Biola desires to uphold both the biblical ideal of marriage and the graciousness and forgiveness of God in making decisions regarding the employment or continued employment of people who have been divorced or are currently involved in a situation that is leading to divorce.

Careful consideration is given to the circumstances surrounding the divorce and the willingness of Christian people to recognize the work of God in his or her life. The following biblical principles are the basic parameters within which employment decisions are made at Biola University.

**Biblical Teachings Regarding Marriage and Divorce**

Marriage was intended by God to be an indissoluble union (Gen. 2:24; Matthew 19:6) until the death of one of the spouses (Romans 7:1-3). God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16) but permits it as an accommodation to sin (Matthew 5:32, 19:8-9; I Corinthians 7:12-15).

Only God has the legitimate authority to break the bond of marriage (Mark 10:9). The biblical concessions for divorce are (1) fornication and (2) desertion by an unbelieving spouse after all available efforts for reconciliation have failed. Fornication includes all intimate sexual activity outside of the marriage relationship (Matthew 5:32; Mark 10:11-12). In the case of fornication, God does not require divorce, only permits it. The couple should be encouraged to restore the relationship by dealing with any sin (Galatians 6:1) and working toward a forgiving reconciliation (Ephesians 4:31-32). Should one partner experience a marital situation that becomes abusive, that person may seek separation for "God has called us to live in peace" (I Corinthians 7:15).

**Effect on Employment**

Believers who divorce on non-biblical grounds openly reject the word of God. Christians have a responsibility to uphold the biblical ideal of marriage. It is expected that all Biola employees serve as mature Christian role models who minister to other members of this community. However, there are diverse positions of employment in the Biola University community that involve varying degrees of spiritual leadership in relation to students, staff, or faculty. The effect of divorce on employment may be different, depending upon the type of position held.

Therefore, it may be deemed inappropriate to employ a divorced person in some institutional positions. Positions involving spiritual leadership in the Christian community, according to Scripture, require an exemplary maturity of life (I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9). The reason for this is found in the truth that biblical leadership includes example as well as verbal teaching and instruction. Sin connected with divorce therefore disqualifies one from such leadership until the underlying problems of life leading to break-up of marriage are dealt with and the character of the person is matured to the place where his/her life is again an example of Christian maturity. This does not mean that the person is not forgiven or in fellowship with God's people, if repentance has occurred. It only means that person should not attain a position of leadership or should step down from a position of leadership for a time until his/her character and reputation are restored.

If the marriage of an employee gives evidence that there may be an impending divorce, the employee is to inform his/her dean or supervisor, who in turn will inform the Sr. Director of Human Resources. While divorce does not necessarily mean that the employee must leave the university, he/she will be required to provide information as to the nature of the divorce, sufficient to determine if there exists such devastative circumstances that make it impossible for the marriage
to continue, and to weigh the circumstances in relation to the Standard of Conduct imperative to avoid any “unscriptural divorce.” The university may provide up to five professional counseling sessions for a regular employee, either through the Biola Counseling Center or some other approved therapist.

Should the employee have faculty status and/or hold a leadership position, the person may be asked to take a leave of absence or to accept a reassignment to other institutional duties, during which time salary and financial remuneration will be determined in accordance with the circumstances. The reason for this is threefold: (1) to give the university and the individual time to make careful decisions regarding future employment, (2) to recognize that in some situations the university would not be best served by a person struggling with a recent separation or pending divorce, (3) the faculty or staff member may need time away from regular responsibilities to process the impact of the situation.

Should the university determine that an employee has violated the Standard of Conduct regarding divorce, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken up to and including the termination of employment.