

*16 Mountain Road
Rindge, NH 03461*

December 15, 2020

Dear Alumni and Friends of ESR,

My time as a student at Earlham School of Religion (ESR) was life changing. Like others blessed to have attended the seminary that calls itself a Quaker crossroads, I am intensely loyal and grateful to the school for my time there.

ESR is the only Quaker seminary in the United States. A good percentage of students, faculty, administrative staff, and trustees are Friends. Quaker spiritual practices for conducting business have traditionally been used by faculty and student bodies. The Religious Society of Friends in the US benefits from and relies on having a Quaker graduate level education available.

Last week I was shocked to receive an email from Anne Houtman, president of Earlham College (EC), announcing Matt Hisrich's resignation as dean of ESR, effective at the end of this year. Matt and I graduated together in 2008. I only shared one class with him, but that was enough for me to appreciate his keen intellect and excellent people skills.

Although the brief announcement of Matt's departure doesn't mention it, in the years after he completed his Mdiv Matt went on to earn a doctorate in management at the University of Maryland University College. Matt brought a unique combination of spiritual gifts and pragmatic skills to his roles as dean of ESR and vice president of EC. Like many ESR alums who have known him, I was delighted when he stepped in as acting dean, and then moved into the permanent position a year later. I knew ESR was in good hands.

During his tenure as dean of ESR Jay Marshall did a commendable job of stewarding its finances, while Earlham struggled. Granted, it's been a rough couple decades for small, independent colleges, but that doesn't entirely account for Earlham's money problems today.

In June 2020 EC's president and the board of trustees abruptly de-designated roughly half of ESR's \$49 million endowment, appropriating it to help right Earlham's deteriorating financial situation. At the same time, the president required Matt to reduce ESR's budget by 20 percent without cutting salaries.

Matt made the excruciating decision to eliminate two administrative jobs created in response to the changing needs of twenty-first century graduate students. The positions of Director of Student and Alumni Engagement (DSAE) and Director of Community Development positions went on the chopping block. This, although the DSAE job was specifically part of ESR's 2018 Five-Year Strategic Plan. Prior to the de-designation the seminary had more than sufficient funds to support those vital development positions.

Also in June, other administrative jobs performed independently within ESR and its partner, Bethany Theological Seminary (Bethany), were brought under the direct supervision of college administrators, which hasn't benefited the seminaries. All of this placed Matt in an untenable

situation. He was repeatedly stymied in his efforts to act in the best interest of the seminary before then, and has been since.

Another dean can be hired, but it will be difficult to find one with the knowledge of - and passion for - ESR that Matt brought. Should a candidate turn up with Matt's qualifications, their hands will be equally tied. As long as ESR is financially held responsible to help bail out EC, its future is at risk no matter who assumes leadership.

Two great features about ESR have been its sister relationship with Bethany, right next door on the Earlham campus, and aspects of its relationship with EC. The two seminaries working side by side are able to maintain their unique theological perspectives while offering a richer course selection than either could separately. Similarly, students from the seminaries and the college have benefited by having access back and forth to certain professors and courses, libraries, and to cultural events on campus.

However, good boundaries are necessary for these three entities to work well together. Bethany is already affected by the placement of services shared exclusively by the two seminaries under supervision of college administrators. The primary relationship is between the two seminaries, but further changes in ESR's status with the college will continue to spill over onto Bethany.

Ultimately, this is not just about the loss of one staff person. It is about accumulated losses over the past several months. It is about concern for the ongoing characters of Earlham College and Earlham School of Religion. It is about striving for the integrity Quakers value deeply, however short we fall.

Recently, Earlham's president said, "ESR is the jewel in Earlham's crown," making an unfortunate reference to the crown jewel of England. Subjected to British colonialism, India was that crown jewel. By the time British rule ended in 1947, many of India's resources and once-thriving businesses had been pillaged. If anything, ESR is a treasure to be shared, not squandered.

Please join me in calling on the president and the board of trustees of Earlham College to take the following steps:

- 1) Return the de-designated endowment funds Earlham's board had previously designated to ensure ESR's financial stability;
- 2) Return direct reporting of ESR administrative faculty to the dean of ESR;
- 3) Restore the autonomy necessary for ESR to fulfill its distinct and board-approved mission and strategic plan.

I encourage you to either write your own letter or sign on to this one to be forwarded to Earlham's trustees.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Margaret Hawthorn
ESR M.Div 2008

Co-signed:

Micah Bales
ESR Board of Advisors Member
ESR M.Div 2009
Pastor, Berkeley Friends Church

Julie-Ann Silberman-Bunn
ESR Board of Advisors Member
ESR M.Div 1991

Susan Kaul
ESR Board of Advisors Member
ESR M.Div 2007

Travis Etling
ESR Board of Advisors Member
ESR M.Div 2017

Jaimie Mudd
Quaker Pastor

Windy Cooler
Quaker Public Minister, Baltimore Yearly Meeting

Michael Sherman
ESR Graduate
Pastor, Muncie Friends Church
Clerk, New Association of Friends

Andy Stanton-Henry
ESR, M.Div 2018

Ruth Cutcher
Current ESR student

John Jeremiah Edminster
M.Div., ESR, 2019.
Custodian, Quaker Bible Index

Nikki Holland
ESR MDiv 2020,
Director of FUM's Ministries in Belize

Anthony Kirk

ESR Graduate

Pastor of Klamath Falls Friends Church, Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting

Thomas Baker-Swann

Writer and ESR student graduating May 2021 in the MATW

Faith Kelley

Pastor, Berkeley Friends Church

Sarah Gillooly

ESR M.Div Student

Adelphi Friends Meeting, Adelphi, MD

Michael Jay

ESR M.Div 2013

Pastor, Raysville Friends

Leigh Tolton

Pastor, West Elkton Friends

Joe Tolton

ESR 2010

Pastor, West Elkton Friends

Daniel Mudd

L. Callid Keefe-Perry

Traveling Minister, Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting

New England Yearly Meeting Lecturer in Practical Theology

Boston University School of Theology

Earlham GPE Alum 2007

Johan Maurer

Retired Friends pastor, administrator, and missionary

Former ESR advisory board member

Caroline Morris

ESR M.Div 2020

Jason Kalis

ESR M.Div. student

Grand Rapids Friends Meeting (LEYM)

Christine Ashley
MAPST student '21

Joshua Brown
Pastor, Springfield Friends Meeting

The Rev. Suzanne J. LeVesconte
Rector, Trinity Episcopal Church Hamilton, OH
ESR MDiv 2009

Jade Souza
ESR M.Div. student
Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends

Jeff Wolfe
ESR 2006
Former pastor of Whitewater Friends Meeting, Richmond, IN

C.G. White
Attended ESR 1982-84
Professor of Philosophy, Ivy Tech Community College, Columbus, IN

Lynn Domina
ESR '16

Max L. Carter
William R. Rogers Director of Friends Center and Quaker Studies (retired)
Guilford College, Greensboro, N.C.

Jennifer Lynn
ESR Student 1995-1998

Gilbert George
Assistant Clerk, Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting

Jennifer Frick
ESR Student 95-98

Duane Smith
ESR M.Div 1983
Professor of Religion

Berea College Rector
St. Hubert's Episcopal Church

Christy Randazzo
Chair, Quaker Theological Discussion Group
Quaker Theologian and Writer
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

Kate Jaramillo
M.Div 2003
Chaplain Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center

Craig Dove
ESR M.Div 2008
PhD BCC

Noël Carey
ESR M.Min 1998
North Valley Friends Church

Muriel (Mickey) Muriel Edgerton
ESR M.Div 1987

Rex Jones
ESR graduate 1985

Maggie Harrison
ESR student 2008-2009

Philip Gulley
Quaker Pastor

Kaia Jackson
ESR M.Div 2020
Youth Secretary- Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

James Lynch M.Div
Bethany Theological Seminary 1975
Recording Clerk, Heartland Friends Meeting, Wichita, Kansas

Susanne Kromberg
ESR '95

Sarah S Forth
PhD ESR 1988

Aaron Nell
Alternatives To Violence Facilitator

Stephen P Sebert
ESR 1973
was 20 yrs Minister Christian Church, former director of Yokefellows at Shakertown Ky.
Now Editor/Storyteller in Austin, Texas

Caroline Austin, M.Min
ESR, 2002

Jeff P. Crim
ESR M.Div '04
Pastor Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

Julia Pantoga, M.Div, M.A.T and M.U.P.
Quaker minister and founder of Sharp Turn Institute Certificate of Entrepreneurial Ministry,
ESR 2018 M.Div ESR 2010

James W. Kridler
EC 68, ESR 76, Former EC Administrator

Paul Buckley
ESR 2001, Quaker Writer

Dave Cundiff, MD, MPH
Olympia, WA MM (NPYM)
Finance Committee Clerk, Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends (signing as an individual)
ESR donor for about 40 years
Ex-spouse of an ESR alumna

Shelley Newby
M.Div 2003

Donne Hayden
ESR graduate (2006)
Retired Minister & Public Friend, Cincinnati Friends Meeting

Diane Reynolds
M.Div 2012

James Hightower
M.Min Class of 1975

Rev. Neil Wilson
ESR M.Div 1998
Senior Minister Congregational Church of Laconia (NH) United Church of Christ

Rev. Tandy Scheffler
M.Div. 2014
Minister of Care and Connection, Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church Oak Ridge, TN

Elizabeth Code
ESR MDiv 2011
UCC chaplain

Trish (Patricia) Roberts
ESR M.Div 2000
Member Canberra and Region Meeting, Australia

Stephen Beals
ESR M.Div 2012
Retired pastor, West Fayette Presbyterian Church, Geneva NY
Now living in Westfield, MA

Leif Carlson
ESR MA 2005
Professor of Art, Georgia Southern University

The Rev. Linnea Stifler
M.Div 2012
Rector, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Hastings, MI

Rev. Erin Hougland
Associate Rector, Trinity Episcopal Church, Indianapolis
ESR M.Div 2014

Reverend Pamela Kittredge, M.Div
ESR 2016
Minister, Union Church, Vinalhaven, ME

Rev. Gary Wagner
ESR MDiv, 1981
Retired Staff Pastor, Orange Park United Methodist Church, Florida

Michael John Crook
ESR M.Div 2000
Writer / Distinguished Christian Scholar

Lisa J. Walden
ESR 2014

Summer Cushman
ESR M.Div. 2010
ESR EM Certificate 2018
ESR Spirituality Gathering Keynote 2020
ESR Adjunct Faculty in the EM Program 2020

Nancy Maeder
ESR M.Div 2002
Member, Durham Friends Meeting, NC

Cynthia Mason
ESR M.Div 1993

Margaret Griffin March

Rev. Elizabeth Raid
M.Div 2002 Newton, Kansas

Tracy Davis
ESR MA 2016
Durango Friends Meeting Durango, Colorado

Carolyn Shafer
ESR MDiv 92

Barbarajene Williams
ESR 1996

Vicki Corkell

ESR M.Div 2002

David Garman

M.Min 1976

Mary Garman

M.Min 1977

Chris Buice

ESR Alumni

Minister of the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church

Carolyn J. Shafer

ESR M.Div 1992

Sandra Tracy

M.Div 2013

Chaplain, Knoxville, TN

Jonathan Goff

M.Div 2012

Pastor of Maryville Friends Church, Wilmington Yearly Meeting

David L. Ashcraft

Deb Geiger

ESR M.Div 2018

Brian Young

ESR M.Div 2008

Pastoral Minister, West Richmond Friends Meeting

Peter Anderson

ESR M.Div 2000

Part-time Faculty, Ministry of Writing, 2002-2005

Beth Lawn Chaplain

ESR MDiv 2003

Sabrina Falls

ESR M.Div 1995

Recorded Quaker Minister

Jack Rowan
ESR M.Div 2020
Chaplain Missoula Friends Meeting

J Annie Glenn
ESR M.Div 2007

Amy Todd Kelly
ESR M.Div 2018

Jan Bechtel
ESR M.Div 1985
Chaplain Emerita, Defiance College

Jill Frame
Current ESR Student

Sherrema A. Bower
2018-19 ESR Seminarian, Flint, Michigan

David Hadley Finke
Former Presiding Clerk, Illinois Yearly Meeting

Derek Parker
ESR M.Div 2004
Pastor, the Universalist Church of Eldorado, Ohio

Joann LaRocco Glen
ESR Class 2007
Dublin Friends Meeting Pastoral Minister

Angelina Carpenter
M.Div. 2013

Sheila Garrett
M.Div. 2001

Adriana Cabrera-Velásquez
ESR M.Div 2008
ESR EM Certificate 2018

William Iammatteo-Code

ESR 1983

Pastor, United Church of Christ and Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

Carol Iammatteo-Code

ESR 2008

Pastor U.C.C.

Hospice Chaplain

Stephanie A. Ford, Ph.D.

ESR faculty, 2000-2010

Marilyn W. Sizer

ESR M.Div 2012

Chattanooga Friends Meeting

Retired Hospice Chaplain

Jennifer Amy-Dressler

ESR M.Min 1988

Pastor, Open Table United Church of Christ, Ottawa IL

Rev Patti Pomerantz

ESR M.Div 2003

Pastor, Eastrose Fellowship UU, Gresham, OR

Elisabeth Beasley Kramp

Editor, "Convivium Journal"

Writing Instructor, JPCatholic University

Samuel West

Former ESR student

Worship leader Brooklyn First Church of the Brethren, Brooklyn, NY