




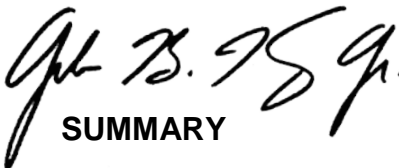
**TO:** Higher Education Committee

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

**SUBJECT:** Elim Bible Institute and College: Application for degree authority: Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree in Biblical and Theological Studies

**DATE:** October 29, 2012

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**

  
SUMMARY

**Issue for Decision**

Should the Board of Regents grant a provisional charter as an independent college to Elim Bible Institute and College, Lima, NY (Livingston County) and approve a master plan amendment to offer a program in Biblical and Theological Studies leading to the degree of Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.)?

**Reason(s) for Consideration**

Required by State statute and State regulation

**Proposed Handling**

The question will come before the Higher Education Committee at its November 2012 meeting, where it will be voted on and action taken. It will then come before the full Board at its November 2012 meeting for final action.

**Background Information**

The Department has received a petition for a provisional charter for Elim Bible Institute and College, seeking authorization to award the Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree.

Elim Bible Institute, Inc., located in Lima, NY, was established in 1924. It is currently a non-degree institution. The Institute has offered a three-year, non-credit diploma in Biblical Studies and a variety of one-year, non-credit certificates during the 88 years of its existence. While this has served the Institute well in the past, it has

become clear to the applicant and its supporting constituents that the general academic climate now requires an approved and recognized degree program.

The Institute is seeking authorization from the Board of Regents to offer an Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree in Biblical and Theological Studies. The applicant has stated that obtaining degree-granting status is a necessary step as it seeks to effectively serve its constituents, who look to Elim to prepare leaders that are academically qualified, effectively trained, and spiritually prepared.

The Department received the Institute's Self-Study in September 2010, which was updated and revised in December 2011 following a peer review visit that took place in September 2011.

A Board of Trustees composed of 13 members will be responsible for governance of the proposed College. The majority of the Board members are clergy of churches affiliated with Elim Bible Institute's denomination. Funding sources for the current Institute and the proposed College comprise contributions from alumni groups and member churches, tuition and room and board revenues, and facility rental.

Purpose and Goals: In its Self-Study, the applicant stated that it is committed to providing a setting where Bible study, academic excellence and practical ministerial education and experience are woven together to prepare students for a variety of service opportunities. The proposed associate degree program supports this overall purpose.

Curriculum: The proposed Associate in Applied Science degree in Biblical and Theological Studies will be a 63 credit program with a blend of liberal arts (35 percent) and biblical and theological studies courses, along with student ministry experiences, and an internship program. The program has been designed to enable graduates to transfer to a four-year institution, and/or to move directly into a vocational position of ministry.

Transfer agreements are in place with Roberts Wesleyan College and Northeastern Seminary, Rochester, N.Y.; Southwestern Christian University, Bethany, OK; Lancaster Christian College, Lancaster, PA; and Nyack College, NY.

Faculty: The proposed college will have four full-time and four part-time faculty. Seven faculty have master's degrees related to their field of instruction and one faculty member holds an earned doctorate related to his field of instruction.

Admissions: All student applicants will be required to have a high school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED).

Students: The prospective student body is expected to be similar to the makeup of the current student body with projected enrollments of 126 to 146 (FTE) over the next five years. The typical age range is 17-22. Most of the students are expected to come from the northeastern United States, and most would be from Pentecostal or charismatic churches.

The applicant states that it has been able to develop strong supporting relationships with a network of independent Pentecostal and charismatic congregations/denominations as well as mission organizations around the world, while building a large, loyal base of alumni. These groups continue to be the primary source of recruitment for the Institute's current and future student body, and they strongly support this application for degree granting status.

Resources: The Institute is located on a 75-acre campus in central New York, 20 miles south of Rochester. There are a total of sixteen buildings on campus, including student housing, administrative offices, a chapel, lecture hall, student center, athletic building, and library. The library has roughly 34,000 books in its holdings. Wireless access is provided in all classrooms and common areas. Dormitories have hard-wired Ethernet connections.

Employment prospects: A recent survey of alumni revealed that graduates serve in a variety of fields, including: 24 percent Ministry, 10 percent Education, 6 percent Administration/Clerical, and 6 percent Healthcare. The applicant states that the Institute supplies a steady flow of well trained, mature, sacrificially minded, and service oriented ministers who are prepared to go and impact their generation. Elim Bible Institute, Inc. is Elim Fellowship's (a national pastoral and missionary organization) primary source of trained ministers. The majority of Elim Fellowship's more than 900 ordained clergy and credential holders are former Elim students, who serve in multiple denominations and organizations, nationally and internationally. Thus, Elim graduates continue to have good prospects for employment and/or for further higher education.

Finances: The Department's Office of Audit Services conducted a review of the Institute's audited financial statements for a four-year period ending May 31, 2011, and noted that the most current federal composite score indicated that the institution was financially healthy. Elim has also submitted a balanced budget for its first year of operation as a degree-granting entity.

Need: The applicant states that achieving degree-granting status will assist its students to continue their education by having an academic transcript that will transfer to other colleges and universities without the current hindrances of an academically unrecognized (non-credit) diploma. Approximately 75 percent of Elim's graduates matriculate into a bachelor's degree program. Elim's graduates have been able to transfer to a number of accredited colleges with whom Elim has articulated transfer agreements. Obtaining NYSED degree-granting approval will allow its students more options for transfer.

The applicant also notes that degree-granting approval will be a step toward opening the option for Elim's students to qualify for financial aid programs that are currently denied because of its non-degree and accreditation status. Elim plans to seek academic accreditation for its program as a next step following degree authorization. The Institute has a diverse body of alumni who continue to send their children to Elim, who desire the benefits and status of a New York State Education Department approved degree, and who would benefit from these financial aid programs.

Planning Review: The Department conducted a canvass of all degree-granting institutions in the Finger Lakes region. Four institutions responded. Three institutions stated “no comments” or no effect on their institution; one heartily endorsed the move. There were no objections to the proposed Elim Bible Institute and College or its proposed program.

Department Review: The Department has determined that the proposed program would meet registration standards. A recommendation regarding the provisional charter appears separately on the Board’s agenda and will be voted on. If the charter is granted, and in keeping with Department policy, the Regents would award its degrees until the charter is made absolute.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board of Regents approve a master plan amendment to authorize Elim Bible Institute and College, Lima, NY to offer an A.A.S. degree program in Biblical and Theological Studies as its first associate degree program in the disciplinary area of the humanities.

### **Timetable for Implementation**

The master plan amendment will be effective until November 30, 2012, unless the Department registers the program prior to that date, in which case master plan amendment shall be without term.