

**Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy
Of the
Ministerial Fellowship Committee
Unitarian Universalist Association**

Policies and Procedures Manual

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Part I – Policies

1. Goals and Function of the Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy

1.1 Goals of the Program

The primary goal in establishing the Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy (RSCCs) of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) was to improve the effectiveness of the credentialing process at its early stages. This was intended for the benefit of both those involved in evaluating aspirants as well as for the aspirants themselves. Specific goals were to:

- Identify aspirants showing promise for the ministry who have significant deficiencies which should be addressed before their MFC interviews
- Identify aspirants who are clearly unsuited for the professional ministry at a point before considerable commitments of time and finances are made and discourage further preparation
- Encourage realistic financial planning
- Encourage diversity in candidates for the UU ministry
- Improve coordination, clarity of roles, and communication among organizations and individuals involved in developing an ongoing ministry, viz., theological schools, mentors, congregations, internship sites, CPE placements, the Panel on Theological Education, the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group (MPL), the MFC, the Ministerial Credentialing Office (MCO), and District Offices and other regional structures
- Meet professional ethical responsibilities to improve information and honest feedback provided to aspirants

1.2 General Responsibilities of the RSCCs

The primary function of the RSCCs is to make early decisions regarding candidacy status. This function includes providing honest feedback to aspirants who are judged suitable for the ministry as well as those who are not. A secondary function is to provide accurate information to aspirants in the credentialing process. This function includes coordinating the work of the organizations or individuals involved in this process. A further responsibility of the RSCCs includes involvement in continuous process improvement and training.

1.3 Evaluation Function

The primary evaluative function of the RSCCs is to make early decisions regarding candidacy status based on three decision options:

- Candidacy **granted** and individual is encouraged to proceed;
- Candidacy **postponed** with requirement of second interview with an RSCC to demonstrate that aspirant has satisfactorily addressed contingencies identified during the prior RSCC interview;
- Candidacy **denied** because the RSCC discerns that the aspirant should discontinue preparation for the ministry, with limited option for appeal;

This function involves the mechanism of an interview process, the use of a consistent model for evaluating aspirants, and the timely reporting of evaluation results to both the aspirant and the MCO.

1.4 Support Function

The primary support function of the RSCC is to provide information about the credentialing process, and to maintain an ongoing relationship with aspirants *particularly where guidance in areas identified as needing improvement is required*. This responsibility includes a requirement that each aspirant have both a balance sheet and a realistic plan for meeting his or her future financial obligations.

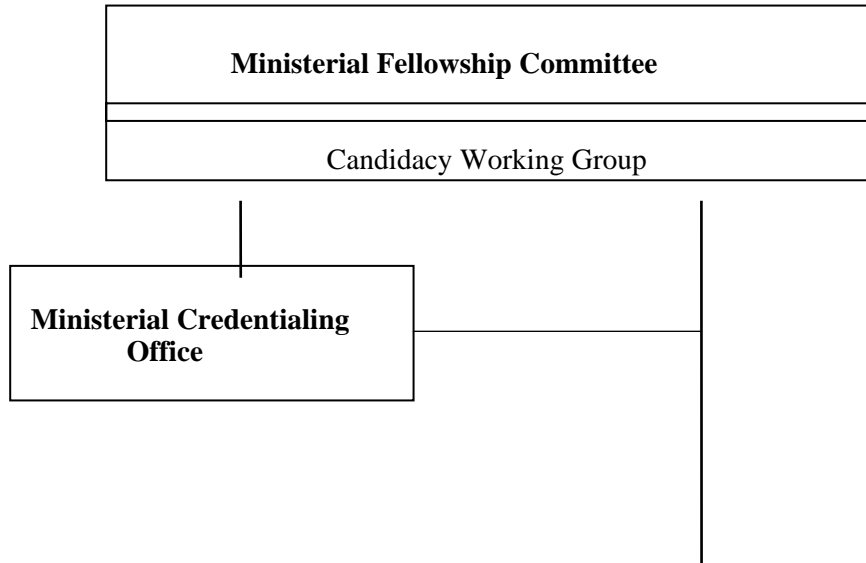
1.5 Terms Used in this Manual

For the sake of clarity and consistency, the following defines the usage of certain terms used in this manual:

applicant	an individual who expresses interest in UU ministry prior to their enrollment in seminary or theological school and approval for aspirant status by an RSCC
aspirant	an individual who has filed the necessary paperwork with an RSCC, enrolled in a seminary, (or, if a transfer, possesses an MDiv degree or an M. Div Equivalency)
student	an applicant or aspirant matriculated in a seminary or theological school, or engaged in a program of relevant coursework
transfer	an aspirant who currently has an M.Div or its Equivalent; may also be seeking to transfer or plural standing from another denomination
candidate	a person who has successfully interviewed with an RSCC, or has re-interviewed with an RSCC, and has satisfactorily addressed contingencies identified in a prior RSCC interview;
committee	members of an RSCC
panel	RSCC members involved in the aspirant interview and evaluation process

2. Organizational Structure

2.1 Organizational Chart



Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy

South-East Midwest West New England

2.2 Regions and Geographical Distribution

The four Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy as presently outlined, by District, are as follows:

South-East Southwest, Florida, Mid-South, Thomas Jefferson, Joseph Priestley, Metro New York

Midwest Prairie Star, Central Midwest, Heartland, Ohio Meadville

West Mountain Desert, Pacific Southwest, Pacific Central, Pacific Northwest

New England Northeast, Mass Bay, Ballou Channing, Clara Barton, St Lawrence

2.3 Implementation History

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee completed the initial appointment of all RSCC members in December 1999. In order for committee members to be indemnified by the Unitarian Universalist Association (fully covered by liability insurance) they must be named as officers of the UUA. (See Article X, Section 10.12 of UUA By-laws.) For this reason, the UUA Board of Trustees officially appoints RSCC members.

2.4 Membership of RSCCs

Since the purpose of the Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy is to make initial decisions regarding candidacy status, as well as create a system to provide on-going support and assistance, members of RSCCs will have early and official contact with persons preparing for Unitarian Universalist ministerial fellowship. The appointment process for members to RSCCs is coordinated through the UUA Board of Trustees Committee on Committees.

Composition and Selection Criteria

Each RSCC will be comprised of a minimum of ten members appointed by the UUA Committee on Committees in order to facilitate the meeting of two panels simultaneously. Five members shall be ministers in Final Fellowships. Five members shall be laypersons in good standing with Unitarian Universalist congregations.

The criteria for appointment to an RSCC is consistent with an appointment to the MFC – to assemble the most capable, well-balanced, effective committee possible. This goal is best served by narrowly defining categorical requirements to those relating to the number of lay and professional ministerial members. Whenever possible, the UUA Committee on Committees will strive for sensitivity and balance in matters of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, class, theology, disability, the size and style of the nominee's home congregation, geography, ministerial category and other appropriate considerations.

Given this, there are nevertheless some important considerations of commitment, desirable attributes, and experience in potential RSCC members. Members of RSCCs should have a commitment to quality and diversity in ministry, two specific goals of the program. They must also be ready and willing to honor the time, energy, and confidentiality required to perform their role. Members should acknowledge that service to Unitarian Universalist congregations and the professional ministry includes a willingness to discourage unsuitable candidates for the ministry. Finally, members must be willing to function as members of a team.

Some of the specifically desired attributes of RSCC members include discernment, the ability to speak the truth even when doing so is uncomfortable, an understanding of Unitarian Universalism in its institutional life, and respect for the ministerial fellowship process. In addition, members should be organized and capable of collaborative work. They must also be broadminded and energetic.

Useful prior experience for RSCC members might include past service on similar credentialing bodies, membership on ministerial relations committees, work in career assessment or counseling, teaching or advising in the context of theological education, and experience in conflict management.

Term of Membership

Appointments to RSCCs shall be for a period of two years, renewable for up to eight consecutive years.

Officers

At a minimum, official roles that must be filled include:

Committee Chair – the individual responsible for calling meetings and ruling on points of order—this person will be appointed by the UUA Committee on Committees

Scribe – the individual responsible for keeping required accurate records—this person will be appointed by each RSCC

Quorum

Five members shall constitute a quorum for the purposes of aspirant interviews and business decisions. At least five votes shall be required for advancement of an aspirant to candidate status. In the event that five members are not available for an interview session, RSCC members from another RSCC may be asked to substitute for absent members, provided they have sufficient time to prepare for the interview.

Workload Considerations

The several areas of committee responsibilities determine the major workload considerations for RSCCs. The following is a (non-exhaustive) list of specific tasks and responsibilities: attend training events needed for participation on the RSCC; commitment to a two-year term; commitment to ongoing anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism training; availability as a resource for aspirants; reading packets of aspirants, conducting interviews and making candidacy decisions and writing follow-up letters to the aspirant/candidate after making candidacy decisions. Follow up or ongoing training for these considerations is subjective to budgetary resources. RSCCs are encouraged to document current practices unique to their RSCC for training and orientation needs of new members.

RSCC Administrator

Each RSCC has an RSCC Administrator who is responsible for providing clerical and staff support to each RSCC, to work closely and comprehensively with applicants and aspirants regarding the required credentialing processes and procedures, and to have ongoing communication with the MCO regarding the status of applicants, aspirants and candidates.

Additionally, although the tasks performed by the RSCC Administrator working with each RSCC can be quite different based upon a number of variables, RSCC Administrators might, for example, assist with setting up site arrangements for the interviews; process travel, housing and meal expense claims; develop and monitor a web-site; co-facilitate educational meetings at theological schools, District events and/or General Assembly; publish a regular newsletter; or work with committee members re: aspirant paperwork concerns.

Some RSCC Administrators are co-employed with the UUA Districts that 'house' the RSCC and others are UUA employees. Typically, the local District plays a role in the hiring of RSCC Administrators during times of turnover. Some RSCCs desire that their Administrator be present during aspirant interviews to take notes, etc., and for other RSCCs, this is not the practice. If the RSCC Administrator is present during the interview process, they may not participate in the interview.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 MFC and MCO to RSCCs

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee has exclusive jurisdiction over ministerial fellowship and makes rules governing ministerial fellowship procedures. Based on its own resolution of February 1997, the Candidacy Working Group of the MFC established the Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy to:

- Help ensure excellence in professional Unitarian Universalist ministry
- Provide an early opportunity for discernment in the fellowship process
- Give RSCCs direction and evaluate their effectiveness

The Ministerial Credentialing Office (MCO) and its Director, also share responsibility for the work of the RSCCs. The responsibilities of the MCO and the MCO Director are to:

- Serve as the point of communication with applicants and aspirants

- Inform the appropriate RSCC of contacts by applicants and aspirants
- Retain copies of the results of aspirant evaluations
- Share information about aspirants with the MFC that is necessary for the MFC to know
- Work with the RSCCs and the MFC re: appeals from aspirants denied candidacy status
- Facilitate communication between the RSCCs and the MFC
- Participate in the assessment of the effectiveness of RSCCs
- Develop a training curriculum and implement scheduled training sessions on the credentialing process
- Supervise the creation and use of evaluation instruments
- Provide guidance in the support functions of the RSCCs
- Keep apprised of the ongoing progress of aspirants through communication with RSCCs
- Assisting in training, orientation and hiring of RSCC Administrators
- Be responsible for fiscal accountability and management of the overall RSCC budget

3.2 RSCCs to MFC to the MCO and to the other RSCCs

Based on the MFC resolution of February 1997, the charge of the Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy is to

- Determine the candidacy status of aspirants
- Give attention to aspirants' need for realistic financial planning
- Inform the Ministerial Credentialing Office of contacts from applicants
- Keep records on all aspirants
- Provide applicants with information packets explaining the credentialing process
- Indicate what is expected of applicants/aspirants in communicating with the RSCC
- Communicate with other RSCCs when aspirants move from one region to another
- Collect the Intention Forms and Interview Documentation sent by applicants
- Review career assessment reports
- Provide an interview schedule to aspirants
- Conduct interviews
- Send results of evaluations, along with recommendations in the case of a candidacy postponed to aspirants and the Ministerial Credentialing Office.
- Conduct a second interview with aspirants whose candidacy was postponed
- Work with the MCO and the MFC regarding any appeals from aspirants denied candidacy.
- Inform the MCO of its schedule of retreats and educational events
- Coordinate interaction with theological school advisors as needed

3.3 District Field Office

The primary responsibility of the District Field Office in the credentialing process is supporting the work of the RSCCs. These tasks could include: having the District Staff attend RSCC meetings and aspirant interviews; sending out meeting announcements; and consulting with the MCO, and supporting additional RSCC activities.

4 Ethical Principles and Guidelines in the Credentialing Process

4.1 Ethical Issues in the Credentialing Process

There are several critical issues of ethics and conduct which arise in the course of the credentialing process:

- Fairness and consistency in evaluation
- Confidentiality
- Truth telling

- Conduct during interviews
- Discussion of aspirants within the committee
- Discussion of aspirants outside the committee

The primary process characteristic that guarantees **fairness** in evaluation is *process consistency*. ‘Fairness’ in evaluation is not necessarily a matter of the evaluation being *easy* or *enjoyable*; rather, it is a matter of *evenhandedness*. It means that whether an evaluation is difficult or easy, enjoyable or stressful, the evaluation process is distributed and the evaluation criteria are applied *equally*. Each individual in the credentialing process must have an equal opportunity to succeed or fail, and to express his or her personal and theological viewpoints without fear of bias. ‘Fairness’ means that one set of standards will not be applied to one candidate while another set of standards are applied to another. A useful way to ensure that an evaluation process is fair is to continually ask of the process questions such as *However good or bad the process is at this point, is it being applied consistently to all who pass through the process?*

Given that highly personal and idiosyncratic feelings and theologies are both expressed and heard in the RSCC process, the question naturally arises about how to deal with the *subjectivity* of evaluation. It is natural to judge more highly an individual whose affective persona or whose individual theology more closely corresponds to one’s own. This level of subjectivity is unavoidable. Each member of an RSCC evaluation team is making a judgment about an individual based on their own perception of suitability for ministry.

However, the 16 attributes and competencies used in the evaluation profile instrument are intended to reduce highly skewed judgments by providing a wide range of criteria by which each aspirant is judged. The evaluation instrument cannot eliminate subjectivity, but its design should help avoid evaluation of a candidate on only a small subset of attributes and competencies, which may be important to a particular RSCC evaluation team member – i.e., judging aspirants only on the basis of their administrative skills.

Applying the evaluation process fairly and equally must also take into consideration different levels of experience and background of aspirants. Committee members must carefully reflect on the implications of one candidate’s greater age or employment-based experience over another. The same is the case with varying levels of education. A useful question, which should be put to such aspirant differentia, is *how do these factors of experience or educational level contribute or impede the aspirant’s ability to perform successfully as a minister?*

Finally, aspirant evaluations must give measured and respectful consideration of an individual’s race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, and prior religious affiliation. It should be understood and communicated to aspirants that among the explicit goals of the RSCC process are the desire to seek **greater** diversity within the UU ministry. Members of RSCCs must therefore be sensitive to a potential for issues of discrimination to arise from several standpoints. The ground they should seek is one in which neutrality and the need for diversity can both be accommodated.

Issues of **confidentiality** can largely be addressed by consideration of the question *who has need to know this information?* Clearly, all information about aspirants will be shared with the MCO and the MFC. The right of the RSCC to share all information about an individual with the MCO and the MFC must be made clear to all aspirants from the start. Areas of ambiguity arise in contemplating those beyond the RSCC, MCO, and MFC who may have either access to information about an aspirant, or a special interest in a particular aspirant. Useful *general* principles to guide issues of confidentiality are the following. (a) Does a party or group have a valid right to information about an aspirant? and (b) is the aspirant informed that information about him or her will (or may) be shared with this party or group?

The biggest danger to confidentiality comes not from explicit or intentional discussions of an aspirant but from casual conversation passed on among individuals, their families, and other friends. The danger here

is twofold. Not only is it easy for private information to be passed along to those who have no genuine right to it, it is also easy for private information to be modified or distorted as it is passed along.

Since it is important that open and frank discussions about the nature of ministry and the RSCC's perceptions of aspirants take place, it is equally important that this kind of discussion be protected. For the RSCCs to reach their goals effectively, there must be a balance between confidentiality and the sharing of information among aspirants, advisors, RSCC members, the MCO and the MFC. This presumes accountability and trust, with an understanding that all materials held by RSCCs would be shared with the aspirants. Routinely, the packet collected by the aspirant for the interview, the candidacy decision letter and perhaps any other recommendation made by the RSCC (i.e., recommendation of a CPE waiver, M. Div Equivalency, or waiver of the internship requirement) would be forwarded to the MFC, unless additional materials were appropriate and requested. No one outside the RSCC system should receive any sensitive information.

The principle of **truth telling** is easy enough to understand, but sometimes hard to apply, particularly when it competes with other desirable purposes or *goods*. One useful way to understand the principle of truth telling is derivative from Kant's Categorical Imperative – *act from an awareness of duty that could be the basis of a universal law*. Think of the implications of your answer. Could a moral attitude or *maxim* (e.g., my attitude towards telling the truth) govern not merely some particular action of mine, but the actions of all people at all times? Would a world in which some principle of action were applied universally be one in which we could live? In the case of truth telling – if no one told the truth, then no one would be believed, and the very fabric of trust which holds society together would disappear.

However, the principle of truth telling often competes with other ends that are good – including the desire to not offend or be insensitive to another's feelings and aspirations. In the case of the evaluation of a ministerial candidate, the need for honesty about strengths and weaknesses must win out over diplomacy or fear of conveying unwelcome judgments. The consequences down the road of not being completely honest and forthright are far too severe. However, honesty is never inconsistent with caring.

The remaining three areas pertaining to **conduct** during interviews and **discussions of aspirants** also largely have to do with good taste and sensitivity. While aspirant interviews are *evaluations*, they can and should be conducted in such a way that an individual is not humiliated or embarrassed. Members of RSCC evaluation teams must be able to distinguish between putting an aspirant under an appropriate level of pressure to follow a thread of concern or to seek explanation or justification for theological viewpoints expressed and behavior which really becomes a form of hazing or unnecessary pickiness. Much of the previous discussion relating to *subjectivity* applies here as well. The goal of interactive interviews and subsequent discussions should be *discovery* but not something, which leads to the need for *recovery*.

4.2 Points for Reflection

It is highly recommended that RSCCs remain attentive to ethical guidelines and criteria for ensuring fairness, consistency, confidentiality, conduct during interviews, and principles for discussion of aspirants. Ethical behavior is not a matter of simple conformity to established rules, but rather actions and behavior based on honest and heartfelt reflection on the issues at hand. Therefore, it will be most meaningful if RSCCs regularly go through a process of ethical reflection themselves. The following points for reflection are expressed as open-ended questions can be a guide to this process:

- Am I aware of *personal* preferences or views, which might lead me to judge one aspirant higher or lower than another?
- Can I discern when I am evaluating an aspirant on my value system rather than on the individual's attributes and competencies as these relate to performing a ministry?

- Am I overly swayed by whether or not I happen to *like* an individual or find them physically appealing?
- Are other members of the evaluation committee influencing my judgments?
- Am I clear on what information about this aspirant is suitable for sharing?
- Have I identified with whom or with which group I may share information about this aspirant?
- Do I discuss stories about this aspirant's personal history or family background with people who might be inclined to pass them on to others?
- Is there a shared sense of implied respect and appropriateness of questions to be put to an aspirant by all members of the evaluation team?
- In private discussions of aspirants by the evaluation team are aspirants joked about or ridiculed?
- Have I evaluated aspirants with consideration to all 16 attributes and competencies and not just a select few?
- In using the evaluation instrument, do I take time to ask myself: "Would the aspirant agree with my evaluation here or not?" And if not, what would be my imagined explanation or reasons for the difference?
- Does our RSCC periodically discuss these issues, explore cases by which to identify new issues of ethical concern, and develop procedures or actions to address areas of weakness in the evaluation process?

Part II – Procedures

5. The Credentialing Process Task Flow

The facing graphic represents a picture of the credentialing process useful to both RSCCs and aspirants. The following is a narrative description of that process.

Once an applicant has come to a decision to pursue the UU ministerial fellowship, they should contact their appropriate Regional Sub-Committee on Candidacy or the Ministerial Credentialing Office, or both. The MCO will inform the RSCC of any applicants who have contacted it. RSCCs will keep records on all applicants and aspirants.

The applicant will then receive from the RSCC a packet of information describing the credentialing process, including the materials to be provided to the RSCC before the aspirant's scheduled interview. The applicant is responsible for his or her own process, including communicating with the RSCC regarding "major milestones."

The applicant is to notify the RSCC upon being accepted to an ATS approved theological school. The applicant moves to aspirant status upon receipt of all required documents. In the case of an applicant seeking transfer or plural standing the applicant may already possess an MDiv degree. RSCCs can educate an aspirant regarding the process of obtaining an M. Div Equivalency. The RSCC informs the MCO of applicants who have become aspirants, sends the MCO the aspirant's biographical sheet, and sends an Interview Information packet out to the aspirant.

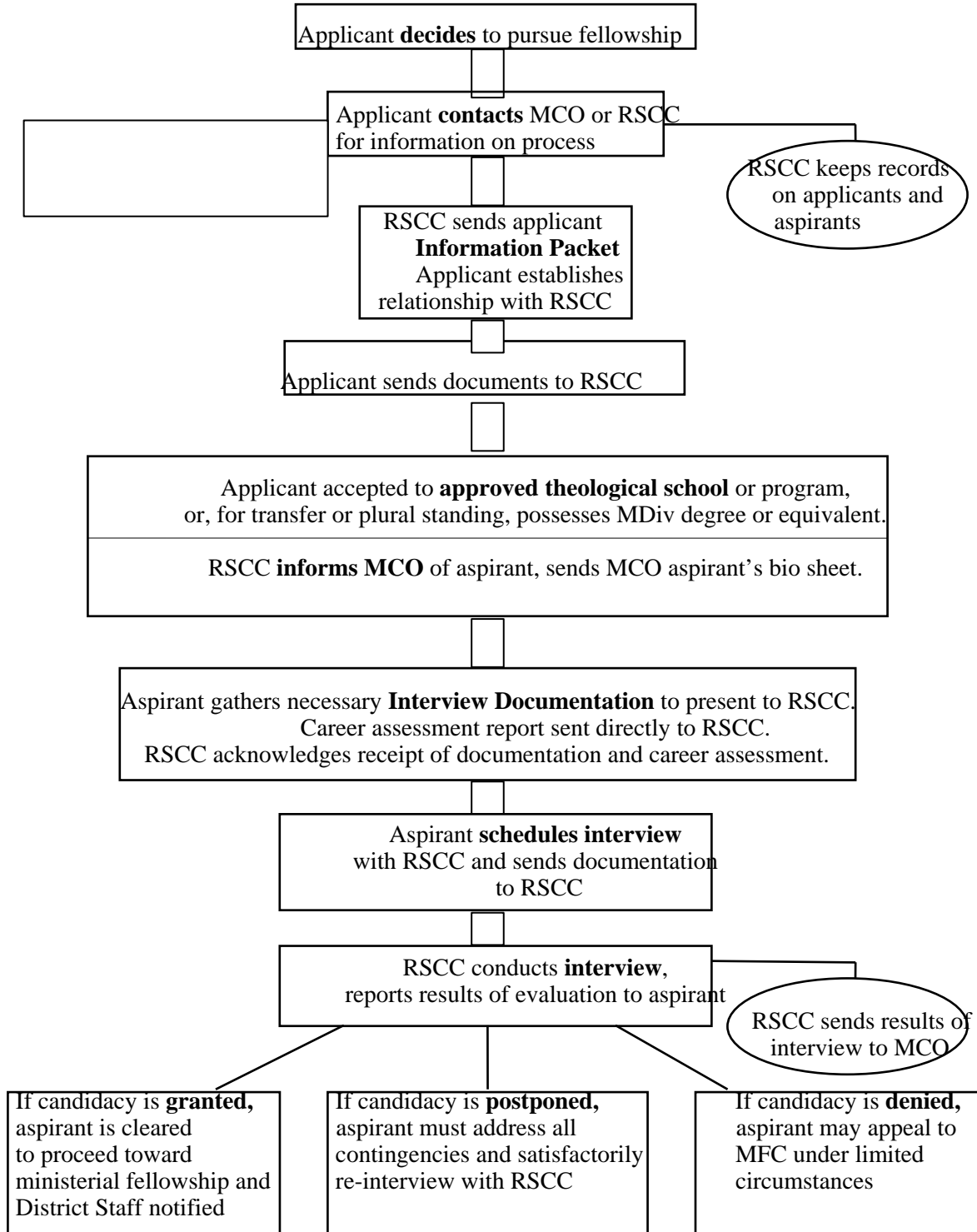
The aspirant then gathers the necessary interview documentation to present to the RSCC prior to the interview. The aspirant also arranges to have his or her career assessment report sent directly to the RSCC. Aspirants may be eligible for a Program Assistance Grant that is to used to offset the cost of the career assessment. All aspirants, including transfer and dual standing aspirants are required to have a career assessment. The RSCC Administrator works with all transfers or those seeking dual fellowship to gather materials specific to the aspirant's current standing with their prior denomination and to get a letter of reference from a ministerial colleague of the aspirant's current or former faith communion.

The aspirant will schedule an interview with the RSCC. RSCCs will generally determine a schedule for interviewing groups of aspirants. Therefore, the specific date of the aspirant's interview will be based on this schedule. During the interview, the RSCC will provide useful feedback to the aspirant. After its interview with the aspirant, the RSCC reports the results to both the aspirant and, along with appropriate paperwork, to the MCO.

If the aspirant is granted candidacy status, he or she is cleared to proceed with plans towards ministerial fellowship and complete the remaining requirements in preparation for the MFC. If the aspirant has candidacy status postponed, the aspirant will be given a specific set of recommendations by the RSCC. These recommendations must be fulfilled and completed before the aspirant may re-interview with the RSCC. A successful return interview is required for an aspirant to be cleared to proceed with plans towards ministerial fellowship.

If the aspirant has candidacy status denied this should be taken as a strong judgment not to continue with plans towards ministerial fellowship. The aspirant may appeal the decision to the MFC. Throughout the credentialing process, the final decision regarding questions of policy or procedure resides with the MFC and MCO.

5.1 RSCC Credentialing Process



6. Evaluation Function of the RSCC

6.1 The Evaluation Model

Evaluation of the aspirant is based on a set of 16 specific attributes and capabilities used to assess the potential for ministry of aspirants, and to identify areas for development. The following describes the elements of the evaluation model:

- 1 Motivation and Genuineness of Purpose**
Desire to pursue ministry motivated by a genuine concern for the needs of others, as individuals, in congregations, and in the community, and the importance of providing spiritual guidance.
- 2 Personality Integration and Maturity**
Has maturity, emotional stability, and strength to authentically and effectively minister to others.
- 3 Intellectual Capability**
Has the capability to identify and discuss issues intelligently, and can articulate their historical context with knowledge and sensitivity.
- 4 Support Network**
Develops and maintains a strong colleague, denominational, and personal support system.
- 5 Self-Care and Spiritual Development**
Knows the importance of self-care and spiritual development as foundational resources for ministry.
- 6 Theological Understanding**
Well-grounded in denominational values and history; projects spiritual strength in exploring issues of pain, suffering, injustice, and relates them in theological terms which reflect denominational principles; understands and can knowledgeably discuss other religions and spiritual practices in the world.
- 7 Awareness of Social and Ethical Issues**
Identifies critical issues of social and ethical import appropriate for the attention, reflection, and response by congregations and individuals.
- 8 Respect for Confidentiality**
Appropriately keeps confidences resulting from counseling, casual conversation, or institutional and personal life.
- 9 Communication and Listening Skills**
Interacts and relates well with others in all modalities of communication; possesses the ability to hear and reflect on the comments and thoughts of others; excellent writing and oral presentation skills.
- 10 Empathy and Counseling Ability**
Able to respond appropriately to the counseling needs of individuals and families in a congregation or community setting; understands counseling dynamics; can identify behavioral signs of dangerous or high-risk individuals
- 11 Social Skills**

Provides a warm and welcoming presence; shows sound judgment in social situations; indicates through behavior respect for self and others

12 Leadership Potential

Shows capability to grow a ministry through nurturing and fostering the ability of others; possesses vision and direction; holds the respect of colleagues, staff, church members, clients; has the ability to influence, inspire, enable, empower; shares leadership and resources; serves as appropriate role model for denominational values and principles.

13 Crisis Management

Has ability to confront difficult issues with skill and insight; does not avoid difficult situations that arise within a congregation or institutional setting; invites discussion of perceptions and feelings in a way that is constructive and leads to resolution or mutual understanding; displays calming presence in times of crisis or need; knows available resources and supports.

14 Administrative and Financial Effectiveness

Has the ability to oversee volunteer or paid staff; can responsibly and knowledgeably manage finances of ministry; understands the financial needs and operations of the church or other institutions, and responsibly manages personal finances.

15 Clarity of Roles and Boundaries

Understands and maintains appropriate boundaries with staff and congregants; sensitive to dynamics of congregational life.

16 Commitment to Unitarian Universalist Institution and Principles

Supports the principles and purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.

These elements may be represented in a conceptual model based on four broader dimensions of personal and ministerial activity:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Self-Reflective</div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Motivation and Genuineness of Purpose 2. Personality Integration and Maturity 3. Intellectual Capability 4. Support Network 5. Self-Care and Spiritual Development 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Interactive</div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Communication and Listening Skills 10. Empathy and Counseling Ability 11. Social Skills
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Normative</div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Theological Understanding 7. Awareness of Social and Ethical Issues 8. Respect for Confidentiality 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">Directive</div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Leadership Potential 13. Crisis Management 14. Administrative and Financial Effectiveness 15. Clarity of Roles and Boundaries 16. Commitment to UU Institution and Principles

In this conceptual model

- **Self-Reflective** refers to those attributes and competencies which relate to the individual as a person
- **Directive** refers to those attributes and competencies which relate to the individual in the role of an administrator and leader of an organization
- **Normative** refers to the moral and ethical dimension of the individual's activities and role in the larger community
- **Interactive** refers to the individual's social and communication skills

The purpose of the evaluation model and the set of 16 attributes and competencies is twofold. (1) It ensures *fairness* across aspirants. Everyone will be evaluated on the same basis and by the same criteria. (2) It ensures *thoroughness* of the criteria by which aspirants will be evaluated. The set of 16 attributes and competencies represent a reasonably complete range of factors under which the qualifications of potential ministers should be considered.

6.2 The Evaluation Process

The evaluation process has five major elements (also described on the Credentialing Process Task Flow). These elements generally occur in five successive stages.

1. The RSCC provides an information packet to applicants/aspirants describing the process.
2. The RSCC evaluates documentation provided by the aspirant.
3. The RSCC conducts an aspirant interview.
4. The RSCC evaluates the aspirant using an instrument to determine candidacy status.
5. The RSCC reports the results of its evaluation to the aspirant and the MCO.

In addition, the RSCC may work with the MCO and the MFC regarding appeals from aspirants. Each of these elements is described in detail.

- **Information Packet for Applicant**

The RSCC provides an information packet to applicants. The packet includes the appropriate forms, and instructs the applicant about what he or she must supply.

A Intention Forms

- **Initial Inquiry Form** (Init A)
- **Interview Form - UU Minister** (Init B)
- **Essay on ministerial aspirations and relevant biography**
Describe who you are.
Discuss the ministry you would like to perform.
- **Transfer/Plural Standing Form** (MFC-7) (If applicable)
- **Application for Interview Form**

B Interview Documentation

- **Application for Candidate Status** (MFC-1)
- **Career Assessment Report**
- **Financial Plan**
- **Transcripts**
- **One-page essays from two of the following topics**
Why did you choose to prepare for UU ministry?
How do you hope to serve the UU movement?
What excites you about UU ministry?
What is your vision of your work two years after fellowship?
- **CPE evaluations (if available)**
- **Internship evaluation forms (if available)**
- **Names of four references, one of whom should be the minister of the individual's own congregation, if possible**

The applicant is instructed to provide the RSCC with completed **Intention Forms (A)**, to establish an appropriate channel of communication with the RSCC, and to inform the RSCC of the theological school the individual is or will be attending. Upon acceptance at an approved theological school, the RSCC will inform the applicant that he or she has moved to aspirant status. The RSCC maintains these records for the aspirant.

Applicants for transfer or plural standing additionally complete the Transfer/Plural Standing Form (MFC-8). Upon receipt of this and the other Intention Forms (A), the RSCC will inform the applicant that he or she has moved to aspirant status.

- Evaluation of Aspirant Documentation

Prior to scheduling an interview with the RSCC, the aspirant provides the RSCC with the required **Interview Documentation (B)**, and has his or her career assessment report sent directly to the RSCC.

Members of the RSCC participating in the aspirant interview will review all documentation and the career assessment. RSCC members involved in the interview process should keep anecdotal notes and records on each aspirant for eventual consideration in conjunction with use of the formal evaluation instrument after the aspirant interview. However, evaluators should avoid making firm judgments or conclusions about the aspirant prior to the interview.

If the aspirant's career assessment report or other documentation reveals a glaring concern or deficiency, this should be discussed by all members of the RSCC participating in the evaluation process and, in some cases, with the Director of the MCO. Career assessment reports can be subtle or at times elliptical. Therefore, it is necessary that they be read carefully. Issues raised in the career assessment report should be checked out with the author of the report. This may include how the aspirant reacts to his or her own career assessment report.

CPE reports can vary greatly, but will often identify concerns relating to how an individual interacts with others during situations of stress or ambiguity of role. It is important here to look for issues that are likely to carry over and impact professional ministry.

In the aspirant's essays, the committee should look for honest and open discussion of the individual's calling, their vision of ministry, the sense of passion with which they approach the ministry. Examining these essays should also give the committee a sense of the aspirant's writing and thinking skills. How well, how clearly can they articulate their theological views? Their passions? Finally, the essays should reflect specifics about what the aspirant has to offer the ministry, and how realistic their understanding is about what it will take to reach their goal.

Aspirants must complete the Financial Planning Sheet for Seminarians. The plan is not to be used for purposes of discerning candidacy status, but as an important discussion tool to ascertain the aspirant's understanding of the financial implications of preparing for ministry, as well as to assist with helping the aspirant avoid accumulating student debt. The aspirant will have been sent, and hopefully has read the Economic Realities of the Unitarian Universalist Ministry.

The Interview

The aspirant interview preferably occurs early in the ministerial formation process. Therefore, it is important to both acknowledge this, but also use it as an opportunity to discern what background a person brings to their life as an aspirant. Once an individual enters seminary or theological school, their thinking and expressions are likely to be shaped largely by that immediate experience. The impact of an individual's prior background may reemerge only after work in a ministerial capacity has begun.

Motivation, therefore, is among the key attributes of an aspirant the RSCC panel should examine. Applicants and aspirants often enter seminary for personal reasons, or at a major life transition point. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it may present an emotionally charged or even distorted context in which the aspirant's perceptions of his or her own suitability for ministry are formed. The panel wants to assess how an individual's age and life experience figure into their commitment to ministry. Has this person learned through their life experience? Do they see projects through to their completion? Is this person motivated by study, drawn to theological inquiry, but not to the work of the ministry? Is this a genuine calling, or a last ditch effort to find oneself? Does this person think ministry is all about them, or is there something bigger toward which they are being called? Does the aspirant know the difference?

Elements of character should also be examined. Are weaknesses of character areas in which the aspirant is growing or are these permanent features not likely to change? How warm and open is this person? How well does the person know himself or herself? How aware of strengths and weaknesses? Does this person listen to feedback that is given, or are responses mostly defensive? Does this person have passion? Express emotion? Handle stress with maturity? Does this person take responsibility for self-care? Are there any untreated substance abuse or unresolved psychological issues?

The panel will want to consider how well an aspirant relates to people, the community, and to issues of authority. What are the aspirant's interpersonal skills? How well does he or she listen? Is this the kind of person others flee from, or are drawn to? Does the individual present as a leader, as one who feels comfortable in guiding others about matters of the greatest significance in their lives? How does this individual relate to other authority? What is their response to criticism?

Finally, the panel must consider the ends of the aspirant spectrum. How does this individual deal with practical matters? Do they have administrative common sense? And is there congruence between their lifestyle and their religious understanding? Does the spiritual dimension in their life reflect familiarity with Unitarian Universalism? Does the person communicate hope?

For aspirants seeking transfer or plural standing, these considerations and questions should be adjusted appropriately. RSCCs may be asked to recommend to the MFC whether an M. Div Equivalency should be granted for those aspirants who bring prior relevant academic preparation.

Format and Schedule

It is recommended that the aspirant interview with the RSCC after completing the equivalent of a full year of study, or approximately 30 credits. Part-time aspirants may come to interview two years into their academic and ministerial formation. Transfers should come early in their transfer process.

It is the responsibility of the aspirant to gather the information required by the **Interview Forms (B)** and to submit it as a packet to the RSCC. RSCCs are free to set their own schedule of aspirant interview. The following is one suggested administrative timetable:

- Aspirant indicates to RSCC his or her readiness by June
- Aspirant submits documentation and materials to the RSCC by September. RSCC distributes materials to evaluation panel
- Interviews occur in November.
- Letters with results are sent to aspirant and MCO in December

RSCCs may structure aspirant interviews in ways they feel are most suitable to their purpose. The following is one suggested format for aspirant interviews. Interviews are scheduled 90 minutes apart. The general format involves:

- 45 minutes interview and talking with the aspirants
- 15 minutes discussion of the aspirant by the panel with the aspirant not present
- 15 minutes discussion with the aspirant present
- 15 minutes break and regroup

Roles of RSCC panel

The RSCC Administrator will send each aspirant prior to the interview a letter of general advice. The letter will advise aspirants to read the UUMA Guidelines. It will inform them with a brief biography of who the committee (or panel) members are. It will recommend they come dressed for a professional interview, but not to prepare a sermon or formal remarks. It will recommend coming with questions of their own. It will describe the time frame and format of the interview. The letter will inform the aspirant

that a report of the results of the interview will be sent to the aspirant and to the MCO. It is thoughtful to remind the aspirant that he or she is invited, even encouraged, to bring a friend, family member or other support person along to the interview. This person, however, is not invited to participate in the interview process.

In advance of the interview, the panel should assign one committee member to each aspirant. This person will conduct the welcome and introductions of the panel members to the aspirant, and will also introduce the aspirant to the panel members. This person will also start the actual interview with a first question developed by the aspirant. All committee members who participate in the aspirant interview will be involved in all discussions of the aspirant, use of the evaluation instrument, and the process for arriving at consensus in an evaluation judgment.

(The following is a description of how one RSCC has decided to record and report the outcome of the interview process. It is a model for your consideration and may be modified or changed according to committee desires.)

The panel will assign a committee member (“recorder”) to be responsible for taking careful notes during the evaluation of aspirants and subsequent discussion. These notes or *findings* will be useful in preparing the letter of results for the MCO and the aspirant, and for evaluating the credentialing process itself. The recorder writes a draft of *findings* based on the interview, and sends these to committee members for feedback within two weeks. The *findings*, including feedback, are then sent to the RSCC “scribe” who writes an official summary letter. The scribe must attend aspirant interviews. Both the official letter and the *findings* are sent to the aspirant, with copies going to the MFC and the RSCC’s own files. The aspirant may choose to send a response letter to his or her file.

Guidelines for Dialogue

The intention is that the aspirant interview be relaxed, reasonably informal, with opportunity for questions by the aspirant as well as by RSCC members.

An appropriate early question might be open-ended but also focus on an area of familiarity to the aspirant. For example, “*Could you talk a bit about your plans for the upcoming year?*” If the aspirant goes on too long, it is appropriate for the chair to politely cut them off, saying, “*Thank you, you’ve said enough on that.*” Similarly, coaching by panel members mid-interview is also appropriate. Panel members might offer remarks such as “*How is this interview going for you?*” Or “*How are you feeling right now?*” or “*You seem to be rambling; can you answer more succinctly?*”

It is useful to assign questions to panel members before hand, based on flags in the aspirant’s documentation or material. The panel should carefully pre-read all the materials and flag questions for the interview. The panel members should come prepared with questions based upon these materials.

Candidates are not expected to be finished products. The interview should not focus on academic content or the reading list.

Use of Evaluation Instruments

The evaluation instrument used in conjunction with the aspirant interview is intended to optimize the RSCCs ability to meet the overall goals of the RSCC program, in particular, to identify deficiencies of aspirants showing promise for the ministry and to identify aspirants clearly unsuited for professional ministry. The instrument reflects the most critical attributes of the aspiring minister, and it has been designed to be straightforward and easy to use.

Guidelines for Evaluation Criteria

The 16 attributes and competencies, which constitute the evaluation model, to assess potential for ministry and identify areas for development are assessed on a continuum, with evaluators making judgments on a 5 point Likert-type scale. The scale is descriptive rather than quantitative. There are three major reasons for this. (1) Descriptive categories give panel evaluators more meaningful terms by which to assess attributes and competencies that are often subtle or complex. (2) The use of the evaluation instrument is to obtain an evaluation of each aspirant individually, not in competition with other aspirants. (3) The evaluation represents judgments about 16 attributes and competencies, the significance of whose presence or absence in an individual is *relative to one another*, not in any absolute sense of a minimum threshold.

Additionally, should an aspirant be denied candidacy status, as part of the appeal process, the RSCC will be required to submit a copy of the 16 Attributes and Competencies model to assist the CWG in the hearing of the appeal.

The facing page shows the evaluation instrument.

**Evaluation of Key Attributes and Competencies to Assess Potential for Ministry
and Identify Areas for Development**

	Not Well Displayed	Somewhat Displayed	Moderately Displayed	Strongly Displayed	Highly Displayed
1 Motivation and Genuineness of Purpose					
2 Personality Integration and Maturity					
3 Intellectual Capability					
4 Support Network					
5 Self-Care and Spiritual Development					
6 Theological Understanding					
7 Awareness of Social and Ethical Issues					
8 Respect for Confidentiality					
9 Communication and Listening Skills					
10 Empathy and Counseling Ability					
11 Social Skills					
12 Leadership Potential					
13 Crisis Management					
14 Administrative and Financial Effectiveness					
15 Clarity of Roles and Boundaries					
16 Commitment to UU Institution and Principles					

Each attribute or competency set may be judged as

- not well displayed or documented
- somewhat displayed or documented
- moderately displayed or documented
- strongly displayed or documented
- highly displayed or documented

in an individual. Evaluators need only place a check in the appropriate box for how they evaluate the aspirant with respect to each category. Arrangement of categories in a continuum allows rapid visual discernment of areas of strength or weakness for each aspirant.

Committee members are expected to keep detailed anecdotal notes and remarks on the aspirant's documentation, the interview, and all other relevant aspects of the credentialing process. These notes are to be considered in conjunction with the committee member's use of the formal evaluation instrument and in discussion of each aspirant with members of the RSCC panel. In addition, it is highly recommended that committee members note reasons or anecdotal remarks, which support their judgments of aspirants in each category. Such notes, reasons, and anecdotal remarks will be very useful in preparing letters describing the results of interviews to the MCO and to aspirants.

Discussion of Results

Discussion of aspirant documentation, supporting material, and interviews should proceed in an orderly and consistent fashion. This assures fairness in the interview of aspirants as well as thoroughness in assessment of all 16 attributes and competencies.

The process the RSCC panel uses to accomplish an orderly and consistent discussion of aspirants may take several forms. One form which has commonly been used is the following:

1. Each panel member gives a brief first impression of the aspirant.
2. There is free discussion of the aspirant.
3. The panel conducts a straw vote on the aspirant
4. If there is disagreement on the straw vote, the panel conducts further discussion and clarification, including reasons for particular evaluations.
The panel strives to reach a consensus about the aspirant through this discussion
5. If necessary, the panel conducts another vote.

The panel iterates on this procedure until consensus is reached. It is important that a designated panel member take careful notes during discussion and evaluation of aspirants. These notes will be useful in preparing the letter of results for the MCO and the aspirant.

Reaching Consensus

Consensus represents a judgment reached by a group as a whole. It differs from a simple majority vote in one important sense. While majority vote results in a particular outcome, *consensus* represents a commitment by each member to that outcome. Vote results do not presuppose any such agreement. With consensus, while each member may not agree with the outcome, they are explicit in their willingness to invoke it.

The principle of consensus expresses the spiritual harmony of the evaluation panel, and should be applied in assessments of aspirants wherever possible.

Reporting Results to MCO and Aspirant

A copy of the RSCC's evaluation will be sent to each aspirant and the MCO.

Security of Files and Records

The UUA has charged the MFC with admitting and continuing in fellowship those persons who are qualified to serve as ministers in our association. In order to carry out this function effectively, on behalf of our congregations, information and evaluative materials must be maintained about each aspirant. This information is the property of the MFC rather than aspirants, and it shall be maintained with concern for the individual's privacy as well as for the integrity of the process that grants ministerial fellowship.

An **Aspirant's Record** is the total of all information about an aspirant in the possession of the RSCC or the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group. The record may include career assessment reports, CPE and internship evaluations, interview notes, correspondence, phone notes, and other pertinent records.

An **Aspirant's Official Record** has been purged of inconsequential items and jottings that have no long-term significance. The Official Record will be turned over to the Ministerial Credentialing Office when an individual is granted candidate status by an RSCC.

An **Aspirant's File** consists of those records and items an aspirant may see. This may include Intention Forms, career assessment reports, academic records, as well as CPE evaluations and internship evaluations, when available.

Access to files and records is restricted to RSCC members and staff, MFC members and staff, the MCO and staff, and other staff of the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group. Aspirant files and records should be kept under lock and key except during working hours. Appropriate precautions must be taken while any files or records are in transit.

When an aspirant becomes a candidate, all files and records are transferred to the MCO.

6.3 Appeals

The Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy are empowered to grant, postpone or deny candidacy status. Currently, when an aspirant is denied candidacy status by an RSCC, the decision effectively stops progress toward ministerial fellowship. This decision has no impact upon an aspirant's capacity, if a student, to complete preparation toward an academic degree.

If an aspirant desires to appeal a Regional Sub-Committee on Candidacy (RSCC) decision to deny candidacy, the aspirant must submit a letter to the Candidacy Working Group explaining why an appeal of the RSCC decision is warranted. The aspirant may submit up to four letters of recommendation. At least one of these recommendations must come from a UU minister or a UUA district staff member. The appeal will include all the materials that were part of the initial packet reviewed by the RSCC when the decision to deny candidacy was made.

Grounds for overturning a candidacy denied decision include verifiable evidence that the RSCC failed to follow its own processes related to the RSCC interview; that RSCC members demonstrated prejudice or bias toward the aspirant; or that in some way, the RSCC interview leading to the decision was unfair.

The Candidacy Working Group may accept the appeal and grant candidacy status; may consider a specific request from the aspirant, or determine another course of action; or may deny the appeal. The decision of the Candidacy Working Group will be brought to the full Committee for a vote.

7. Support function of the RSCC

7.1 Information about the Credentialing Process

The support function performed by the RSCCs includes:

Providing applicants and aspirants with accurate and current information about the credentialing process, including processes or requirements which are specific to the RSCC

The dual role of the RSCC – evaluation and support – may raise issues and some potential for confusion in both the RSCC’s self-perception and the applicant or aspirant’s perception of the function of the RSCC. This dual role is both natural and necessary. However, it is important to guide the applicant’s and aspirant’s understanding of credentialing so the dual role of the RSCC makes sense in relation to other elements in the process leading to ministerial fellowship.

RSCCs may want to make use of some metaphor, which helps to convey these differences. For example, if a *gardening* metaphor were chosen, the RSCC Retreat might be characterized as initial planting and watering, the RSCC Interview as tending, a little weeding and fertilizing, and the MFC Interview as harvesting the crop. RSCCs should characterize these roles and functions in a manner they feel is most suitable to them. However, applicants and aspirants should be clear that some evaluation of them occurs throughout the process.

After an applicant contacts their appropriate RSCC or the MCO, the RSCC will send the applicant a packet of information describing the credentialing process. This packet of information should include:

- A description of the credentialing process and the functions of the RSCC
- The Intention Forms to be returned to the RSCC
- The Interview Documentation to be provided to the RSCC before the scheduled interview.
- Guidelines for communication with the RSCC.
- Information about having the Career Assessment Report forwarded to the RSCC
- A description of resources available through the RSCC, the District Office, and the aspirant’s theological school.

The following priority list determines which region an aspirant’s credentialing process occurs:

1. Where the aspirant attends theological school or seminary.
2. The major residence of the aspirant, if the individual is attending a theological school or seminary in a modified residency program.
3. Other regions on a case-by-case basis

The RSCC Administrators will help facilitate transfer of files from region to region based upon where the aspirant interviews.

7.2 Financial Planning

The RSCC’s responsibility with respect to the aspirant’s financial planning is primarily to ensure the individual is aware of the financial consequences of theological education and related expenses. This includes awareness of the levels of compensation of various forms of ministry so the aspirant can make

informed financial decisions and meaningful commitments to his or her financial responsibilities. The RSCC should review the aspirant's financial planning statement as a part of its overall evaluation.

8. A Closing Word: Results of the RSCC Evaluation Process

In 2003-04, the RSCC system was evaluated to ascertain whether it was satisfactorily meeting its goals. A wide range of stakeholders was contacted for information. A final report was completed in November 2003, recommendations were submitted to the MFC for approval at the December 2003 MFC meeting, and the results of the MFC vote were passed forward to the UUA Board of Trustees for affirmation at their January 2004 meeting. Sixteen findings and recommendations were considered:

1. Our findings indicate that the RSCCs focus more on evaluation than on nurturing or support. Many aspirants report that the amount of nurturing and support is inadequate.

*We recommend that the RSCCs, while continuing to perform necessary evaluative functions, place greater emphasis on the guidance of aspirants, and experiment with ways to provide ongoing support. We further recommend that, before the time of the next evaluation, the MFC and the RSCCs enter into discussion and consideration regarding how the RSCCs can most effectively fulfill the guidance aspects of the responsibilities as set forth in the RSCC Policies and Procedures Manual. **AFFIRMED.***

2. There was a significant amount of negative feedback received from aspirants and seminaries concerning the use of the green-yellow-red light rating system.

*We recommend the elimination of the light rating system in determining candidacy status, and instruct the RSCCs to communicate at the time of the interview and in the letter sent after the interview whether candidacy status is granted, granting of candidacy status postponed at this time (with the requirement of a return interview), or candidacy status is denied. **AFFIRMED.***

3. Our findings indicate that there is a great deal of concern about the lack of diversity in the membership of the RSCCs. There are no community ministers, few persons of color or from historically marginalized communities, and few younger members on the RSCCs.

*Therefore, we recommend that the Committee on Committees address this concern when making future appointments. **AFFIRMED.***

4. Aspirants indicate a perception of varied bias favoring parish ministry over community ministry and the ministry of religious education, against those with a Christian orientation, and against those preparing for service as military chaplains.

*Therefore, we recommend that RSCC members receive ongoing training to address and eliminate these perceived biases. **AFFIRMED.***

5. Some students of color or those from historically marginalized communities reported feeling that there was an expectation that they assimilate into the dominant European American UU culture.

*Therefore, we recommend that RSCC members receive ongoing training in anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism during each term of service on an RSCC. **AFFIRMED.***

6. Our findings indicate that the current practice with respect to the aspirant's financial planning is inadequate. Aspirants and committee members report that insufficient time or attention is given to this aspect of the committee's work.

*Therefore, we recommend that each aspirant be required to submit a financial plan before the interview for review by the RSCC committee. **AFFIRMED.***

7. Our findings indicate that the concept of retreats should be broadened. While most RSCC members and many aspirants were very positive about the value of retreats, the surveys showed that only

about 60% of the respondents had attended a retreat. Most of these were from UU affiliated schools. The retreats posed challenges for students in terms of time, travel, and cost. The surveys indicated mixed reviews as to the effectiveness of the retreats. There was confusion as to the primary purpose of the retreats-were they to be informational, evaluative or supportive?

We recommend that alternative retreat programs or formats be considered in addition to the models currently used. Alternatives might include RSCC members making regular visits to theological schools attended by UU students, RSCCs developing workshops to be offered at district meetings and at General Assembly, and increased use of the internet for information, communication, and training.
AFFIRMED.

8. Our findings suggest the accounting practices of the RSCCs are inconsistent with each other, and do not provide evidence of adequate financial management or control.

Therefore, we recommend the following steps be taken:

a. Centralize control of RSCC financial planning, cash management, record keeping and reporting at the UUA. A common chart of accounts should be established and used by all of the RSCCs.

b. Require the RSCCs to submit budget proposals and requests for payment of expenses, subject to approval by the Ministerial Credentialing Director.

c. Make expense reimbursements through the UUA Treasurer's Office, which will also be responsible for preparation of monthly reports.

d. The line of responsibility should run from the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group, through the Ministerial Credentialing Director, to each of the RSCCs in analyzing the results of RSCC operations.

e. Any balances of budgeted amounts remaining in an RSCC at year-end should revert to the UUA General Fund. **AFFIRMED.**

9. Our findings indicate that there is lack of consistency about the use of sermons or presentations as part of the aspirant's interviews. Some RSCCs require a sermon or presentation; others do not.

Therefore, it is our recommendation that RSCCs offer all aspirants the choice of giving a sermon or presentation. **DENIED BY THE MFC. NO SERMONS OR PRESENTATIONS AT TIME OF RSCC INTERVIEW.**

10. Our findings indicate that, in some instances, there is a lack of understanding regarding the relationship between the RSCC administrator, the District Staff, and the RSCC committee. For example, some RSCCs choose to have the RSCC Administrator and/or District Staff present during aspirant interviews, while others do not.

Therefore, we recommend in those instances in which the RSCC administrator and/or District Staff are present at interviews, they do not participate in the interview process. **AFFIRMED.**

11. Our findings indicate that some District Staff feel they are not involved early enough in the credentialing process. They are not aware of persons preparing for the ministry in their district and aspirants are unaware of the role of District Staff.

Therefore, we recommend that the initial interview of each aspirant be with a District Staff member or his/her designee. Further, we recommend that the Ministerial Credentialing Office Administrator notify appropriate District Staff when an aspirant becomes a candidate and when a candidate is granted Preliminary Fellowship. **AFFIRMED WITH THE PROVISIO THAT DISTRICT STAFF WERE AGREEABLE.**

12. Responsibilities of the RSCCs as stated in the Policies and Procedures Manual include being involved in the recruiting of students, helping educate congregations on the function of the RSCCs and

establishing and relating to Advisory Teams. Our findings indicated that these three responsibilities are not being undertaken by the RSCCs. Most RSCCs feel that there is neither time nor finances to undertake these responsibilities.

Therefore, we recommend that the following three functions be eliminated from the list of responsibilities in the Policies and Procedures Manual:

- 1) recruitment of students*
- 2) education of congregations, and*
- 3) establishment of Advisory Teams **AFFIRMED.***

13. Our findings indicate that there are a number of inconsistencies in the implementation of the RSCC Policies and Procedures. These include the manner in which committee members relate to students, the role of the sponsor, follow-up procedures after interviews, the form and content of letters to the MFC, and confusion about who can attend retreats.

*Therefore, we recommend that the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group review and update the RSCC Policies and Procedures Manual. In addition, templates for letters used by the RSCC committees should strive toward greater consistency. **AFFIRMED.***

14. Participants in the September 2002 Diversity of Ministry Team Conference expressed concern that the ministerial credentialing process is oppressive to students of color.

*Therefore, we recommend that the UUA Diversity of Ministry Team review RSCC forms and processes through an anti-racism, anti-oppression and multicultural lens and make recommendations for needed changes. **AFFIRMED WITH MODIFICATION THAT INSTEAD OF DIVERSITY OF MINISTRY TEAM, THE TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE FOR WHOLENESS AND JUSTICE BE UTILIZED.***

15. Our findings indicate that some Internship Supervisors feel that information from the RSCC concerning their interns would be helpful for their supervisory responsibilities. The present policy is that each RSCC is responsible for establishing its own policies for sharing information.

*Therefore, we recommend that RSCCs and the MPLSG urge candidates to share RSCC interview letters with Intern Committees and Supervisors, CPE Supervisors, and other persons who assist students in professional growth. **AFFIRMED.***

16. Our findings suggest that the full impact of the RSCC system will take a number of years to be revealed, and that the system deserves ongoing assessment to determine if it is meeting stated goals.

*Therefore, we recommend a follow-up evaluation of the RSCC system in five years. **AFFIRMED; THE CANDIDACY WORKING GROUP WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE RSCC SYSTEM ON AN ONGOING BASIS.***