

## UTS Convocation 2019 in Manhattan, NY Welcomes 20 Newly Enrolled Students

Hugh Spurgin  
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On March 26, a convocation was launched at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) Manhattan New York center for an acceptance ceremony to welcome 20 newly enrolled students since the Winter 2018 semester.

The purpose of this annual convocation was to orient the new students to the UTS code of conduct and serve as a guide in their journey of achieving their goals. Overall, 30 people arrived as an audience to support the convocation ceremony composed of alumni, faculty and current students who are enrolled in different fields of master's degrees.

The spirits of the room became enlightened when Mr. Samuel Dennis, the speaker of the day, and Dr. Hugh Spurgin, the President of the UTS, spoke. Dr. Spurgin stressed that students are the most important asset of the institution; whether they are online or full-time students, they are the vital structure of UTS. Dr. Spurgin also showed his appreciation to the 12 students who enrolled online in 2017, considering their enrollment as an example of one of the cutting edges of the seminary, and caused great results this year. From his sharing, the new students came to learn the uniqueness of the interfaith school, which has a dynamic mission of not only bridging religious divides, but generating leaders able to work all over the world as an instrument of bringing world peace. He ended his speech by granting his commission and blessing to the new students of the seminary.

Afterwards, a candle ceremony was engaged, where Dr. Spurgin said the flame would create a resemblance of peace within oneself that would shine and reflect onto the world. The new students then recited the code of conduct, a guide that highlighted the code of ethics that all students were expected to follow. The student code of conduct would serve as a support that will uphold their journey to become their most authentic selves. The audience was moved by the student message from Roeline Ramirez, a current MRE student at UTS, Christian Education Coordinator and member of the Trinity United Methodist Church in New Jersey. Her journey to UTS served as a highlight when she summarized and shared her great experience during her studies at UTS. Her appreciation to the course of education as well as to all her current professors gave her wisdom to deepen her relationship with others and with God. Her dynamic experience in the seminary opened her heart and served as her inspiration in doing her mission.

Rene Ballenas, a Divinity student, empowered the audience with his suggestion to the faculty staff and students to stand as an ambassador to UTS throughout the world. Following Rene was the captivating response of Regina Talja, an MA student, who compared her days at UTS to an "oasis of the desert," which moved, inspired, and strengthened her life of faith.

The convocation also included entertainment by professional singer Carla Mongado, whose touching and beautiful voice added a great sense of presence to the audience. The ceremony concluded with a congratulatory remark given by Dr. Keisuke Noda, who encouraged the students to pursue their commitment to excellence, and a promise from the institution committee and faculty for great service through molding students in the path of their education, spiritual development, and emotional and academic excellence.

### **Unification Theological Seminary Student Code**

I commit myself before God:

To develop my relationship with God through regular spiritual practices with full devotion of heart, mind and body

To uphold and live according to the highest moral and ethical standards in my personal life and relations with others

To respect the campus as a smoke-free, alcohol-free and drug-free environment, and to maintain my body at all times as a temple of God

To refrain from premarital and extramarital relationships, sexual harassment and pornography

To respect the diversity of cultural and religious traditions

To attend enrolled classes and fulfill academic responsibilities with honesty and integrity

To pursue my religious vocation with integrity upon graduation.