instructor due to emergency or extreme circumstances. A student who misses class is responsible for all class notes, assignments and any exams that occurred during their absence. It may or may not be possible to make up these assignments, at the discretion of the instructor. Please consult individual syllabi for class requirements.

SECTION 4.12 – Academic Advising Procedures

Students will meet with the Academic Dean at the beginning of their degree to determine the best possible course selection and load to effectively and efficiently completing their degree. Students will then be contacted by the Academic Dean prior to each semester to advise in continued course selection.

Faculty are encouraged to advise students in conjunction with the Academic Dean and as to what is in the best interest of the student.

SECTION 4.13 – Grading, Incomplete and Grade Change

1. Grading

- a. Grades are due to the Academic Dean by the deadline date published in the Academic Calendar.
- b. Online grading is the mandatory grade submission method.
- c. Instructors should retain personal grade records for a minimum of four (4) years.
- d. Faculty who fail to submit grades by the deadline date will be notified in writing of their noncompliance by the Academic Dean. Repeat offenses will be noted in the faculty member's department records.

2. Incomplete Policy

a. The grade “incomplete” is to be given only under special circumstances upon recommendation of the professor with the permission of the Academic Dean. An incomplete may be granted for up to 4 weeks from the date of issue. Extension beyond the 4 weeks requires a petition and is subject to review by the faculty member and the Registrar. Forms for filing the incomplete (and petition) can be obtained from the Academic Dean.

3. Grade Change Policy

a. Grades reported to the Registrar are considered official and final except for I (Incomplete grades), IN (incomplete, no paperwork), and FN (failure, non-attending). Faculty should not change grades except in the rare case of proven mathematical or recording error or in the case of a grade appeal in which the faculty member acknowledges an error or has a considered change of professional judgment. Work completed after the close of the grading period does not justify a grade change.

b. When necessary to change a grade, the faculty member should complete the Grade Change form and submit it to the Academic Dean for approval and signature. The grade will be changed on the official grade report and on the student’s transcript.

c. In the case of grade appeals, students must file grade appeals within 30 days after the end of the semester in which the grade is received. All grade appeals should be addressed first to the instructor of record, either verbally or in writing. Failure to resolve the matter at that point requires a written appeal. And should be submitted to the Academic Dean.

d. The faculty of record has the responsibility and right to determine students’ grades based on professional judgment. In rare circumstances (e.g., as the result of a successful student appeal), the Academic Dean may change a student’s grade administratively.

SECTION 4.14 – Independent Study Option

Independent study is provided for the benefit of students to help them finish their degree in a timely manner. Often a student may need one or more classes to graduate but that class is not offered until the following year. The independent study option will provide the opportunity for the student to finish without having to wait.

1. The student and the faculty member under whom the student wishes to study should submit a written proposal to the Academic Dean. The “Independent Study Application,” should be used and can be obtained from the office of the Registrar.

2. Students may only receive credit for a maximum of nine units of independent-type study to be applied to their undergraduate degree program.

3. There is a limit of five independent-study students per teacher, per registration period. This limit is monitored by the Academic Dean.
4. Students are assessed a fee of \$200 per course for independent-type study. The faculty member does not have the right to waive the fee for independent study.
5. Faculty are responsible to ensure that the learning objectives for each independent study course is met before assigning a grade.
6. Faculty are to place a copy of the students "Independent Study Application" with the office of the Registrar.

SECTION 4.15 – Textbook adoption and management

1. Textbook Adoption

The textbook chosen for each course will be at the discretion of the faculty. The faculty will be responsible for choosing textbooks that are academically and Biblically sound in regard to their subject matter and do not conflict or oppose with The Branch College of Ministry's statement of faith.

2. Textbook Management

For each course the instructor will be required to provide a full reference of the necessary textbooks and suggested reading to students along with a suggestion of where they may be purchased.

SECTION 4.16 – Procedures for the procurement of equipment and supplies

Faculty will be provided a classroom during their scheduled class time equipped with multiple whiteboards, markers, erasers, and a projector. Faculty will have access to one copy machine to print copies for class. Any additional equipment must be purchased by the individual faculty member. For any questions about current equipment or additional needed supplies the faculty are responsible to see the Academic Dean.

SECTION 4.17 – Academic Integrity

Expectations of academic integrity of Branch College students must be predicated upon by academic integrity on the part of Branch College faculty members. Faculty members are expected to model the rules of scholarship giving credit to ideas taken from other sources. Established academic dishonesty on the part of a faculty member is grounds for termination.

The Branch College desires to cultivate in each student the academic skills that are required for their particular degree. A breach of academic integrity is viewed not merely as a private matter between the student and the professor, but rather as an act which is fundamentally inconsistent with the purpose and mission of the entire College.

A specific academic integrity policy exists and is indicated on each syllabus for each class. Academic integrity infractions must be reported by faculty to the Academic Dean and the President. Upon a student's notice of an integrity infraction by a faculty member, he/she should report it to the Academic Dean who will then investigate the claim. If the matter cannot be resolved or decided upon, the Academic Dean will report it to the President who will also investigate and make the final decision.

SECTION 4.18 – Relationships with Students

1. Interactions with Students

a. The faculty-student relationship is foundational to the mission of the College. Faculty responsibilities with respect to students may include but are not limited to the following:

i.) Nurture students' holistic development.

ii.) Be available to students through the maintenance of regularly scheduled office hours that accommodate the majority of the students in the classes the faculty teach.

iii.) Maintain professional discretion.

a. Information intercepted in advising students, officially or unofficially, is confidential in nature and must not be discussed with other students or those outside the College community. If information is disclosed that indicates the student is a potential danger to him/herself or others, it must be reported to the appropriate office (e.g., Dean of Students). Any necessary discussion must be conducted with the greatest of consideration for the welfare of the student as well as the student's personal rights.

b. Faculty members should avoid criticism of fellow faculty to students. (Justifiable criticism should be taken up with the colleague him/herself or proper authorities of the College.)

c. Borrowing or loaning money, cars, equipment, or other property with students is discouraged. This policy will avoid potential problems.

d. Involvement in student spiritual mentoring activities, where students receive ministry credit, should be cleared with the Dean of Students.

SECTION 4.19 – The Faculty Evaluation System

1. The faculty will be evaluated by the Academic Dean in the Dean Evaluation for Teaching Faculty. This academic assessment will further provide outside perception and support to their strengths and weaknesses while providing tangible ways to improve.
2. The faculty will participate in the Faculty Satisfaction Inventory (FSI) annually giving concrete feedback to their satisfactions and struggles.
3. Course evaluations will be filled out by the students following each course. The goal of the evaluation is to rate the instructor, the material taught, and the instructor's ability to teach it. Specific questions on a numbered scale will be provided for the students to objectively grade the faculty.

SECTION 4.20 – Faculty Organization

Sharing in the governance of the institution is a faculty privilege and obligation. The following are principles that will guide faculty participation in the governance of the institution.

1. The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction and delivery, evaluation of student performance, and standards for admission of students.
2. The faculty complies with degree requirements and qualifies students when the requirements have been met to the Academic Dean and President to grant the degrees thus achieved.
3. Faculty must exercise diligence and provide oversight to ensure that its agencies act in keeping with its policies and recommendations, and that they are implemented in an appropriate manner.
4. The faculty may consider any subject pertaining to the interests of the College and make recommendations to the College administration.
5. Additional appropriate areas for faculty consultation include significant changes in existing institution-wide policies that deal with faculty evaluations and development.

SECTION 4.21 – Faculty Meetings

Faculty Meetings

1. Calling Meetings of the Full Faculty

- a. The faculty shall meet at once individually and once with all faculty prior to the start of each semester with the Academic Dean for purposes of organizational development and spiritual growth.
- b. Meetings of the Faculty, both individual and corporate, shall be called by the Academic Dean.
- c. The Academic Dean may call additional meetings of the faculty as needed.

2. Agenda

The Academic Dean will be responsible for setting the agenda. A notice and agenda for each business meeting of the full faculty shall be sent to all members on the Friday prior to the meetings.

3. Attendance

To the extent that it is possible, all present teaching faculty are expected to be present at all faculty meetings, and they shall have the right to participate in discussion. Adjunct faculty not currently teaching may or may not be invited at the discretion of the Academic Dean.

4. Rules of Order

Faculty present are expected to act in accordance with Biblical principles and Christ-likeness. The Academic Dean and at least three faculty will constitute a quorum to vote and make decisions. Decisions presented for faculty vote will be decided by majority vote.

SECTION 4.22 – Handbook Review Committee

1. Handbook Review Committee

- a. The purpose of the committee is to ensure that the Faculty Handbook provides clear and consistent procedures for faculty as they fulfill their duties at The Branch College of Ministry.
- b. The committee shall be comprised of the Academic Dean and two representative full time faculty.
- c. Duties
 - i.) Undertake a yearly review of the Faculty Handbook to ensure consistency and effectiveness in processes and procedures.
 - ii.) Receive proposed changes from the President.
 - iii.) Ensure that requested changes do not create inconsistency in procedures.
 - iv.) Forward recommended changes to the President for final approval.

SECTION 4.23 – Faculty Member Duties and Responsibilities

Full Time Faculty

Reporting to the Academic Dean, faculty serve as contracted, full-time instructors providing consistent quality education contributing to the accomplishment of the institutional Mission. Faculty members hold earned degrees from accredited institutions and are assigned courses related to degree discipline and area of professional expertise. Faculty members are expected to exemplify mature Christian character and to serve as mentors and models of authentic Christian ministry and service in keeping with the institution's statement of faith, policies, and practices. Faculty work collegially under the oversight of the Academic Dean to promote student success, ministry development, and educational effectiveness. Faculty members are expected to participate in required meetings, events, assigned areas of academic oversight, and participate in academic assessment.

Essential Functions

1. Provide 4 courses of academic instruction per academic year consisting of 42 hours of lecture, 21 hours of preparation and grading per course (total of 63 hours per course).
2. Overload of up to 3 additional adjunct courses can be contracted upon approval of the Academic Dean.
3. Maintain 20 hours per week of regularly scheduled office hours and be available for the support of students.
4. Participate in syllabus and course development.
5. Participate in assigned assessment of student learning outcomes.
6. Participate regularly in faculty meetings, annual faculty self-evaluations and supervisor evaluations, committee service as assigned, annual graduation events and commencements.

Additional Marginal Functions

1. Represent the institution to various external entities and outside agencies regarding mission, goals, and objectives.
2. Foster an environment that promotes respect for others and recognizes initiative and excellence.
3. Support institutional activities and special events through attendance or participation.
4. Communicate an accurate image of the institution to the public, and be a positive and active representative of the institution.

5. Maintain confidentiality of institutional information exposed to in the course of business.
6. Perform such other academic services as assigned by the Academic Dean.

Qualifications

1. Knowledge of and commitment to the Mission, Statement of Faith, and Philosophy of Education of the institution.
2. Ability to utilize metrics to measure educational effectiveness.
3. Ability to perform satisfactorily in a higher education office work environment.
4. Skill in using the tools of a modern office environment.
5. Skill in making presentations to individuals and groups.
6. Skill in communicating well in both oral and written forms.
7. Skill in interpersonal relations, including the ability to relate professionally to students, faculty, and staff.

Education and Experience

1. Requires an earned degree (Doctoral degree for graduate programs faculty; M.Div. or equivalent for undergraduate programs with doctoral degree preferred) from an accredited institution in the appropriate discipline.
2. Five to ten years of progressive instructor experience. Must have a demonstrated record of teaching, scholarship and service.
3. Experience with using technology and education resources for teaching and learning, as well as proficiency with online instruction and course management systems.
4. Ability to assist in the evaluation and assessment of student learning outcomes and curriculum review.
5. The individual must be a seasoned professional who can provide exceptional instruction along with demonstrated Christian character.
6. Pastoral or ministry experience preferred.

SECTION 4.24 – Administration and Staff Duties and Responsibilities

The Office of the President

The President works under the direction of the Board of Trustees to develop and direct an executive leadership team capable of effectively and efficiently administering the institution, and to carry out the directives of the Board as expressed in the bylaws, board policies and resolutions. The President also serves as the primary representative for institutional advancement.

Essential Functions

1. Performance of all duties related to the office as prescribed by the Articles of Incorporation, or the bylaws, and the exercise of such powers and performance of other duties as may be prescribed by the Board.
2. Assume leadership, direction, and responsibility for all of the affairs of the institution as well as the activities of the officers and delegated parties.
3. Oversight of the recruitment and nomination of officers necessary to fulfill the strategic goals and objectives of the institution.
4. Provide all annually prescribed documents and reports related to core institutional documents, budgeting, and strategic planning in a timely and efficient manner to the Board of Trustees for review and approval.
5. Comprehensive oversight of all curricular and co-curricular functions of the institution, including its operations, finances, and academic programs.
6. Consideration and implementation of any improvements recommended by the Board of Trustees related to the results of the annual evaluation of the President.

Qualifications

1. Commitment to the consistent application of Christian values and professional practices to higher education.
2. Commitment to the education, success, and growth of a diverse student population.
3. Provides enthusiastic support for the mission, goals, and objectives of the institution, as well as a strong and consistent sense of vision and direction.
4. Possess significant executive administrative experience in higher education, with demonstrated effectiveness in strategic planning, staff development, and management.
5. Commitment to servant-leadership with clear ability to utilize teamwork to its maximum effectiveness.

6. Have excellent communication skills and the ability to work with diverse constituencies.
7. Skills and ability to build community and collegiality while modeling integrity and ethical practices.
8. Ability to synthesize and evaluate institutional research and assessment data in order to facilitate the development and success of the institution.

Education and Experience

Earned post-graduate degree, from an accredited institution which is appropriate to the assigned responsibilities, with a minimum of five years of executive leadership and administrative experience in an educational environment of higher education or any combination of experience, education, and training which would provide the level of knowledge, skill, and ability required.

The Office of Academic Dean

The Chief Academic Officer provides primary oversight of the educational functions consistent with the highest standards of Christian ethics, legal and regulatory requirements, and accepted principles and practices of postsecondary Christian education.

Essential Functions

1. Performance of all responsibilities as stated in the Bylaws.
2. Leadership and direction for all academic programs of the institution.
3. Oversight of the recruitment, assignment, and retention of qualified faculty that demonstrate excellence academically and spiritually, and who are in agreement with the institution's statement of faith.
4. Oversight of the development, review, and assessment of curriculum appropriate to each academic program.
5. Cooperation with supporting administrative services and functions of the institution.
6. Oversight of the publication of core institutional documents necessary for mission fulfillment and consistent with accepted standards for postsecondary Christian education.
7. Development of the academic department strategic plan and budget.
8. Providing leadership in conducting regular meetings of the faculty for the purpose of encouragement and professional development.
9. Teaching of 2 courses per year during each academic year.

Qualifications

1. Commitment to the consistent application of Christian values and professional practices to higher education.
2. Commitment to the education, success, and growth of a diverse student population.
3. Provide enthusiastic support for the mission, goals, and objectives of the institution, as well as a strong and consistent sense of vision and direction for the academic programs.
4. Possess significant executive administrative experience in higher education, with demonstrated effectiveness course instruction, curriculum and program review, academic assessment, and staff development.
5. Possess executive administrative experience in higher education, with demonstrated effectiveness in strategic planning, staff development, and management.
6. Commitment to servant-leadership with clear ability to utilize teamwork to its maximum effectiveness.
7. Have excellent communication skills and the ability to work with diverse constituencies.
8. Skills and ability to build community and collegiality while modeling integrity and ethical practices.
9. Ability to synthesize and evaluate institutional research and assessment data in order to facilitate the development and success of the institution.

Education and Experience

Post-graduate degree, preferably an Ed.D, D.Min., or a Ph.D. in education or in a related field (MA will be considered when BA degrees are the highest degree offered by the institution), with five years of leadership and administrative experience in an educational environment of higher education, or any combination of experience, education, and training which would provide the level of knowledge, skill, and ability required, as the President shall determine.

SECTION 5.1 – Student Rights

Students are free to pursue their educational goals. Appropriate opportunities for learning in the classroom and on the campus shall be provided by the college.

Students have the right to have their performance evaluated solely on an academic basis as defined by the course syllabus, not on opinions or conduct matters unrelated to academic standards.

Students have the right to freedom of expression, inquiry, and assembly without restraint or censorship subject to reasonable and non-discriminatory rules and regulations regarding time, place and manner.

Students have the right to form clubs, as defined through Section 2.8 of the Student Handbook, to show solidarity to an academic program, societal issue or personal cause.

Students have the right to safeguard and protect their official college record, as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. Students and former students have the right to review their official records and to request a hearing if they want to challenge the content of their record.

All rights and privileges guaranteed to every citizen by the Constitution of the United States and by the State of California shall not be denied to any student.

Should a student violate a college policy, college discipline will be initiated when the presence of the student on campus will (or has) disrupt the educational process. Students have the right to due process during these situations. Due process procedures are established to guarantee a student accused of a Standards of Student Conduct Violation (academic or non-academic) the right to a hearing, a presentation of charges, evidence of charges, the right to present evidence, the right to have a witness on one's behalf, the right to hear witness on behalf of the accuser, and the right to an appeal. If a student violates State or Federal law and the violation adversely impacts the college's pursuit of its recognized educational objectives, the college will enforce its own disciplinary sanctions, in addition to penalties incurred by legal authorities, to maintain a safe and orderly academic environment.

SECTION 5.2 – Open Door Admission Policy

Pursuant to state law and except as provided below, The Branch College of Ministry maintains an open-door admission's policy for all of its educational programs.

Admission is open to all legal residents of the United States who are high school or high school equivalency program graduates or who are at least eighteen (18) years of age.

Admission Criteria

The following admission criteria shall apply to all college applicants:

1. High School Diploma - Admission to degree programs requires a high school diploma or the equivalent.
2. Transfer - Applicants transferring from other postsecondary institutions must submit official transcripts for placement documentation and transfer credit evaluation. The college reserves the right to deny admission to applicants on disciplinary suspension from another educational entity.
3. Audit - A person who meets the college's admission requirements may enroll as an audit student. The fee in a curriculum course is less than a credit student (see the current years Catalog). Audits are not reported on grade reports and transcripts and do not earn credit.

SECTION 5.3 – Registration

Contact: Registrar Office, (858) 384-6679

The Registrar Office handles both credit and non-credit registrations. In addition, the Registrar Office handles drop/add withdrawal from courses, and 'incomplete' status.

Student responsibilities:

Credit students

- Students should register for courses according to their quarterly recommendation letter from the Academic Dean.
- Students must register for courses each session prior to the registration deadline.
- Students will register for classes on Populi after they have been accepted and entered into the website database.

Non-credit students (Audit)

- Non-credit students must complete a registration form (available at www.branchcollege.org), along with appropriate non-credit tuition fees, prior to the registration deadline each term.
- Students taking classes in a non-credit status must remember that they will not receive credit for taking the course. A grade will not be issued, nor will a transcript be provided.

Add

Students may add a class no later than the second class meeting. To add a class, log onto Populi and under the current semester select the course(s) you wish to add.

Drop

Students may drop classes up to and including the 4th week of the course. To drop a class, a student must log onto Populi and drop the specific class in their account.

Withdrawal

Students may withdraw from a class after the fifth (5th) week and up through the ninth (9th) week of classes. To withdraw from a class a student must log onto Populi to complete the action. A "W" will appear on the student's transcript.

Student responsibilities for Withdrawing from the institution:

- Students must inform the Academic Dean of their decision to withdraw from the College. Upon doing so, the Academic Dean will remove them from the Populi database.
- If students desire to re-enter they must submit a new application and application fee.

Independent Study Option

Independent study is provided for the benefit of students to help them finish their degree in a timely manner. Often a student may need one or more classes to graduate but that class is not offered until the following year. The independent study option will provide the opportunity for the student to finish without having to wait.

1. The student and the faculty member under whom the student wishes to study should submit a written proposal to the Academic Dean. The "Independent Study Application," should be used and can be obtained from the office of the Registrar.
2. Students may only receive credit for a maximum of nine units of independent-type study to be applied to their undergraduate degree program.
3. There is a limit of five independent-study students per teacher, per registration period. This limit is monitored by the Academic Dean.
4. Students are assessed a fee of \$200 per course for independent-type study. The faculty member does not have the right to waive the fee for independent study.
5. Faculty are responsible to ensure that the learning objectives for each independent study course is met before assigning a grade.

6. Faculty are to place a copy of the students "Independent Study Application" with the office of the Registrar.

SECTION 5.4 – Financial Aid Services

Financial Aid

Personal student loans, institutional scholarships, flexible payment plans.

SECTION 5.5 – Social/Behavioral Standards

Alcohol/Drugs

The college expects its students to obey the law. It is a violation of the college's expectations for a student to drink, possess, or be impaired by drinking, alcoholic beverages, or to possess, use, or be under the influence of, illegal drugs, on campus or at any event sponsored by the college or by a college-approved student organization. If the college determines that a student has violated this policy, the college may disclose the violation to a student's parent or legal guardian if the student is less than 21 years of age at the time of the notification. Violation of this policy may result in any sanction deemed appropriate by the college, including, but not limited to, required participation in a drug or alcohol treatment or rehabilitation program, suspension or expulsion.

Attire

Students should be properly dressed at all times for the specific occasion. Any sexually suggestive clothing, including t-shirts with ungodly wording, slogans or cartoons, will not be tolerated anywhere on the campus. Shirts and shoes must be worn at all times by both men and women. Both men and women are asked to avoid wearing clothing that reveals their undergarments. Individual classroom attire regulations shall be at the discretion of instructors and/or administration.

Any student wearing inappropriate attire will be dismissed from class until that student can return wearing suitable clothing. It will then be the student's responsibility to obtain any lecture notes missed due to dismissal for inappropriate attire. Repeated violations of this policy may result in probation with mandatory pastoral counseling, or suspension from the college, at the discretion of the Academic Dean.

Cheating/Plagiarism/Forgery

Plagiarism is taking an idea or structure of a work that someone else has written, composed, etc., then presenting it as one's own idea, and neglecting to give credit to the original source of that work. Anyone who plagiarizes will receive an automatic failure on that piece of work, as

well as a warning of a potential “F” for the course. A second occurrence of plagiarism within that course will result in failure (“F”) for the final course grade. An “F” for cheating/plagiarism in a subsequent course may result in suspension from the college, at the discretion of the Academic Dean.

Church Involvement

Students are expected to attend church regularly. They may attend the weekly service at The Branch Church San Diego, or, services at a Christian church of their choosing.

Financial Irregularities

Keeping in mind the biblical principles of stewardship, selflessness, integrity, and personal discipline, it is expected that students will meet financial obligations on their scheduled due date for each session that they attend BCOM.

If a student is late for two consecutive installments, that student will lose installment privileges for the following term. This means that the student would be required to make full payment for all classes at the start of the term.

Any payments that are returned to the college for non-sufficient funds will result in a charge of \$20.00 to the student. After two non-sufficient funds occurrences, the student will be required to pay by cash, certified check, credit card, or money order for the remainder of the academic year.

A student will not be permitted to register for any new courses, graduate, or obtain transcripts until all tuition debts from the prior term are paid in full.

Health Services and Student Insurance

Although precautions are taken to maintain adequate security, The Branch College of Ministry does not assume any legal obligation to pay for injury to persons (including death) or loss or damage to items of personal property which occur in its buildings or on its grounds, prior to, during, or subsequent to classes or events on the campus. Students, their parents, guardians, or guarantor are thereby strongly encouraged to purchase and maintain appropriate insurance to cover health, life and property.

Student Discipline

Students are required to maintain standards of behavior that are consistent with the calling to ministry, the teachings of the Bible, and the stated intentions (e.g. mission statement, goals, policies) of BCOM. Students who do not maintain such standards may be denied the opportunity to continue in this school or to graduate from it. The primary goals of discipline at BCOM is restorative (i.e., not punitive) and the physical, emotional, and spiritual protection of the community.

Student Rights and Due Process

A student who believes that disciplinary procedures are unwarranted or unfair has the right to due process. The sequence of steps starts with a meeting with the Dean of Students to make sure the student understands the offence and to evaluate the student's attitude. At that meeting, the Dean of Students will provide the student a written statement concerning the suspect behavior. If the student does not evidence a change of behavior, the process will go forward through probation, suspension and expulsion. At the point that the latter three steps begin, a student may notify the Dean of Students that he or she wants to appeal his or her case to a committee of disinterested faculty and students (i.e. those who are a part of the college but not involved). A final appeal can be made to the administrative council. In regard to discipline and due process, the student has the following rights:

- The student has a right to know the charges against him or her and to receive them in writing.
- The student has a right to have a hearing consisting of a committee of disinterested faculty (two) and students (preferably two members of the student government) and the Dean of Students. This committee will make a recommendation to the administrative council, which will make the final decision. The final decision will be signed by the President and a copy will be given to the student.
- The student also has a right to confront his or her accusers (e.g. explain his or her side of the story, cross-examine witnesses, bring his or her own witnesses)
- A student may be represented or assisted (e.g. a character witness's testimony) by anyone he or she chooses
- The student has a right to the minutes of the proceedings and a written copy of the decision.
- The student may appeal this decision by requesting another hearing before the administrative council. The final decision will be signed by the President and a copy will be given to the student.

Campus safety and emergency procedures

In the interest of the safety and integrity of the BCOM community, the BCOM reserves the right to refer any violation to appropriate law enforcement. Students are expected to comply with civil law to keep the BCOM campus safe. Any witnessing of harmful activity is required to be reported to the proper authorities. Upon any emergency situation on campus, students and faculty alike are required to follow emergency procedures as outlines and posted on campus.

Rude/Obscene Language

Vulgar, foul, obscene, or profane language is not to be tolerated on campus at any time. Pornographic materials, obscene literature and pictures are also not to be tolerated. Any student who violates this policy will be asked to have a consultation with the Academic Dean. Repeated occurrences of rude or obscene language may result in probation with mandatory pastoral counseling and/or community service, or suspension from the college, at the discretion of the Academic Dean.

Sexual Misconduct

Students engaged in inappropriate sexual behavior are destructive to an environment of purity and obedience to God. Sexual misconduct includes, but may not be limited to, the following: suggestive conversation, correspondence, or gestures; public displays of sexual intimacy; and extra- or pre-marital sexual relations, whether on or off campus. Any student who violates this policy will be asked to have a consultation with the Academic Dean. Repeated occurrences of sexual misconduct may result in probation with mandatory pastoral counseling and/or community service, or suspension from the college, at the discretion of the Academic Dean.

Smoking

The BCOM is a smoke-free environment. No student may smoke either on or outside of the campus. Due to its destructive nature to the human body which God has created, smoking is strongly discouraged as a life-style choice, whether on or off campus. Any student who violates this policy will be asked to have a consultation with the Academic Dean. Repeated occurrences of smoking on or outside of the BCOM campus may result in probation with mandatory pastoral counseling and/or community service, or suspension from the college, at the discretion of the Academic Dean.

Theft/Destruction

Bearing in mind the Biblical principles of honesty, integrity, and concern for neighbors, theft or destruction of property will not be tolerated at the BCOM. Any student who practices breaking and entering, theft, embezzlement of funds, and/or related activities will be subject to suspension from the college with mandatory pastoral counseling and/or community service, in addition to possible civil prosecution.

Unauthorized Use of Property & Equipment

Students are prohibited from any unauthorized use of BCOM property or equipment. This includes office equipment and supplies, kitchen and bathroom areas, any and all multi-media and computer equipment. No student may disconnect, interface with, relocate or tamper in any way with computer systems, hardware, printers, peripherals or accessories. No student may download or install any third party programs or software. Any unauthorized use or

tampering that result in loss of functionality or damage will be considered as Theft/Destruction (see above).

Unauthorized Use of Premises

Students are prohibited to use the BCOM campus for unauthorized events or activities. If a student wishes to hold an event or activity on the campus, the student must first obtain permission from the Registrar Office. Unauthorized use of premises may result in probation or suspension from the college, at the discretion of the Academic Dean.

Violence

Threats or acts of violence will not be tolerated at the BCOM. For the safety and well-being of the entire BCOM community, any student who violates this policy must immediately leave the campus. Furthermore, that student will be subject to suspension from the college with mandatory pastoral counseling and/or community service, in addition to possible civil prosecution.

Weather Policies

In the event of extreme weather conditions such as fire, flood, or earthquake warnings, it is likely that the campus will cancel classes. However, no student should assume that a class is cancelled without verifying the cancellation with the BCOM faculty. In addition, students should inquire about any changes to course requirements resulting from the closing.

Sexual Assault Policy

If you, as the victim, believe a sexual assault act has been committed, report the assault immediately to the nearest fellow faculty or staff member, who is to in turn notify the school's President or Academic Dean and the police. We desire to do everything possible to protect victim's safety, reputation and emotional wellbeing. Therefore, a sympathetic, same-sex companion will be made available to be with a victim of such a crisis.

Any observer of a sexual assault crime should notify the school's President or Academic Dean immediately, rather than take the initiative to contact the police. It is critical that the rights of victims are protected so that they accurately report the crime to authorities.

The police will be called to review the crime, take a description of the attacker, etc. and ensure that the victim and his or her escort are transported to a medical facility. Confidentiality is required in order to protect all parties involved with the assault. In order to protect the rights of both victim and alleged perpetrators, neither the names of victims nor alleged perpetrators will be released to the public without prior permission. Any inquiries from newspapers, employees, parents, or other students will be immediately forwarded to the school's President or Academic Dean to avoid misrepresentation of the facts and breach of confidentiality.

Efforts will be made by the school staff or faculty member to help the victim deal with work-related difficulties resulting from the crime. Should a student, faculty member, or staff member be accused of the crime, appropriate disciplinary action will not occur until a formal investigation is completed. The victim will be informed of any disciplinary action that is taken or progress of appeals in connection with the sexual assault.

Prevention is the best tool for elimination of sexual assault. All staff, faculty, and students should take all steps necessary to prevent sexual assault from occurring such as escorting females to parking areas, expressing strong disapproval, using self-defense techniques, and increasing awareness of what sexual assault means.

SECTION 5.6 – Student Complaint Procedures

Students are encouraged to help improve the college by sharing their observations. Various mechanisms are available. A Student Survey is distributed annually. The Dean of Students will welcome you if you make an appointment. If a problem is presented to the Dean of Students, he or she will keep records of any complaints as well as any action taken. A student is welcome to make another appointment to inquire of progress on the issue. If the student does not find the resolution to be acceptable, the student may write a formal description of the problem and a proposed solution. Upon the student's request, this written description and proposed solution will be presented at duly appointed administrative council consisting of the Academic Dean, Dean of Students, and Director of Admissions. The decision of the administrative council will be final. Records of the decision of the administrative council are to be kept by the Dean of Students. If desired, the concerned student may make an appointment with the Dean of Students to read the decision.

If a student feels there is a problem with another student, faculty member, staff member, administrator, or other person associated with the school, the concerned student is encouraged to follow procedures outlined in Matthew 18 before engaging in the formal complaint process. First go to the person and humbly express the issue. If this does not prove adequate, take it to the Dean of Students. If the resolution of the Dean of Students and administrative council are not acceptable, the student has a further option. If he or she believes there is a *serious* issue, he or she may contact the State of California (BPPE) at the addresses below:

BPPE

400 R Street, Suite 5000
Sacramento, CA 95814-6200

(916) 445-3427

Pastoral Care/Counseling

Contact: San Diego Branch Church (858) 384-6788

Counseling services are available by appointment for personal and spiritual matters.

Student Responsibilities:

- Students are to schedule counseling appointments as needed, via e-mail or phone request.

SECTION 5.7 – Commencement

At the end of spring semester, a commencement ceremony is held for students to celebrate their achievement of completing degree requirements for programs approved by The Branch College of Ministry. Students completing degree requirements during the summer semester may participate in the commencement ceremony.

Applications for commencement must be approved by the Academic Dean and submitted to the Office of the Registrar by the deadline listed in the academic calendar. Following verification of the completion of requirements by the Academic Dean and the Office of the Registrar, the degree is awarded to the student.

Commence Ceremonies are coordinated by the Dean of Students.

SECTION 5.8 - Student Records

Contact: Registrar Office, (858) 384-6679

Student Rights and Responsibilities:

The Branch College of Ministry complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (the Buckley Amendment) which is designed to protect the privacy of educational records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate or misleading data through informal and formal hearings. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 provides that information from student records will not be identified by nor conveyed to unauthorized parties. Exceptions are made for BCOM officials, teachers, authorized federal agencies, and in connection with the application for or receipt of financial aid. No other parties may obtain information unless you have provided BCOM with written consent. Students have access to their information on demand. Students 18 years of age and older must sign a consent form in order for parents to obtain academic or financial information. The appropriate Release of Information forms are available from the Admissions Office.

- **Course Work** - Any papers or tests that are not returned to the student prior to the end of the session will be available for pick-up by the student at the BCOM office.

- **Transcripts** - Students fill out the Transcript Request Form available at the Registrar Office. Students must either mail or drop off the form, including a fee of \$5 per transcript. Transcript requests will not be processed without fee payment.
- Mail to Address:
The Branch College of Ministry
8344 Clairemont Mesa Blvd. Suite 100
San Diego, CA 92111
Attn: Transcript Request
- Drop Off Address: Same as above

SECTION 5.9 – Library

Facilities

The Branch College of Ministry library is located inside The Branch College building at the end of the main hall adjacent to Dr. Chuck Allers office.

Users

The Branch College Library welcomes patrons from its Branch Church. Any student attending The Branch Church San Diego, as well as any Branch College instructor or staff may borrow books from the library. Any patron who borrows books is held responsible for the timely and safe return, and will be charged for any late or lost books.

Services

Library materials are available for check-out to The Branch College students by following check out procedures as listed in the library.

Internet Availability

Wireless internet access is also available in the building for those with laptops. The password is available in each room.

Policies

Library User Rules

- Patrons are welcome to research, study, and fellowship in the library, keeping in mind the needs of other visiting patrons and modify sound level appropriately.
- Please place all materials taken from shelves to the designated book return area rather than returning them to their shelves. This will enable the College to track the extent to which the library is being used by its patrons.

- Please be mindful of the intended use of the library as a research and study resource for students and staff. The Branch College reserves the right to ask visitors to leave if their behavior is not in keeping with this intent.
- Do not remove books from the library without checking them out, or accurately filling out a book check out form and notifying a college staff member.

Lending Policy

1. Lending policies, duration, and procedures shall be posted and available through the library.
2. Lost or damaged library materials will be charged to borrowers for the replacement cost as determined by administration.
3. Books may be checked out by a faculty member for three months. Faculty members are not charged overdue fines, but will be charged for lost or damaged materials.

SECTION 5.10 – Lost and Found

Contact: Administration, (858) 6384-6679

The Branch College of Ministry is not responsible for any student's personal items. However, in the event that personal items are found on the property, BCOM will keep those items at the Admissions Office for the duration of the term in which the items were found. Once the term is completed, the Admissions Office will dispose of the items as they see fit.

Student Responsibilities:

- Students will contact the Admissions Office to inquire about lost items as needed.
- Students may bring found items to the Admissions Office.

SECTION 5.11 – Students with Disabilities

Contact: Please contact appropriate faculty or staff as designated by department or nature of issue

Faculty will make every effort to accommodate the specialized learning and participation needs of students with disabilities.

Student responsibilities:

- All students, faculty, and staff must treat students with disabilities in a godly manner, displaying dignity and respect.

- Areas designated for access by individuals with disabilities must not be blocked for any reason at any time.
- Students with disabilities must voice questions or concerns to appropriate staff or faculty (according to the nature of the issue) in a timely manner.

SECTION 5.12 – Student Clubs and Organizations

Groups of students and student organizations are expected to comply with all college policies, including the Social/behavioral standards and all additional policies pertaining to groups and organizations. A group or organization may be held responsible for the actions and behaviors of its members and guests. The decision to hold a group or organization responsible as a whole is ultimately determined by examining all the circumstances of a situation and by taking into account all appropriated and related factors.

SECTION 5.13 – Scholarships

The Branch College of Ministry established donor opportunities for people who believe in the mission of the college to contribute into the lives of our students, specifically to help scholarship students. There are four possible scholarships students are eligible to receive; (1) Based on financial need (2) Those desiring full time Pastoral ministry (3) Those desiring to be full time missionaries, and (4) Pursuing full time leadership within the church or parachurch context. Students need not apply for these scholarships. Eligibility and confirmation of all scholarships will be awarded by the CFO.

The CFO will examine the number of students in the area of the desired donor and weigh the needs of the students as well as their performance at the college and in wisdom and integrity give out the scholarship as he/she sees best. The CFO may split up the scholarship between multiple students or give it in entirety to one.

SECTION 5.14 – Fire and Safety Drills

Fire or Emergencies

In case of a fire or an emergency proceed to the nearest exit as illustrated on the evacuation plan listed on the bulletin board inside the classrooms. If the smoke alarm sounds, get out and stay out, do not go back inside for people and pets. If you have to escape through smoke get low and go under the smoke to your way out. Call the fire department from outside the facilities. For further emergencies and what to do, see The Branch College Emergency Action Plan (made available on-line at branchcollege.org).

Safety Drills

The Branch College of Ministry will practice a variety of safety drills biannually, once every Spring and Fall, including fire drills, earthquake drills, and shooter drills. As lead by the Academic Dean, students will proceed to know and practice the college escape plan as illustrated in each classroom on the bulletin board, as least two ways out of the facilities, and conjuring at an outside meeting place.

SECTION 5.15 – Grade Appeal

Grade Appeal

The grade appeal process applies only to final grades.

1. Student must first meet with the instructor of record within ten (10) business days of the grade being posted to the transcript to discuss the grade and try to informally resolve the matter.
2. If the student does not agree with the instructor's determination at the informal level, the student may appeal the grade to the Academic Dean. The appeal must be made within ten (10) business days after the instructor's decision at the informal level. The appeal must be in writing, must demonstrate that the student met with the instructor and must contain sufficient documentation to assist the Academic Dean to make a determination. The Academic Dean will conduct any further investigation into the matter as necessary. The Academic Dean shall make a written determination and provide a copy of the decision to the student and instructor.
3. If the student does not agree with the Academic Dean's determination, the student may then appeal the grade to the President. The appeal must be made within ten (10) business days after receipt of the Academic Dean's written determination. The appeal must be in writing. The President shall review the written appeal and any and all documentation presented at the lower level appeals and will do such other further investigation into the matter as necessary. The President shall make a written determination and provide a copy of the decision to the student and instructor. The President's decision is final.

SECTION 6.1 – Deposits

A. Accepting Payments: Courses will be paid online through the college website, or in the college office. All major credit and debit cards will be accepted, in addition to checks and cash. Credit Card information will remain confidential with the college.

B. Processing Cash Receipts: Receipts will be issued for all transactions made in the college office, and may be requested for online payments.

C. Handling Gifts: All charitable gifts to The Branch College of Ministry, including outright gifts, bequests and trusts, corporate matching gifts, and gift pledges, are processed through the CFO. For gifts greater than \$500 received from a Branch College faculty or staff member, a statement by the donor that the gift is not being used for personal benefit is required.

The CFO shall ensure that all donors and contributors shall receive proper acknowledgement of their contributions in accordance with IRS Guidelines.

SECTION 6.2 – Finance and Accounting

The Branch College of Ministry CFO shall provide oversight for all financial dealings. This will include regular financial audits or compilations as necessary. All Branch College finances will be kept and recorded by the college accountant.

SECTION 6.3 – Purchasing and Payments

All purchasing and ordering of goods and services must be approved by either the Branch College Treasurer or CFO. Returns and exchanges will be handled by the same.

SECTION 6.4 – Financial Reporting

The Branch College of Ministry is responsible for keeping accurate financial reports. The College Board of Trustees is given final approval of all budgets and will be given annual reports and updates by the Branch College CFO.

SECTION 6.5 – Forms

All the necessary financial forms will be available through the Branch College website or in the College office.

SECTION 6.6 – Payment of Accounts

Student accounts are due and payable within two ways. Students may (1) pay the total amount upon registration or (2) pay 50% by the first week and the remaining 50% by the fourth week of the current semester. Students will not be allowed to register for the next semester's courses until all past due charges have been paid. Students may not graduate if they have not paid new accounts in full. Students will not receive either grades or transcripts if they have any remaining balance on their account.

SECTION 6.7 – Outstanding Balances

A student's account must be current by the end of each enrollment period. Students will not be permitted to register for courses in subsequent semesters if they have an unpaid balance on their accounts. A student's records, grades, and transcripts cannot be released while an outstanding balance exists. Satisfactory arrangements include the signing of a promissory note for the balance owed if a plan for repayment is acceptable to the registrar's office. Payment of amounts owed the institution should not wait until statements (bills) are issued. It is always the student's responsibility to remain current in payment of charges to his or her account. BCOM reserves the right to deny enrollment or extension of credit to any student who does not meet past-due obligations or fulfill financial commitments to the college.

If a student wishes to appeal his/her withdrawal from classes due to past tuition balances, the student may request an appointment with BCOM Financial Advisor to explain the circumstances causing the past due balance and a proposed repayment plan. The advisor will then present the pertinent information regarding the case to the Financial Committee who will make a decision regarding appropriate arrangements.

SECTION 6.8 – Uncollectible Accounts

Any outstanding or past due accounts (classified as delinquent) are turned over to the CFO for collection. Any accounts that have been given to the CFO which result in no response after nine months are classified as uncollectible and written off. Statements and phone calls may be used to aid in collections during that nine-month period. After this period, the college reserves the right to transfer the debt to the third-party collection services.

SECTION 6.9 – Refund Policy

Refunds

- 100% of tuition may be refunded if the course is dropped the first week of class(s)
- 50% of tuition may be refunded for the second through third week of class(s)
- No tuition will be refunded after the end of the third week of class(s)
- Fees are non-refundable
- The Branch Faculty and Staff have the right to assess, determine, and reimburse each drop situation as needed.

Refunds are assessed from the date a student submits a Drop/Withdrawal request to the admissions office, not from the date they stop participating in class(s). Students must notify BCOM by phone, email (Academic Dean) or in person (Academic Dean) of their intent to withdraw from its programs. Students must withdrawal online through their assigned Populi account. Failure to attend class is not regarded as withdrawal. The date that the official notice is received determines the date of Drop/Withdrawal.

SECTION 6.10 – Audits/Non-Credits

Note that auditing a class or being allowed to take a class for non-credit means that a student has obtained permission to attend the course and is not enrolled for academic credit. Students must pay \$0 per class for audit or non-credit courses.

SECTION 6.11 – Disposition/Holding of Checks

BCOM checks should be locked in the business office until the day that they are needed for disbursement. Any checks that have been picked up and will not be used that day should be returned to the business office for safekeeping.

Any checks that are collected from receivables, etc. should be brought to the business office for safekeeping on the same day. At no time should checks or monies be stored overnight outside of the business office.

SECTION 6.12 – Tax Compliance

Federal Tax Status

BCOM is a tax exempt 501(c)3 organization and files an annual 990 form with the Internal Revenue Service to guarantee compliance.

Social Security Tax

All social security taxes will be paid by BCOM and in compliance with federal tax codes and statutes.

State Tax

All state taxes will be paid by BCOM in compliance with California State tax codes and statutes.

SECTION 6.13 – Tuition

All students will be charged a tuition fee in exchange for the training and education they receive at BCOM. Tuition fees will be set up on Populi for each student. If, for any reason, a student has an outstanding balance at the beginning of a new semester, he or she will not be allowed to re-enroll until that balance has been paid in full.

SECTION 6.14 – Financial Assistance

BCOM offers scholarships to its students. See section 5.13 for more information.

SECTION 7.1 – Facilities

A. Time Open

The college facilities are open:

- Monday through Thursday from 8:30am to 4:30pm
- Fridays from 8:30am to 12:30pm
- During class scheduled hours of that week from 6:00pm to 9:30pm.

B. Proper Use

Facilities are open for students to study, to make use of the college library, and to meet with faculty and staff. Students are encouraged to make full use of the facilities to benefit their education while attending the college. Any improper use of the facilities during normal or outside operating hours will be dealt with immediately and may result in asking students to leave or pursuing legal action.

C. Use of facilities (student groups)

Student groups may use college facilities on a space-available basis so long as they declare the purpose of the meetings and so long as they neither violate nor encourage violation of college policy as set forth in the mission and educational goals statements of the college.

C. Damages

Any and all damages to the facilities must be reported immediately to the President who will determine whether legal action should be taken and how.

SECTION 7.2 – Equipment

All college equipment must remain and be used properly within the college classrooms at all times unless given permission by the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean may be visited during normal operating hours or emailed through the college website.

SECTION 8.1 – Duties and Responsibilities of Members

1. Board Job Description

The job of the Board is to lead the institution toward the desired mission and ensure that it occurs. The Board's specific contributions are unique to its trusteeship role and necessary for proper governance and management. To perform its duties, the Board of Trustees:

- a. elects and assesses the performance of the President of the college;
- b. establishes college policies, to be executed by the President;
- c. assists, guides, and evaluates the progress of the college and receives reports from the President in this regard;
- d. elects board trustees and officers;
- e. approves full-time faculty appointments recommended by the President;
- f. confers degrees;
- g. appoints committees it deems necessary;
- h. assists in raising funds to support the college; and
- i. preserves and protects college operations and properties.

2. Chair's Role

The job of the Chair is, primarily, to maintain the integrity of the Board's process. The Chair “manages the Board.” The Chair is the only trustee authorized to speak for the Board, other than in rare and specifically Board authorized instances. The Chair ensures that the Board behaves consistent with its own rules and those legitimately imposed upon it from outside the organization.

Meeting discussion content will be those issues that, according to Board policy, clearly belong to the Board to decide, not staff. The authority of the Chair consists only in making decisions on behalf of the Board that fall within and are consistent with any reasonable interpretation of Board policies. The Chair has no authority to make decisions beyond policies created by the Board. Therefore, the Chair has no authority to supervise or direct the President's or other employees' work, but is expected to maintain close communication, offer advice, and provide encouragement to the President and staff on behalf of the Board.

SECTION 8.2 – Number of Members

Corporation business shall be transacted by a Board of Trustees of not less than five (5) and no more than ten (10) persons, and of whom five (5) members having the power to vote shall constitute a quorum. Trustees shall be elected by the Board.

SECTION 8.3 – Qualifications, Representation, and Method of Selection of Members

1. Qualifications

Members must demonstrate the following in order to be qualified to serve on the governing board.

- A professed believer in Jesus Christ
- A tested follower of Jesus Christ holding onto the deep truths of Jesus Christ in faith with a clear conscience
- Demonstrate Christ like qualities
- Possess a good reputation in the Church and with outsiders
- Manage their own families well

2. Representation

The Board will represent The Branch College of Ministry.

3. Method of Selection of Members

The Board shall hold elections at its spring meeting for trustees whose terms shall start upon the conclusion of the meeting. Trustee vacancies may be filled at any regular Board meeting, provided written notice of the election has been sent to each trustee with notice of the meeting. The President shall nominate persons to be elected by the Board. Election may be by written ballot upon the request of any two (2) trustees present at the election.

SECTION 8.4 – Organizational Structure

1. Governing Style

The Board will approach its task with a style that emphasizes outward vision rather than an internal preoccupation, encouragement of diversity in viewpoints, strategic leadership more than administrative detail, clear distinction of board and staff roles, and pro-activity rather than reactivity. In this spirit, the Board will:

- a. Enforce upon itself and its members whatever discipline is needed to govern with excellence. Discipline shall apply to matters such as attendance, respect of clarified roles, speaking to management and the public with one voice, self-policing of any tendency to stray from the governance structure and process adopted in these Board policies, maintain confidentiality as concerns Board dialogue, and support Board actions once decisions are made.
- b. Be accountable to its stakeholders and the general public for competent, conscientious and effective accomplishment of its obligations as a body. It will allow no officer, individual, or committee of the Board to usurp this role or hinder this commitment.

2. Officers and their Selection

Board officers shall be a Chair and a Vice Chair. They will be nominated by the Board and elected at the winter meeting and begin their service at the next spring meeting.

SECTION 8.5 – Length of Service of Members and Officers

Board members and officers shall hold office for a term of two (2) years or for a shorter term specified by the Board at the time of election. Two-year terms terminate at the end of the spring meeting of the second year after election. Shorter terms terminate at the end of the spring meeting of the year specified at the time of election, unless otherwise specified at the time of election.

SECTION 8.6 – Procedures

1. Frequency of Meetings

At least two (2) regular meetings shall be held during each fiscal year, at least one of which shall be held in fall and the other annual meeting shall be held in spring. The Chair determines the date, time, and place of regular meetings. Written notice of the date, time and place of each regular meeting shall be sent to each trustee at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting.

2. Special Meetings

Special meetings may be held at the call of the Chair, of a majority of the members of the board or upon written request of any four (4) or more trustees having the power to vote made to the Chair. Written notice of the date, time and place of each special meeting shall be sent to each trustee at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.

3. Emergency Meetings

Emergency meetings may be held at the call of the Chair, a majority of the members of the board or upon written request of any four (4) or more trustees having the power to vote made

to the Chair, provided that an emergency meeting may be called or requested only if in the judgment of the Chair, a majority of the members of the board or any four (4) or more trustees having the power to vote, as applicable, emergency circumstances have arisen that make notice of a special meeting of the board onerous and impractical, provided further that, in no event shall a vote to amend these bylaws or to remove a trustee be taken at an emergency meeting. Written notice of the date, time and place of each emergency meeting shall be sent, by hand delivery, facsimile transmission, electronic mail or other expedited means, to each trustee at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting.

4. Participation of Meetings

Trustees may participate in board meetings by teleconference, which shall constitute presence in person at the meeting. A trustee may be required to recuse himself or herself from board meetings in accordance with board policies or practices.

5. Quorum

The vote of a majority of the trustees having the power to vote who are present at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall be the act of the board of trustees.

SECTION 8.7 – Board Self-Evaluation Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of self-evaluation is to determine the degree to which the mission is being accomplished and Board policies are being fulfilled. Information that does not do this shall not be considered self-evaluation. Evaluation will be as automatic as possible, using a minimum of Board time so that meetings can be used to affect the future rather than to review the past. A given policy may be monitored in one or more of three ways:

1. Direct Board inspection

Discovery of compliance information by a trustee, a committee or the Board as a whole. This includes Board inspection of documents, activities, or circumstances that allows a "prudent person" test of policy compliance.

2. External report

Discovery of compliance information by a disinterested, external person or firm who is selected by and reports directly to the Board. Such reports must assess executive performance only against legal requirements or policies of the Board, with suggestions from the external party as to how the organization can improve itself.

3. President Reports

The President shall help the Board determine what tracking data are possible to measure progress in achieving the mission and goals and conforming with Board policies. Currently the Board requests these regular evaluation reports, in addition to any specific reports requested in other sections of the Board manual.

Semi-Annually: (A) Expense and revenue against budget report with comparison to previous year; (B) Balance sheet; (C) Cash flow projections; (D) _____statistics.

Annual: Within 45 days of the end of the fiscal year, with respect to that year: (A) End of year expense and revenue against budget; (B)Balance sheet; (C) Staff organization chart (or whenever major changes are made); (D) Other reports that the Board may define in the Board Manual.