

Request for prayers to support UTS in the reaffirmation of its accreditation

Hugh Spurgin
December 17, 2015



President Spurgin requests prayerful support for UTS

Dear alumnae, alumni and friends of UTS,

In 1996, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) accredited Unification Theological Seminary. Every ten years accredited institutions of higher education engage in an 18-24 month period of self-study and peer review, in order to demonstrate institutional compliance with various standards of accreditation.

In March 2013, UTS completed the self-study and hosted a MSCHE team visit. Following the on-site visit, the MSCHE evaluation team submitted its report to UTS, which prepared an institutional response. The institutional response is the opportunity to provide a thoughtful written response to the report of the team, including any disagreements with the findings of the team. The team report and the response of UTS were submitted to the Commission for its June 2014 meeting.

The Commission decided to place UTS on probation because of a lack of evidence that our seminary was in compliance with four of fourteen standards:

Standard 1 (Mission and Goals),

Standard 3 (Institutional Resources),

Standard 8 (Student Admissions and Retention)

Standard 14 (Assessment of Student Learning).

Those MSCHE standards are explained in the following document:

<http://www.msche.org/publications/CHX-2011-WEB.pdf>

While on probation, UTS has remained accredited by the Middle States Commission and was given two years in which to demonstrate compliance with the remaining four standards.

The Commission requested that UTS submit a monitoring report by March 1, 2015 to document that it had achieved compliance with Standards 1, 3, 8 and 14:

(1) Standard 1: After consultation with all stakeholders, including the leaders of our sponsoring church (HSA-UWC), a new mission statement was drafted and approved by the UTS Board of Trustees;

(2) Standard 3: Efforts have been made to demonstrate the financial viability and sustainability of UTS as an institution of higher education;

(3) Standard 8: Development and publication of consistent admission criteria, with tools to aid in the identification and remediation of academically at-risk students and development of a strategic enrollment management plan;

(4) Standard 14: Establishment of a clear assessment process, which demonstrates that upon graduation, students have obtained the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies.

In June 2015, the Middle States Commission decided that UTS demonstrated that it was in compliance with Standard 1 (Mission and Goals) and with Standard 8 (Student Admissions and Retention). However, the Commission indicated that UTS would remain on probation because of insufficient evidence that it was in compliance with Standard 3 (Institutional Resources) and Standard 14 (Assessment of Student Learning).

On December 1, UTS submitted another monitoring report. A second MSCHE team will visit UTS on January 4, 5 and 6, to assess the compliance of UTS with the two remaining standards. Based on the monitoring report, on the report of the MSCHE team coming in January, and on the response of UTS to that team report, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education will determine at its meeting in March 2016 whether or not UTS will remain on probation.

Please send your prayerful support for UTS to be successful in having its accreditation reaffirmed.

Thank you,

Hugh Spurgin, Ph.D. (Class of 1977)
President, Unification Theological Seminary