INSTITUTIONAL GUIDELINES ON AIDS

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary recognizes the serious threat to our society posed by the AIDS epidemic. These Guidelines are adopted to guide our community in a Christian response by:

- encouraging a redemptive response to a major health crisis;
- developing a better understanding of AIDS;
- developing necessary and appropriate actions and procedures to prevent the spread of AIDS; and
- assisting those whose lives might be affected by AIDS.

CHRISTIAN RESPONSE - The Seminary will be guided by a firm commitment to biblical teachings and all information and guidelines will be presented in a manner that affirms the importance of Christian ethics.

MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE - The Seminary will be guided by the latest and best medical knowledge concerning AIDS as a contagious disease and its prevention and treatment. The recommendations of federal and state health agencies and the American College Health Association (1) will be sources of information.

EDUCATION - The Seminary will make available to students, employees, and their families current information concerning AIDS and will also include such information in the orientation processes for students and employees. Individuals will also be informed of their responsibility, if they know themselves to be antibody positive for the AIDS virus, to report this fact to the Seminary Clinic or to their private physician, in order to obtain treatment and consultation for their own and others protection. Individuals will also be strongly encouraged to seek counseling in order to assist them in dealing with the consequences of the disease.

CONFIDENTIALITY - The Seminary will, to the extent legally and medically permissible, maintain the confidentiality of information concerning the identity of individuals with AIDS or the AIDS virus.

STUDENT OR EMPLOYMENT STATUS - The Seminary will not base enrollment or employment decisions on the existence of AIDS or the AIDS antibody, so long as the individuals are able to function fully in their academic programs or employee roles.
INFECTION - The Seminary will encourage any individual with an infectious disease to seek medical evaluation. Individuals evidencing special susceptibility to the consequences of infections (2) or special risk of spreading an infectious disease (3), including AIDS, will be required to seek medical evaluation of their condition, and their permitted activities at the Seminary will be determined based on the medical evaluation and recommendations applicable to their individual case. The determination of whether special conditions exist will be made on a case-by-case basis utilizing the latest and best medical advice.

SAFETY GUIDELINES - The Seminary will adopt safety guidelines as proposed by the United States Public Health Service for the handling of blood and body fluids for all persons, not just those known to have infectious diseases.

(1) "Current knowledge indicates that students or employees with any form of HIV infection do not pose a health risk to other students or employees in an academic setting." General Statement on Institutional Response to AIDS, American College Health Association, Revised January 1988.

The Public Health Service states that there is no risk created by living in the same place as an infected person; caring for an AIDS patient; eating food handled by an infected person; being coughed or sneezed upon by an infected person; casual kissing; or swimming in a pool with an infected person. Surgeon General’s Report on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, October 22, 1986.

(2) The American College Health Association statement indicates that persons with AIDS and other diseases that compromise the immune system are especially susceptible to infections.

(3) The Surgeon General’s report states that a special risk might exist if an individual lost control of body secretions or knowingly and willingly exposed others in ways that are known to spread the infection.