

Report from the Panel on Theological Education
Monday October 21 and Tuesday October 22, 2008
Boston, MA

Present: Barbara Merritt, Chair, Doug Gallager, Robert Hardies, Gini Courter, Marvin Ellison, Beth Miller, Virginia Jarocha Ernst, Tamara Payne Alex, David Pettee.

Absent: Bill Sinkford

Approval of April 2008 Minutes- Minutes: Approved as written (Unanimous)

Reports

Shelter Rock RFP- Last spring, the Panel was invited to submit a Request for Proposal from the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock. The Panel is grateful that the congregation chose to award funds to support “Dreaming Big” an initiative co-sponsored by the Senior Ministers of Large Unitarian Universalist Congregations and Ministry and Professional Leadership, and “Nurturing Excellence in Transformational Ministry” organized by the Mountain/Desert District. Both these proposal were developed in response to an RFP process initiated by the Panel in 2007.

Dreaming Big- The group of 20 ministers has been selected and will meet in November in Concord, MA. Jane Jzepka and Rob Eller-Isaacs have both been instrumental in designing this schedule.

Nurturing Excellence in Transformational Ministry- The Mountain/Desert District has begun to implement “Nurturing Excellence in Transformational Ministry” with students at Iliff School of Theology. Representatives from Ministry and Professional Leadership and District Services have collaborated to identify three clusters of UU students and non-UU schools: in Metro New York, Prairie Star and the Pacific Northwest District. The District Executives and a lead minister from these three areas will be invited to gather with MPL and District staff in Denver, CO in January 2009 to work on expanding the “Nurturing Excellence in Transformational Ministry” model in these three districts.

UU Scholars Committee Report - Doug Gallager will represent the Panel for the UU Scholars at the upcoming AAR meeting. Lisa Karnan has not finished her dissertation yet, but it is expected to be completed by May 2009. The Panel has not received confirmation on who will serve as Qiyamah Rahman’s mentor yet, but hopes to have this matter clarified soon. Scholarship applications will be reviewed at the Panel’s April meeting in 2009.

UUA Board Report - The Board of Trustees has signaled its commitment to the Excellence in Ministry summit. The Board is looking forward to assessing how the objectives of the summit will correlate with the Board’s current objectives. The Board discussed the circumstances of the recent national economic hardship upon the Association. Barbara Merritt will make a report to the Board in January 2009 following the Excellence in Ministry conferences.

The Panel was urged not lose sight of its original intention to fundamentally change the relationship between the Panel and the UU Schools regarding accountability. There was unanimous agreement that the Panel should be engaged in conversation with other parties, such as the MFC, to work out an accountability structure in the future.

A motion was made to recommend to the Board that the FY 10 allocation to the Unitarian Universalist schools be consistent with the FY 09 allocation but include a 5% readjustment based upon current budgetary projections. Approved unanimously.

Under logistics measures include:

Executive Secretary: David Pettee discussed the logistical preparation underway for the Excellence in Ministry conference. Reservations at the Silver Cloud Inn- University have been confirmed. There was discussion about the hiring of an on-site logistics coordinator as needed.

Excellence in Ministry Summit

Logistics: The Panel discussed ways to improve the efficiency of the logistical preparation for the conference and will be actively engaged with measures to ensure that everything runs smoothly.

Measures include:

- Discussions with the facilitator Susan Beaumont
- Sending out a Pre-Meeting notices to all conference invitees
- Hiring a facilities coordinator to oversee the logistics of the conference including catering, transportation and lodging
- Coordinating the five worship sessions
- Setting up Video and Audio recording capacity
- Identifying a blogger to document the event
- Identifying chaplains
- Creating a photographic collage

Website- Discussion of the Excellence in Ministry website will be tabled for the April 2009 meeting. Barbara Merritt will be overseeing the project.

Additional Invitees- The Panel agreed to invite three additional members to the conference. Rick Heydinger, a representative from Allies for Racial Equity and a blogger. The Executive Secretary was requested confirm the formal invitation to our host minister, The Reverend Jon Luopa,

Post Conference Meeting- The POTE will meet in January 13, 2009 for one day to continue debriefing and planning. The POTE is also scheduled to meet in April