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

Unheard Voices/An Innovative Proposal

Richard A. Panzer
December 15, 2014

"I had a dream of reviving Christianity even by sacrificing ourselves. There were even some critics among us who questioned what I was doing, so to found this Seminary was a difficult decision on my part. But I had to do this. How many times I came to this property to pray before deciding to purchase it for the founding of the Seminary! To this degree I was serious about reviving Christianity and saving the nation of America and the world through the Unification Theological Seminary."

Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, Commencement Address 1999

I have remained silent regarding the current controversy which Robin Graham has discussed in his letter from Thursday night. I am grateful for one reason- *it has greatly motivated me to seek deeper spiritual guidance!* Yesterday I had the opportunity to give a message at the Sunday Service in Clifton, NJ called "[Joseph's Course and I](#)" which might be of interest to you.



Joseph's Course and I

I will not use this email to debate the details of the demands from HSA that Barrytown College be closed down, etc. I do think the voices of the students of Barrytown College deserve to be heard. I do not have enough space to share all of the letters from students and parents, but have decided to share a heartfelt letter from one of our students from a 2nd year student named Jenny Cox below.

I do hope that you will take a few minutes to fill out the online survey so that we can learn what the majority of Unification members think. Here is the link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8MRHPB3>.

Also, I recently received a proposal from former UTS president Tyler Hendricks that I think could be a way out of this situation that, to be frank, is damaging to both UTS and to the church. Here it is:

Dr. Hendricks: I recommend that UTS and the church jointly announce their commitment to convene a conference led by a mediator from the ATS. My proposal would be that Dr. Balcomb and Dr. Panzer set up a conference guided by a mediator experienced in church-seminary affairs, and that the church and UTS jointly announce it as soon as possible.



Scaffolding in UTS Chapel for Window Replacement

The conference would include representatives of the UTS Board and administration, and church board-including those who voted in favor of the recent action. In preparation, the mediator would spend time with the church board, with the UTS leadership and staff, with the UTS board, and perhaps others. Then would come the conference, which I think would need three days.

This kind of crisis happens all the time between churches and their seminaries, and the ATS would be the place to find people who serve as mediators in such cases. I remember talking to one such person myself, when I was UTS president. They know full well the dynamics of this kind of crisis-all parties will have to talk to such a mediator honestly, because he or she will know the questions to ask.



Such a conference would serve an additional, and very important, purpose of helping articulate the UTS mission statement.

Letter from a Barrytown College 2nd Year Student

My name is Jenny. I have spent only one and a half semesters studying at Barrytown College of UTS, and I can say, without exaggeration, that it has been the best year and a half of my life. I have grown the most, I have learned the most about myself and others, and I have become educated about many different faith perspectives and developed a deeper sense of appreciation for all people. I believe in Barrytown College.



In my lifetime, I have never encountered such a place as Barrytown, and I don't know if I ever will

again. For the first time in my life, I have been able to form true friendships with those close at hand. Here I was finally able to engage with wonderful brothers and sisters on a regular basis to create deep, lasting relationships.

In this place, I feel I have strengthened--almost re-created--my faith in God. In all honesty, before coming here, I used to be very depressed, and my spiritual life was all but stagnant. I would experience anxiety attacks, which triggered in me a deep, almost existential crisis.

From the moment I came here, I have felt spiritually lighter. It actually feels easier to breathe the air here than anywhere else. I still feel this way. This is truly a special place, imbued with decades of spiritual commitment and divine inspiration.

Here, in class and in other activities, I have learned about the beauty of several different spiritual practices, one of these being Buddhist meditation. I have begun practicing it myself to calm my soul and to purely feel the love of my Heavenly Parent. During one meditation session this past semester I actually experienced a moment of nirvana, where my mind was completely clear of thoughts. In this place I have prayed many times with tears of joy, bowed upon the ground, for hours and hours at a time. Here I am inspired to live with God.

On my first day here, I was so young and inexperienced with being away from the embrace of my family that I could not stop crying. But as I faced the doorway of this new place, one first generation student, Susan, was there who reached out to me with open arms. She didn't know me at all, but she held me in a warm and loving embrace.

Later that first evening, I came to the Worship Service. The chaplain welcomed me in, and put his arm around me. When service ended, my roommate, Sung Soon Gaval, came right up to me and clasped my hand firmly. She didn't let go for even a moment as we walked up to the dorms. Since that day, I cannot count the times I have reached out to people and received guidance and support and unconditional love. Here I have felt free to be honest about my difficulties, and have learned to manage my emotions, and how to cope with the outside world in a constructive way. I owe that to Barrytown College.



Father Making Nets at UTS in Barrytown

I deeply appreciate and am inspired by my classmates here. Taking risks to invest in True Father's vision for this college, these students have shown an amazing

entrepreneurial spirit. In their brief time here they have initiated many clubs and programs, some of which are directly tied to serving the community and practicing our values: the Film Production Club, the Ballroom Dance Club, the Barrytones Singing Club, and Home Group (named after "Home Church") are a few. We also have a lively, talented Worship Service team,

which is almost solely responsible for the program's production, which enjoys enthusiastic turnouts every Saturday. There is also a devoted Hoon Dok Hae group that meets every morning at 7 a.m. for reading and worship. The Barrytown CARP chapter has also been very influential in aiding students' growth as individuals. To give you an example of our CARP activities, this semester we held a motivational event where we all made a condition to leave behind old, destructive habits and embrace new courses of action, an event which entailed jumping into the Hudson River at 6:30 a.m., in the middle of October. Needless to say, it has left a big impact on us!

With my education here, I have been encouraged to do what I can to change the world around me. After taking the college's Spirituality of Music course, which discussed the importance of using morally-motivated art to impact the culture, I became inspired to use my writing ability to craft novels that communicate messages of goodness, that are clear in their support of purity before marriage and maintaining a heavenly standard. Specifically, I am planning to write a semi-autobiographical novel based on my experiences growing up in the church, to spread the word about our faith in a way that's emotionally moving and true to fact. A great part of this novel will reflect my experiences at Barrytown, a place which holds some of my fondest memories.

I truly believe that it is a place worth investing in. I have learned so much from Barrytown College, and would be sad to see it go; I am disappointed that more second generation after me may not be able to enjoy this unique experience of growth, joy, faith, and love.

Editor's Note: Jenny and other students have created an [online petition](#) to "Keep Barrytown College & UTS."

We have also developed a series of ads expressing these themes that can be shared via email, or downloaded and printed.



We invite you to check out [these ads](#) and to share them if you like them as much as we do!

I invite you to JOIN WITH US to ensure that Barrytown will continue to be a place for spiritual and intellectual development for new generations to come. For more information, or to apply online for the Spring or Fall 2015 semester, visit www.Barrytown.uts.edu/2015! For more information about outstanding UTS Masters or Doctoral degree programs visit www.UTS.edu! If you'd like to become a contributor/co-creator/co-owner of UTS/Barrytown College, visit [Giving!](#)

Sincerely,

Richard

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