

News about Barrytown - Selling UTS's Barrytown Campus

Hugh Spurgin
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A letter to alumni/ae and friends of UTS from Dr. Hugh Spurgin, President of Unification Theological Seminary

I am writing to inform you of an important development for the [Unification Theological Seminary](#). After considerable prayer, thought, discussion and due diligence, the [UTS Board of Trustees](#) has directed the Seminary administration to sell the Barrytown campus. UTS is no longer able to pay what it costs to maintain the property, while simultaneously fulfilling its educational mission in a changing world. Therefore, in consultation with the [Family Federation](#) (FFWPU) leadership, the Seminary has decided to place the Barrytown property on the market for sale.

The UTS Board, which has fiduciary responsibility for the institution, came to this difficult decision with a heavy heart. Students and church members have sought to honor the tradition that our [Founders](#) established at Barrytown. Many of us have precious memories of this place where they trained us, fished with us, hiked with us, and spoke with us for many long hours. In our hearts, we will forever harbor the wonderful, magical experiences that we had there.

Yet it is poor stewardship to retain a huge building that is empty for most of the year. In reviewing the current situation, our trustees determined that it is best to invest the Seminary's limited resources to develop stronger academic programs. The mission of UTS is to provide a quality theological education for a new generation of leaders.

UTS is repositioning itself as an entrepreneurial, urban seminary with courses offered online and in NY City. [As our Founder predicted](#), e-learning is the wave of the future, providing access to courses to a global audience. Technology has opened doors for new ways to learn. It is essential that UTS move forward and utilize interactive, online platforms. We live in an age when the Internet opens the doors of education far beyond the limitations of a brick-and-mortar building, which is expensive to maintain.

In 1998, when our beloved 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 our Founder, he said, "UTS may relocate from Barrytown in the future." He proposed instead the white cross logo that we all know. UTS is an institution, not a property. Indeed, twice our Founder approved plans for UTS to relocate, which did not materialize.

Since 2002, the 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.

Our goal is to protect and develop UTS as a respected institution that continues to give meaning to the degrees that are earned. Without the financial burden of Barrytown, UTS can fulfill its mission of educating future generations of students; with it, that will not be possible.

The Barrytown property is owned by UTS. Proceeds from its sale will be used solely to benefit our Seminary. Priority needs to be placed on ensuring the well-being of UTS as a fully accredited educational

institution. Given recent reductions in funding from our sponsoring church, it became clear to our trustees that there is no other option than to sell Barrytown - if UTS is to remain viable.

For many decades, UTS sought numerous ways to generate income from the Barrytown property. We worked with FFWPU, reached out to alumni, even explored secular business uses, but all to no avail. Our trustees explored many options, including the possibility of re-instituting a residential program at Barrytown. However, in December, the leaders of our sponsoring church determined that FFWPU could provide neither the funding nor sufficient tuition-paying students to sustain such a costly venture.



A residential seminary is expensive to operate. Due to daunting fiscal challenges, [Episcopal Divinity School](#), [Andover Newton Theological Seminary](#) (the oldest graduate seminary in America) and other independent seminaries sold their property and relocated. Like UTS, those schools found that they were unable to provide students with rooms, meals, and classes in a brick-and-mortar facility at a reasonable price.

Many of us have a sentimental yearning for the love, happiness and friendship that we experienced at Barrytown, having spent quality time with our Founders and peers. Yet rather than dwell on the past, our Board has decided that our Seminary should move forward toward what God has in store for future generations of students.

We are tremendously encouraged by the worldwide response of students to [UTS Online](#). We are inspired that our distance learning courses have resulted in breakthroughs for students in Africa, Europe and Asia. Our partnership with FFWPU remains solid, and we are working closely with our church leaders to provide theological education for a new wave of young leaders worldwide.

We are planning to reinstitute a scholarship program to support doctoral studies for a few young scholars who want to become UTS professors. We are excited to strengthen community relations and expand our academic programs, by developing ecumenical partnerships and collaborations, launching a Ministry Institute, establishing an Islamic track in our Master's degree program and seeking to offer joint degree programs with peer institutions. Sale of the Barrytown campus will provide the funds that will drive that next phase of our development as a leading graduate school in Unification studies.

I ask for your love, support and prayers for our alma mater at this critical, transitional moment in its history. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact either Robin Graham, the Director of Advancement and Enrollment Management, at r.graham@uts.edu or myself at h.spurgin@uts.edu. I will keep you informed of developments as they unfold.