

To Whom It May Concern:

As a recent Moody alumna, I feel compelled to express my deep concern with the atmosphere, education, and direction of Moody Bible Institute. Throughout the last four years of classes, both online and on Chicago's campus, I have been profoundly disappointed in my experience. I believe many on Moody's campus, students and professors alike, share my experience—though often these concerns are not expressed for fear of retaliation by fellow students, fellow professors, and the administration itself. My main concern for Moody Bible Institute is that it has begun trading the sure foundation of God's Word and the mission of training men and women to know and teach the Gospel for the fragile foundation of the cultural tides of the day.

I am desirous to share my concerns in the hope that Moody will evaluate its students, programs, and values carefully so that it may remain faithful to train young men and women to present themselves "to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

I would first like to discuss the issue of students within Moody's undergraduate program. Though I understand that students have varying experiences while enrolled, I wish to call attention to the lack of maturity, knowledge of and love for the Lord, and therefore the lack of strength of character that I have found to be true of many Moody undergraduate students. As a recent Moody student, the atmosphere I was told to expect was nothing like the one I entered into. I quickly realized that the students around campus and on my floor were not acting in ways that showed their desire to love and know the Lord fully. When I inquired about their lack of desire to study the Word, several replies were given that Moody was simply an inexpensive way to get a degree, their parents had attended and therefore their own attendance was expected, or they were told that anyone who applies for youth ministry would get accepted automatically. I am well aware of the intensive process of application to Moody. I am thankful for the careful and prayerful thought that I am told goes into accepting each student. However, based on the atmosphere created by the lack of interest in the Word of God and living lives consistent with it, I believe there needs to be a more rigorous process in order to ensure Moody is training men and women who are truly desirous to learn. The amount of perverse speech—swearing, coarse joking—and sinful habits gone unchecked—pornography, sexual sin, drunkenness—is known somewhat by administration, but often goes unchallenged on a practical level. I am aware of the inability administration has in controlling its students' personal lives. This is why I believe these problems would be far less common if admissions sought to know the students before their acceptance through interviews and further careful deliberation. I have talked with and challenged students living inconsistent Christian lives. I often heard inappropriate conversations on dorm floors and in the dining room between brother-sister floors and elsewhere. I was frustrated by the constant focus on sex and by defiant attitudes; it took energy that might have been put elsewhere to overcome the pressures. I believe this change in student life to be a result of directional and program changes within Moody as a whole.

A specific and leading example of this directional change within a program can be clearly seen in the Urban Ministry department. To avoid any kind of retaliation this might have had on my education at Moody, I purposefully chose to write this letter after my transcript was complete.

Throughout my experience in my major, an environment of casual academics and unprofessionalism in the practices, requirements, and content of the program have alarmed me. I believe these are a direct result of its department head, Professor Clive Craigen. I addressed some of these concerns with Professor Craigen during my Senior Project meeting, and though he was kind, he dismissed my concerns.

The urban ministry major and its head show an alarming lack of professionalism. Very often, my classes started more than fifteen minutes late. After those minutes, it was not unusual to have Professor Craigen run in and then ask us to pray together in groups for a few minutes because he had forgotten something in his office. Not only would Professor Craigen be fifteen minutes late at times, but on other days he also let us out as much as half an hour early. As an example, my Senior Seminar class was scheduled from 2pm-4:50pm every Monday last spring, but the latest we left class was at 3:30pm. In addition to starting late and dismissing early, Professor Craigen often cancelled without notice, often texting a student during class to inform the class of the cancellation. He also often let classes out early during times he needed to prepare for other responsibilities. During a Senior Seminar class, he came in late and sat on a table, looking over a paper in his hand. He explained to us that he had a meeting he had not previously known about for the budget of Missions Conference previous years looking ahead to future years. He confided in us that he had never seen the Missions Conference budget form before and he had absolutely no idea why categories received more money than others. He was unaware of how much it cost as a whole and had never looked at the document before that morning. He let us go because he said he needed to study it before the meeting and figure out how to present it.

The students came to expect this behavior and this created a lack of professionalism among them as well. Students arrived to class more than thirty minutes late on a regular basis and Professor Craigen would not only mark them present and on time, but would stop class to talk with them about subjects unrelated to class such as dating, politics, and sports, etc.. Students took more than their allotted skips and were counted present while the rest of us fulfilled the requirements. There was not only lack of professionalism in timing, but also in the work presented. The syllabi were often incomplete and contained many mistakes or TBD headings. For example, after we asked for it multiple times, my Senior Seminar class received a syllabus on March 27th reading “Intro to Disciplemaking” at the top with vague assignment instructions. Students in his classes often do not do their papers, tests, or make their presentations on time. Still they are given the same grades as students who follow the syllabus and its deadlines.

Not only is there a lack of a professional atmosphere in this department, but there is also lack of relevant content. This is an issue for all of Professor Craigen’s classes—from Introduction to Disciplemaking to Senior Seminar. Though students sometimes

discuss books from the list, Professor Craigen often does not follow his own syllabus. His classes consist of discussions based on his passions, which are mainly politics, racial injustice, social justice, and liberation as it relates to the city. For example, during “Introduction to Disciplemaking”, he has all of his students throw wads of paper from where they are sitting into a trash can at the front. He then explains what he believes to be is “white privilege”—the students that sit in front who are privileged because of their seat versus the students who sit in the back of class. Last year, he had his students take out a piece of paper and write down whom they would vote for during the election—Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump, stating that he would not judge them, but simply wanted to know—this was their only assignment for the day. Assignments for this class also entailed poetry slams and class discussions unrelated to making disciples. Assignments were repeated in several classes with the same specifications, and Professor Craigen was unaware of this until informed by students in his Senior Seminar class. For instance, we watched a Ted Talk twice and were assigned one book in multiple classes. Other irrelevant subjects to training in Urban Ministry discussed were things such as whether foul language is appropriate for the believer, if Jesus cursed in the Gospels, if Acts was written by a woman, if Judas would be in heaven, if we could lose our salvation, and on. Though these are valid subjects, they added nothing to my education about urban ministry and often were not talked of in ways that were helpful. Class discussions leaned one-sidedly left and led only to bitter and divisive talk, marginalizing and silencing conservative students.

In addition to the lack of relevant and helpful content in Professor Craigen’s classes, I was alarmed by the lack of discernment he showed on a regular basis. Professor Craigen or students with his permission showed videos or songs that included vulgar language. During Senior Seminar, Professor Craigen asked the students their opinion about his taking the class “Introduction to Ministry” and dedicating it to the importance of race relations with particular interest in discussing “white privilege” in order to have freshman thinking more liberally early. For example, during the Ferguson protests, Professor Craigen suggested to one urban ministry class that we walk out of chapel when President Nyquist was speaking, our hands raised chanting, “hands up, don’t shoot.” Several of us immediately communicated that we would not be comfortable doing that, as it would be incredibly disrespectful to President Nyquist. Professor Craigen then led other protests off campus instead. Not only did this show lack of discernment, but it also clearly reflected his expectation that the class be on his side of the issue. One only needs to glance at his social media outlet to discover his opinions and desire to provoke disunity.

My greatest concern about this program is that it is not faithfully centering on the Word of God. Two specific examples I have of this are from discussions held in my Senior Seminar class. The first few days of this class, Professor Craigen had us gather together and discuss what he originally wanted to be a class project. He wanted us to create a booklet on inner city crime and the solution to the problem and then present it to the school as a practical action plan. There were around ten of us in the class, however, and he was unsure of how to go about this project because our passions within inner city injustice were so broad. After my class discussed a few ideas, I felt compelled to suggest

that we center this project on the Gospel and use our various fields of interests within it to be vehicles for restoration because of its message. Professor Craigen told me, “Yeah, we’ll definitely talk about loving your neighbor and stuff like that” but was uninterested in using the Gospel as the central place from which to find unity.

Professor Craigen consistently emphasized human action and remedies over the Gospel, stressing the importance of living out our values rather than being explicit. When I said respectfully that the Gospel was the distinctive of Christian outreach, as non-Christians can effectively do social projects, he said, “We can care intentionally for people without caring for them spiritually.” I concluded after many discussions like this that his notion of the gospel is closer to liberation theology and the social gospel than it is to biblical concerns. His idea, expressed consistently in all the classes I took was that “ministry” is not about salvation; instead, the church must help others free themselves from society’s social and political constraints.

In view of the alarmingly casual, unprofessional, divisive, and theologically inaccurate environment Professor Craigen creates, I am concerned that he is not responsible in his influential position at Moody. His general classes have not prepared Moody students for overall ministry and those within the Urban Ministry department have likewise not been prepared for vocational ministry in an urban setting. As a program that replaces ministry with social justice philosophy and instills liberation theology as a replacement for the Gospel, I will not be recommending this program in the future and ask that administration seek to thoroughly understand what takes place within it.

I am also concerned with the general atmosphere I saw deteriorating in the years I was at Moody. While students were encouraged to have “open conversations” about their views, I rarely saw that occur. Too often only liberal perspectives were tolerated. For example, as I exited my Spanish class in the fall of 2016, one of my classmates who was wearing a “Make America Great Again” hat commented that he was glad Trump was leading in the polls. A fellow classmate stopped him in the hall and told him his speech was offensive and inappropriate, silencing that student. However, in an urban ministry class, a prayer request was made that those who voted for Trump would know that they supported hate and brought shame upon Christianity. The professor agreed; it was clear that my opinion would not be heard. That hostile environment was not only perpetuated by some students and professors, but also by administration. The chapel after Trump was elected, students were told they could go to Broman Prayer Chapel to find a “safe space” to be used as a time for “mourning and prayer”. This effectively shut down the many conservative students on campus whose opinions and feelings were not seen as valid or welcome. Probably the most invasive and deliberate attack against politically conservative convictions came during Missions Conference 2016 within the context of the Syrian Refugee Crisis. Taking Luke 10:25-37, along with many other passages out of context, the presenters made it clear that the only way to love our neighbors and be compassionate was to let refugees into the country. And other view was seen as a contradiction of God’s Word.

The most prominent example of how racial issues were perpetuated by the administration occurred again, at Missions Conference 2016. A spoken word artist, Propaganda, never mentioning the Gospel or mission, instead spoke to us about race, blaming the whole white race for the way he feels. While I did not mind hearing his opinion, the one-sidedness of the discussion was disturbing. He belittled those who did not agree with him as being simply on “baby math” while those who agreed were on “calculus level math” ending with condescension saying “That’s o.k. you’ll get there”. The roar of applause from his followers certainly did not make those who disagreed with his tone or message feel safe; in fact, he was demeaning. More disturbing was the President, Paul Nyquist’s standing and applauding Propaganda declaring his message “powerful” and “moving”.

The social gospel was also preached with the call of liberation theology and kingdom theology during chapels at Moody. This was mainly seen in the guest speakers we invited. A constant, though unofficial, theme of last year seemed to be social justice. Several speakers made white male students feel guilty simply because of their race and gender. The white race in general was also attacked for the racial injustice that was focused on in chapels. This was done through taking Bible passages out of context and preaching them as though Jesus’ context was our own. Simply as one example, I specifically remember an African-American speaker preaching on the passage of the woman at the well. He explained that the woman at the well was really the victim of the story. Her neighbors and the disciples were judgmental and Jesus was the only person who understood. The woman was merely fighting against “the system,” much like the people in his people group were facing today, he explained. He actually went as far as to call out the disciples for their “Jewish privilege”. Again, I have no problem discussing these views, but open discussion is not what has been genuinely encouraged on campus. Conservatives are pressured to conform or stop talking. This was clearly seen when a female student placed a poem against “White Privilege” on the poem board in the tunnels—these do not need to be authorized. This was not a hateful poem, but merely a poem of confusion about a rural girl coming into our “safe space” at Moody and being accused of being racist simply because of the color of her skin. It was taken down, but not before another student saw it and took a picture of it to applaud her courage to speak out. Once he realized it had been removed, he gathered some letters from students who wrote anonymously on how they felt Moody had violated their “safe space” through taking down this poem. When he brought them before administration, they asked him condescendingly if all those who wrote notes were white male students. Yet three ethnicities and both genders were represented. I know this because I was one of the students who spoke out through these notes. Though those who wrote notes signed them anonymously, there were still many who did not write because they were afraid of what retaliation might be taken by the administration. I have been shocked in seeing how administrative individuals deal with issues of race at Moody, consistently agreeing with liberal political stances and pressuring others to agree by calling a conservative position “morally bankrupt”.

When I first considered Moody as an option for college, I was excited to see a school that held firm theological convictions and was unafraid to train men and women in

them. I have not found this to be true of my education; in fact, I have found Moody to be a place of theological instability, surely a result of program changes and creeping unofficial attitudes those in leadership have adopted.

From the inside of Moody community as a student and now the outside as an alumni, it seems that Moody desires to put forward a different face for each of its audiences. For instance, the older generations of alumni still believe Moody is holding firmly to its traditional theological stances. They believe this because they are being told that Moody is still a conservative voice with its focus on the Word of God, whose students are excited about their classes and Moody's vision. This is done by changes in chapel presentations when alumni visit, and sending Moody's most conservative professors to talk at fundraising events for this audience—professors that the majority of liberal Moody students dislike.

Moody Bible Institute is not the training ground it once was. Moody has become not a unique place to study and know God's Word, but instead a place infiltrated by liberal political stances and clichéd cultural buzzwords without a solid theological foundation, a departure from Moody's central and driving mission to train men and women for faithful service by knowing and teaching the Word of God.

I implore you to consider these concerns as not just as those of an individual, but also as representative of those who have just graduated and those who are continuing in their education at Moody as those who are reluctant to speak. It is with a heavy heart that I write that I have not been prepared for ministry by this school and will not recommend it to those seeking a solid education or faithful biblical instruction in the future.

Thank you for your time,



Alumnus class of 2017