

The Value of the Divinity Scholarship Fund

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Barrytown - One of the most satisfying experiences a college administrator can have is helping students to find ways to successfully accomplish their degree program. The cost of tuition is often a burden for students, so any assistance they receive is welcomed.

This concern motivated the Alumni Relations office at the [Unification Theological Seminary](#)(UTS) to begin the [Divinity Scholarship Fund](#) in 2017 to help some of our students fulfill their financial responsibilities. Foreign students do

not qualify for student loans from the US government, and UTS tuition fees, though moderate compared to many other institutions, can be a challenge for them. In 2017 the UTS alumni were asked if they could help support a scholarship program with an initial goal of \$6,000.

This would offer scholarships of \$1200 each to five students in the [Master of Divinity](#) (MDiv) program. The MDiv is the gold standard of seminary education and is UTS's premier master degree, which requires 80 credit hours. Consequently, the expenses for this program are greater than for the [Master of Religious Education](#) (MRE) with 50 credit hours or the [Master of Arts \(MA\) in Religious Studies](#) with 48 credits. Already \$2400 has been divided between three deserving MDiv students and further scholarship funds will be awarded in the 2018/19 academic year.

Support for international students attending UTS was the original purpose. In the academic year 2018/2019 this will expand to make all MDiv students, international and domestic, eligible for scholarships. The hope is for more UTS alumni to get on board, especially when they read about what these scholarships mean to the awardees. So the fundraising campaign goal has increased to \$9600. The aim to offer eight MDiv scholarships of up to \$1200 each.



"As a student of MDiv, and as a recipient of the scholarship granted by the UTS alumni, I am forever grateful to you for your generosity to support a student like me paying my tuition fee," said Filipina Elena Bahian. "Your donation has inspired me and motivated me to do better in my studies, to equip myself with the necessary education that will be useful for my future service to the community. Your support will always be remembered as one inspiring act to value the students of UTS. God bless you always."



Emmanuel Ndupu, a student from Nigeria and also the recipient of a scholarship, is grateful for the funds, helping to ease his financial burden while allowing him more time to concentrate on his classwork.

"I would like to thank everyone for making the MDiv scholarship program successful," he said. "This generous contribution has aided me to continue my graduate education. It takes a burden off myself by allowing me to focus on my studies instead of concerning myself with financial matters. I see this as a miracle and I extend my heartfelt appreciation for aiding me in reaching my educational goals. Thank you."

"The value of the MDiv. program is that it prepares students for all types of ministerial leadership and service," explained Dr. Kathy Winings. "Our world needs men and women of faith who can minister in diverse ways to all of us. This means a skill set that can meet today's needs. The MDiv. is the best place to begin to teach those skills. It is genuinely about learning to serve others - to serve the greater good."



Dr. Drissa Kone, the Director of Student Life at UTS is an MDiv graduate and had this to say about the program:

The Master of Divinity at UTS prepared me to be a professional minister in a complex, modern world. The 21st century is more and more culturally diverse, and having the skill to practice ministry across cultures is a precious gift from God.

The Clinical Pastoral Education reinforces the learning experience on a practical level. It provides two important paths.

The first is to know who you are in doing ministry and how to effectively offer spiritual counseling to those in need. Life happens; loved ones die, accidents happen, births and weddings are part of the everyday life of a community. So, the minister has to be present and support the grieving process of his community members, but also enjoy the joyful moments with them.

The MDiv also opens the door to a chaplaincy career, which is a growing profession in the U.S. Today, chaplains are needed in the military, hospitals, prisons, schools and hospices.

I highly recommend the MDiv program to anyone who feels called to professional ministry. It helped me to be more spiritually grounded in my faith as a Unificationist, and I am totally confident to work with other faith traditions to bring about a better and more peaceful society.