

Family Federation USA - Letter about UTS

Richard Buessing

July 22, 2018



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Warm greetings to you and your families from Las Vegas. Your dedication to God and True Parents never ceases to amaze me as I travel and visit your communities across America. It's so inspiring to witness the great development among our youth, Tribal Messiah work, and our providential organizations. Our Unification Theological Seminary is also growing rapidly, especially since the launching of UTS Online. However, with this progress also comes change.

As many of you know, Dr. Hugh Spurgin, President of Unification Theological Seminary, announced on May 14 the decision of the UTS Board of Trustees to sell the Barrytown property. It was a difficult decision, one that the UTS Board, administration and faculty came to with great reluctance. Yet, as responsible stewards of UTS and its mission, it was a step that they had to take.

In his letter to the UTS alumni, Dr. Spurgin wrote that the Seminary is "re-positioning itself as an entrepreneurial, urban Seminary with traditional classes at our campus in New York City and online courses for students worldwide." For UTS, the new focus on online learning will enable the seminary to fulfill the purpose set by our True Parents: to equip Unification leaders with the knowledge and tools to minister in a global religious environment.

UTS has been a cornerstone for education in our worldwide movement since its founding in 1975, but for the past 10 years, the main location for the theological education has been at its New York City campus, while the Barrytown campus has remained largely empty, except as a venue for the doctoral program, a few graduate courses, and occasional conferences during the summer months.

Since 2002, Family Federation has contributed more than \$21 million dollars to support UTS. However, the Barrytown facility now requires considerable financial resources that neither UTS nor the Family Federation is able to supply. At this point this financial burden puts the function of the institution as our primary theological school in jeopardy.

Over the past year, the UTS Board, administration and faculty struggled over how the school could fulfill its core mission while maintaining its presence at Barrytown, and reluctantly came to the conclusion that it could not. Many attempts were made to find a way to secure a financially viable future for the property, but when these attempts failed, the decision to sell the Barrytown property was made by the UTS trustees in May. Without the financial burden of Barrytown, UTS can fulfill its mission of educating future generations of students.

We will all lament the loss of such a beautiful property that holds a special place in our hearts and from which many of us have beautiful memories, but let us remember that the essence of UTS is the deeper delving into the teaching of True Parents and the ministerial training it provides, not the external property where it started.

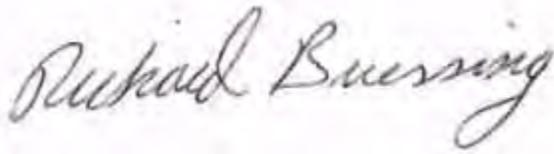
We believe the future of UTS is where the students are. We believe it is better to invest in digital learning and urban locations to be able to educate the broadest range of next-generation faith leaders, just as our Founders had envisioned.

If you're interested in more information about this development, please read this [article](#) on the UTS website. UTS leadership will continue to faithfully update everyone through their website.

I also encourage you to visit the UTS website (www.uts.edu) for information about the online courses offered in the upcoming fall semester and the opportunity to earn a Master's degree online on your own pace.

Thank you all for deeply caring about UTS, let us continue to pray for the success of UTS and for the Barrytown community.

God Bless you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Buessing". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Rev. Richard Buessing
President



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UTS Recasts Its Future in a Global Setting

[Andrew Wilson Ph.D., Professor of Scriptural Studies and Robin Graham, Director of Advancement and Enrollment Management](#)

[18 July 2018](#)

On May 14, Dr. Hugh Spurgin, president of the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS), announced to UTS alumni(ae) and friends that the UTS Board of Trustees decided to sell the Barrytown property. It was a difficult decision, but it was a step that they had to take as responsible stewards of the institution. He wrote that the Seminary is “re-positioning itself as an entrepreneurial, urban Seminary with traditional classes at

our campus in New York City and online courses for students worldwide.”



Online education is disrupting traditional education models throughout the industry, and UTS is no exception. [This is not the only instance](#) where a well-established seminary has had to face the decision between maintaining a campus property and focusing on the institution’s core mission. For UTS, the move to online learning will enable it to fulfill the purpose set by the Founders, Father and Mother Moon, for many generations to come: To equip young Unification leaders and leaders from other faith traditions with the knowledge and tools to minister in a global religious environment.

The Founders have long recognized the value of using cutting-edge media in theological education. In the late 70s Father Moon purchased VCRs and mass-produced [Divine Principle](#) videos for door-to-door evangelism. In the 90s he encouraged the [University of Bridgeport](#) to invest heavily in distance learning. Today, Mother Moon is calling on UTS to harness the power of the Internet to provide educational opportunity to students throughout the world.

“Seminary” means “seedbed,” and since 1975 UTS has been the seedbed of the global Unification movement, graduating leaders to serve in church and [Family Federation](#) (FFWPU) leadership, [CARP](#) and campus ministry, [interfaith peacebuilding](#), service learning, media, Ocean Church, the former Soviet Union, Africa, South America, and more, as well as to pursue doctoral studies. Yet for the past 8 years, the main location for the theological education provided by UTS has been its New York City campus at 4 West 43rd Street, while the property at Barrytown has remained largely empty except as a venue for the doctoral program, some other graduate courses, and conferences during the summer months.

Since 2002, FFWPU has contributed more than \$21 million dollars to support UTS. However, the Barrytown facility now requires considerable financial resources that neither UTS nor the Family Federation is able to supply. The funds required to maintain a 125,000 sq. ft. building are overwhelming for a small school. The goal is to protect and develop UTS as a respected institution that continues to provide quality education in a global context.

Over the past couple of years, the UTS Board, administration and faculty struggled over how the school could fulfill its core mission while maintaining its presence at Barrytown, and reluctantly came to the conclusion that it could not. Yet such a momentous decision would need to be considered by the wider UTS community. Therefore, beginning in 2016 Dr. Spurgin convened meetings of alumni(ae) and sent letters to its stakeholders where he laid out the costs of maintaining the Barrytown property and asked for help in securing a future financially for the property. Not finding any practical alternative, in May 2018 the decision was made by the UTS trustees to sell Barrytown.



Keep in mind that UTS is an institution, not a property. In 1998, when the Seminary was creating its logo, a preliminary plan was to use a silhouette of the main building at Barrytown. When that proposal for a logo was shown to Father Moon, he said, “UTS may relocate from Barrytown in the future.” He proposed instead the white cross logo that we all know. Indeed, twice our Founder approved plans for UTS to relocate, which did not materialize.

“Alumni and members of The Unification Church will certainly mourn the loss of such a beautiful property that holds a special place in

their heart, but the future of UTS is to be where the students are, rather than expecting them to come to us. It makes sense to invest in digital and urban locations to educate the broadest range of next-generation faith leaders just as our Founders had envisioned,” said Robin Graham, Director of Advancement and Enrollment Management for UTS.

For more info on the background of the Barrytown property sale, please feel free to explore the following:

- [Letter to alumni/ae and friends of UTS from Dr. Hugh Spurgin \(UTS '77\), May 14, 2018](#)
- [UTS to Sell Barrytown](#)
- [The High Cost of Maintaining the Barrytown Campus](#)

Please visit <https://uts.edu/online> for information about the online courses offered by UTS in the upcoming fall semester and the opportunity to earn a Master's degree online.



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