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Barrytown College is the undergraduate Bachelor of Arts degree program at the Unification Theological Seminary

## Meet Li-Sonne, exchange student from SMU

Richard A. Panzer  
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*"I have also endeavored for this campus to be a place where students can develop deep personal faith and authentic spiritual communication with the spirit of God."*

- Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon

Barrytown College of UTS and Sun Moon University have begun to implement an exchange agreement created last year where BC students and SMU students can study at each other's campuses for one to two semesters. Here is our first wonderful exchange SMU student, Li-Sonne Kang! Here are her first impressions based on an interview with fellow Barrytown College student Jennie Cox.

1) Li-Sonne, tell us about yourself. What are your favorite hobbies or interests?

I am studying family culture and my future dream is to become a professor in England. Plus I would like to make an institute which will offer counseling and activities for the health of families in the UK. And I enjoy baking--I recently started baking cookies and different kinds of bread. I also love playing air hockey, ping-pong and basketball.



2) Why did you want to spend a semester studying at Barrytown College?

Since I had a deep experience with God in Cheong-pyeong when I was teenager, I started to really want to follow what God wants me to do. To do that I felt I should develop my English more, and decided to study English more intensely as I began my college life. When I found out about the agreement between SMU and Barrytown concerning exchange students, I prayed and realized that this would be a great chance. It was what God wanted me to do--so I came.



3) How has your experience been so far?

At first it was difficult for me to adjust to everything, but now I feel more used to the classes, environment, etc. I felt that I was able to discover another part of myself here, and even develop myself in ways I felt I didn't in

Korea. Here there is a totally different environment from Sun Moon University, but there are good, supportive people around me. I feel at the same time more supported and more challenged.

4) What do you like the most?

The people. I don't only feel like they are my peers or teachers, but companions in my journey. I feel very loved and protected, and able to enjoy things with them. Being around them also subconsciously helps me to find my true self.

I think that's something good about America, that people are encouraged to become who they are and are able to develop their creativity. I find that interesting, because in Korea, I feel one is encouraged to simply be presentable and act normal, or else people will think you are abnormal. Personally, I feel I am different from Americans, but I feel okay being unusual. In Korea, it felt I had to be a certain way. Students were supposed to look similar, wear similar uniforms, look presentable, and were not supposed to do certain things. But here I feel I can say and do what I want to, or look how I want to look. That's the difference. This kind of environment helps me to discover myself more.

5) What do you find to be the most challenging or difficult?

Actually, I was almost crying after taking one certain class, because it required me to know a lot of English vocabulary. This is difficult for me because when I take classes, I love to really interact and communicate with my professors and



peers, to have an active dialogue about the subject. Actually, I used to be one of the few people in my class to do this. But because of the language barrier, it's a challenge. Also cultural differences are difficult--though as I take more and more classes, I am beginning to understand more. I would also like to understand American humor, so I can get your jokes more, to really engage with the community more. I noticed when you guys gather together to do group projects, you tend to use very casual, informal language--not strict or "textbook" style--which I don't get right away because I am not used to it.



So sometimes I don't understand jokes people tell here, and I feel I can't really join in or laugh. That's kind of a sad thing.

6) What differences, if any, do you see in the education you are receiving in Barrytown and your education at Sun Moon University?

My original major is Family Culture Based on True Love--even one of our professors called it the "Absolute Sex" major. We learned about Father's speeches, especially Unificationist

concepts such as absolute sex, and studied how to apply True Father's message in our lives. It's much more based in Unificationist principles than Barrytown. The program is also divided into units about different age groups, therefore we study about how to care for, educate, and counsel children, adolescents, couples and families.

I was studying more about family and family culture and about how to solve problems in the family. This is a different area of study than I will be able to get at Barrytown this semester. I don't know if I will learn a whole lot on that subject while I'm here, though I hope there will be these kinds of classes later on. That's the difference I found. I'm hoping I will have an opportunity to study something family-related next semester at Barrytown. [Editor's Note: Barrytown College does have such courses in its minor in Human Development and Family Studies.]

Another difference between Barrytown and SMU is the emphasis on Father's speeches. At Sun Moon University, our theology students study that subject specifically. Barrytown also features non-Unificationist teachings and professors from outside our faith.



That made a big impact on me. With this kind of set-up, it may be a bit of a challenge for students and teachers with different backgrounds to relate--but I think it provides a good opportunity to study each religion from the perspective of the people themselves and to really communicate with them. I had never gotten a chance to do that at SMU.

Also at SMU, the professors had deeply studied Father's speeches for many years, so it's good to learn from them to get the essence of Father's speeches, to understand the true meaning of them. Both Unificationist studies and interfaith studies combined together is a good balance.

7) Would you recommend that other students at SMU spend a semester at Barrytown?

Yes, I think they should. Already many friends and peers of mine at SMU--especially those in my major--are really interested in studying here, and would like to come. In coming here, I think they would see and learn a lot, and experience a good community. It's challenging, but worthwhile. It is kind of a culture shock to come here, even if, like me, you have mixed heritage. But these days, Koreans are exposed to American media, such as television shows, and are immersed in the culture in other ways, so I think they would be able to adjust well to being here. America is called a "salad bowl," so there are many cultures and faiths are allowed to be here and be comfortable together. Then why not Korean?



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Also, a reminder for teen or young adult filmmakers about the 2014 *Barrytown College Video competition* whose theme

this year is "GIVING." The top prizes will be \$2,000, \$1,000, and \$500. For applicants to Barrytown College, prize-winners can receive an additional \$1,000 scholarship to the school, which has an active Media Arts program. Genres may be fiction/narrative, documentary/ interview, or animation. For more information, visit 2014 Barrytown College Video Contest.

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### **Other Important Topics**

\* The next **Open House** at Barrytown College for prospective students will take place on Saturday, March 8. For more information or to register, visit B.C. Open Houses.

\* **Help do outreach in your community for** Barrytown College at our volunteer sign-up page.

\* **Help support** the Barrytown Renovation Project or to pass on the gift of a Unificationist college education by donating to one of the scholarship funds by giving .

\* For those who wish to continue their graduate studies, UTS offers 3 Masters degree programs and a Doctoral program as well. Go to UTS.edu.

***I invite you to JOIN WITH US in building a future at Barrytown*** that we can all be proud of to leave for succeeding generations.

**Sincerely,**

Richard

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