

HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership: Institutional Name Change

Thomas G. Walsh
June 30, 2023



Dear Members of the UTS Community,

Thank you for your steadfast service and commitment to the mission of the Unification Theological Seminary. I felt a great sense of pride as we held the 47th commencement ceremony recently for the class of 2023. We have such wonderful students and alumni, and the inspiring testimonies that graduates shared at the ceremony about their time at UTS is a tribute to your care for them and to your work to maintain high standards of excellence that are consistent with our Founders' vision.

At this time, given the institutional name change coming to effect on July 1, I offer this updated version of my president's letter, previously shared with the UTS community on June 8. [Please note the following name change backgrounder and frequently asked questions.](#)

As reported in my June 8th letter, following months of consultations with our Founder, the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, alumni and other stakeholders, UTS submitted, to the New York State Department of Education and the State University of New York Board of Regents, its request for a name change, from Unification Theological Seminary to HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership, HJI for short. The proposed name change, we feel, better reflects the developments at our institution, which began with the inclusion of a Peace and Justice Track in our Doctor of Ministry program, initiated in 2006; the Interfaith Peacebuilding concentration in our Master of Religious Studies program, initiated in 2010; the Master of Peace Studies program, initiated in 2022; and the focus on the role of religion in

furthering peace, which has been a guiding theme for our sponsoring Church since the end of the Cold War. The name change was approved by the University of the State of New York Education Department and the amended charter was sent to UTS, dated February 14, 2023.

In our application, we proposed the date of July 1, 2023, as the effective date for the name change, and this date was approved. In other words, within a few short weeks, we will open a new chapter in our history as the HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership.

During the past several weeks, we have been busy preparing for the name change, e.g., preparing for changing our letterhead, business cards, our website, our bylaws, our handbooks, our official seal, etc., to reflect the new name.

Although our name will change on July 1, 2023, our basic mission does not change. The emphasis on religion, peace and peacebuilding have been hallmarks of UTS over the years. At this time, we are making that core aspect of our mission more visible. At the same time, we expect that the name change may allow us to reach a wider market of potential students, attracted not only to our strong Doctor of Ministry and Master of Divinity programs but also our Master of Religious Studies and Master of Peace Studies programs.

Be assured that we remain fully committed to the Founders' vision and the tradition of UTS, even as we go forward as HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership.

Thank you once again for your commitment to UTS, and, after July 1, HJI.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas G. Walsh". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Thomas G. Walsh, Ph.D.
President of UTS

Unification Theological Seminary is now HJ International [Learn More](#)

We appreciate your patience while this site is being revised


[APPLY](#)
[Give](#)
[Facebook](#)
[Search](#)
[Home](#)
[About HJI](#)
[Academics](#)
[Admissions and Aid](#)
[Students](#)
[HJI-Online](#)
[Upcoming Events](#)
[About UTS](#)
[History](#)
[Profile of UTS](#)
[Board of Trustees](#)
[President's Message](#)
[Mission & Accreditation](#)
[Facilities and Resources](#)
[Staff/Faculty Directory](#)
[Support the Seminary](#)
[Recent Name Change](#)

Building on our Past, Looking to the Future

From Unification Theological Seminary to HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership

On February 14, 2023, UTS received approval from the New York State Department of Education to change its name to HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership. The statement which follows provides background on this important new development in the history of the institution.

Our Mission

Although our name has changed, our institutional mission remains unchanged:

HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership provides academic and Professional Education for current and future leaders of the Unification Community and all faiths, that seeks to enhance their relationship with God, their effectiveness in ministry, public leadership, and interreligious peacebuilding. As a home of thought, we strive to foster understanding, contextualization, and application of the Unification worldview in a world of diverse faiths.

The name HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership itself reflects and honors the mission of our institution. The mission statement points out that the Institution offers “advanced academic and professional education.” As a school of graduate education, we not only seek “to enhance [the learning community’s] relationship with God”, but also its “effectiveness in ministry, public leadership and interreligious peacebuilding.”

Our New Name

The name, “HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership,” reflects the key dimensions of our institution’s mission.

The HJ in the new name stands for hyojeong -- 효정 in Korean or 孝情 in Chinese characters -- and denotes filial affection, especially in relationship to God as the parent of humanity. The Unification tradition emphasizes the cultivation of a filial heart toward God, i.e., an intuitive, attitudinal sensitivity to what uplifts God and to what causes God grief.

Unificationists believe that beyond religious faith, this pursuit of and sensitivity to God’s heart can help us to “enhance [our] relationship with God”, whether within the Unification community or any other faiths. It can also help us to see each human being as our sibling because we share a common parent, God. Moreover, the focus of UTS since its founding has been “international.” Our new name emphasizes our commitment to ministry and public leadership “in a world of diverse faiths” and reflects the worldwide focus of the sponsoring Church and the interreligious and international expertise of HJI faculty and staff.

In 1994, HJI Co-Founders Sun Myung Moon and Hak Ja Han Moon changed the name of the sponsoring Church to Family Federation for World Peace and Unification. This change reflected post-Cold War developments within the Unification Church Movement that led to the creation of organizations that saw peace as their priority and raison d’être^[1]. Women’s Federation for World Peace, one of these organizations, involved itself in peace-related initiatives including the building of schools in Africa and the promotion of a Bridge of Peace ceremony between Korean and Japanese women, symbolic of the need to find an end to the long historical enmity existing between Korea and Japan.

The Universal Peace Federation, a United Nations Non-Governmental Organization with Consultative Status at the UN’s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has also been involved in multiple initiatives meant to contribute to the peaceful reunion of the Koreas. UPF has also led major peace initiatives both in the Middle East (Israel-Palestine-related) and in Africa (addressing the aftereffects of colonialism and slavery) where they met and collaborated with key actors in the transformation of these conflicts.

For its part, HJI, since its founding in 1975, has emphasized interfaith dialogue and cooperation. When it created its Doctor of Ministry in 2006, it established a Peace and Justice Track. Its Master of Arts degree in Religious Studies, established in 2010, stipulated that all students follow a core curriculum that included World Scriptures and World Peace; Theology of Peacebuilding; Ethics and Social Justice in the Age of Globalization; World Religions; and Global Conflict. The Master of Arts in Religious Studies also included an elective concentration in Interfaith Peacebuilding. HJI initiated a proposal for its own Master of Arts in Peace Studies in 2021 and it received approval from the New York State Education Department in February 2022.

HJI’s teaching faculty includes Dr. Thomas Walsh, Professor of Religion and Peace, who has traveled in 120 nations and has been involved in major peace initiatives in the Middle East and Africa and has a longstanding involvement with the United Nations, presiding over an International Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with General Consultative Status with the United Nations. The faculty also includes Dr. Thomas J. Ward, a Fulbright recipient (2013) and Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Visiting Scholar (2016), who served as the Founding Chair of the Masters of Global Development and Peace at the University of Bridgeport, as well as Delegate at Large of the Committee on Teaching about the United Nations (2018-2020).

Both Dr. Walsh and Dr. Ward have been involved in Track II-related peace initiatives on the Korean peninsula. The full-time faculty also includes Dr. Drissa Kone who is active in peace leadership initiatives and regional conflict study in French speaking Africa. Dr. Andrew Wilson, a Harvard-Educated expert on comparative scripture studies in the World’s Religions is a faculty member and the Editor of the respected World Scriptures: A Comparative Anthology of Sacred Texts (Paragon 1998) that points to the shared mores and values found in the world’s major faiths.

In its new Master of Arts in Peace Studies, HJ International trains peace professionals from around the world. Already our current core of twenty-eight students represents twenty nations from Australia to Canada; from Zambia to Moscow.

A Reflection of Who We Are

The Institution's mission and history, its strong ties with a sponsoring Church that sees peace as a priority, combined with the peace-oriented academic programs at HJI and the expertise and experience of key HJI faculty and staff shed light on our decision to become "HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership."

The new name, HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership, we feel, reflects what UTS has become and represents what our school can offer to our students and the world community whom we strive to serve.

"HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership", we feel, reflects what UTS has become and represents what our School can offer to our students and the world community whom we strive to serve.

[1] Probably the most prominent of these organizations are the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), and Youth and Students for Peace (YSP), the first two of which hold General Consultative Status with the United Nations' Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the latter of which holds special consultative status.

HJ International: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will the new school still remain a seminary?

2. Will HJI maintain its affiliation with the Association of Theological Schools?

3. Will the name change impact on the mission of the Institution?

4. Why is the new name a better fit for the Institution?

5. When will the name change take effect?

6. How will the name change impact student life?

7. Will the name change result in a different kind of student coming to HJI?

8. Will the institution still provide financial aid to its students?

9. What steps had to be taken to change the name and what impact will this have upon State and regional accrediting organizations?

10. Which agency oversees accreditation for the HJ International School for Peace and Public Leadership?

11. For students who entered the school while it was still Unification Theological Seminary, what institutional name will appear on their diplomas?

12. Can alumni request new diplomas with the new name?

13. Will the name change have any impact on the financial aid package and federal loan policies and guidelines?

14. Will the institutional logo change?

15. How will the institution refer to itself?

16. Will the website URL or email change

17. Will Admissions outreach efforts change due to the New Name?

18. What type of outreach and efforts were made to calibrate the acceptance and impact of the name change for students and alumni?

[Click to collapse](#)

Yes, please see the chronology below:

- In November 2020 through to December 2021, UTS President Thomas Ward, VP Michael Mickler, and UTS Chairman Franco Famularo began meeting together. Other members of the Board and the core leadership of UTS were regularly updated on these conversations. Dr. Walsh, International Chairman of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), also joined these conversations, expressing interest in involving UTS in providing UPF leaders and allies with advanced graduate education in the areas of religion, peace, and public leadership.
- UTS proposed with UPF support to develop a Master of Arts in Peace Studies. There was an understanding that UPF would assist in providing recruitment and scholarship support through their worldwide network of members and supporters.
- The proposal for a Master of Arts in Peace Studies was developed through our faculty over a period of one year and was then submitted to the New York State Department of Education in late 2021. The Masters in Peace Studies was approved in early 2022.

The program attracted wide interest and 15 students who had been admitted to UTS in Fall of 2021 in the Master of Religious Studies with a concentration in Interfaith Peacebuilding were followed in Fall 2022 by 15 students admitted as Master of Arts in Peace Studies.

- In April of 2022, Dr. Walsh traveled to Korea where he met with UTS Co-Founder Dr. Moon and several members of the UTS Board of Trustees -- Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, Dr. Chung Sik Yong, Dr. Michael Jenkins, Mr. Steven Jares, and Dr. Franco Famularo. He shared about the New York State Education Department's (NYSED) expeditious approval of the Master of Arts in Peace Studies.
- In April 2022, Dr. Thomas Ward announced his plan to step down as President of UTS at the end of academic year 2022, an intention which he had outlined to the Board at the time of his appointment in July 2019.
- Dr. Thomas Walsh submitted his application to assume the Presidency of UTS. Dr. Walsh, a PhD from Vanderbilt University, who had taught in a variety of institutions and had served as Co-Chair of the University of Bridgeport Board of Trustees, was recognized as a highly qualified candidate to assume this role and was unanimously approved by the Board. He assumed this role following the 2022 UTS graduation ceremony.
- Dr. Walsh asked Dr. Ward to remain on at UTS to serve as Provost and Dr. Ward agreed to this. Dr. Ward supports refocusing UTS and agrees with Dr. Walsh that a name change is in order to better accomplish this.
- In July 2022, Dr. Walsh consulted former UTS presidents Dr. Spurgin, Dr. Shimmyo, and Dr. Hendricks about looking into renaming the Seminary. They each supported this plan to consider a name change, as the Institution expanded its focus on Peace Studies.
- In October 2022, the Board of Trustees approved a resolution encouraging Dr. Walsh to confer with stakeholders of the UTS community, including faculty, staff, alumni, and students.
- Dr. Walsh convened a retreat of UTS full time faculty and staff and shared the concept of a name change, which was generally well received.
- Meetings with students and alumni followed after this.

19. May alumni of the Seminary change their resume to read HJ International rather than UTS when indicating where they did their graduate study?

20. Will the fact that the seminary has changed its name and has become a "graduate school for peace and public leadership" affect its relationship with alumni who are ministers or religious professionals working for religious communities?



HJ International
GRADUATE SCHOOL for
PEACE AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

New York City Main Campus:
4 West 43rd Street
New York, NY 10036
Phone: (212) 563-6647

Barrytown Campus:
30 Seminary Drive
Barrytown, NY 12507
Phone: (845) 752-3000

[Applied Unificationism Blog](#)

[Journal of Unification Studies](#)

[Subscribe to UTS News!](#)

[Latest News](#)

[Directory](#)

[UTS Catalog](#)