

**UUA Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth
Process Recommendation
Submitted by: Consultation Design Team**

Background

In October 2004, after a year-long dialogue between the Young Religious Unitarian Universalist (YRUU) and Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) leadership, the UUA Board of Trustees directed UUA President, the Reverend William Sinkford and Youth Trustee Megan Dowdell to co-convene a Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth. In February 2005, thirty youth and adults from across the Association gathered to discuss the Association's ministry to and with youth. They represented UUA staff leadership, UUA Board of Trustees, YRUU leadership, youth and adults not involved with YRUU, ministers, religious educators, youth advisors, and parents. After a two-day consultation facilitated by organizational development consultant U.T. Saunders, the group identified five focus areas (desired outcomes) for Unitarian Universalist youth ministry, listed the stakeholders for this work, and made suggestions for moving forward in each of the five areas. A representative subcommittee was empowered to design an overall process for a denominational consultation on our ministry to and with youth. This is the report of that design team.

The group met April 22-24, 2005 at the Walker Center in Auburndale, Massachusetts. Consultation Design Team members included Julian Sharp (Youth Trustee At-Large to the UUA Board 2005 - 2007), Sara Eskrich (non-YRUU youth), Sean Jones (member of YRUU Youth Council and Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multi-Cultural Ministries Youth and Young Adults [DRUUMM YaYA]), Mandy Keithan (Liberal Religious Educators Association [LREDA] member), Frank Filz (youth advisor), Jesse Jaeger (UUA Youth Programs Director) and Judith A. Frediani (UUA Director of Lifespan Faith Development). Hannah Eller-Isaacs, YRUU Steering Committee representative, was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting due to illness. Because it was not possible to refill this position, Sean Jones agreed to take the responsibility of reporting to the YRUU Steering Committee.

The charge of the Consultation Design Team: Taking into account the reports on the five focus areas identified at the February Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth; design a process that revises and renews Unitarian Universalist youth ministry.

Desired Outcomes

The five focus areas are ultimately the desired outcomes for the process. They are:

- A youth ministry that is robust, flexible, and diverse.
- Denominational youth work that focuses on serving local congregations.
- An authority structure that respects the rightful role of institutional youth and adult leadership at the same time that it supports the growth and empowerment of all UU youth.
- Anti-racism and anti-oppression work infused within every part of youth ministry, while recognizing that there is not necessarily only one way of doing it, and the "right" way depends on individual identities.
- Effective communication within, between and among continental, district, local, congregational and organizational levels.

Strategy

The Consultation process will solicit the input and engage the commitment of the widest possible spectrum of stakeholders in Unitarian Universalist ministry to and with youth. Conversations within congregations, districts, and organizations will focus on what they can do to support youth ministry at their level, and what the Association can do to support youth ministry on all levels. In this way, the process will build from the ideas and needs of youth and adults at the grassroots.

Stakeholder

The design team defined a stakeholder as one who should have a voice in the creation of a new ministry to and with youth because (1) they are or will be affected by the outcome, (2) they should be invested in the outcome, and (3) we need their buy-in.

Stakeholders were identified at the February Convocation. The design team added a few stakeholders to the list, which is included at the end of this report.

Process Goals

For the Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth to be successful, the process must be measured against and meet the following goals:

- Happens in a timely manner
- Is youth-empowering
- Is financially viable
- Creates buy-in across Unitarian Universalism
- Uses an anti-racism/anti-oppression lens throughout the process
- Includes an ongoing evaluation of the process
- Is transparent and inclusive
- Uses General Assembly as a resource
- Is collaborative among youth, UUA Staff, and UUA Board of Trustees
- Is a model for districts, congregations, and others
- Gets beyond power-grabbing
- Learns from the Common Ground experiences of the early 1980s
- Effectively uses the skills and knowledge of staff (congregational, district, UUA).

Process Oversight – Taskforce on Ministry to and with Youth

An oversight group called the Taskforce on Ministry to and with Youth will coordinate the process. This group will have the following makeup:

- Co-Conveners: Bill Sinkford (UUA President) and Megan Dowdell (UUA Board Youth Trustee At-Large 2003 – 2005)
- Three UUA Staff: Jesse Jaeger (Youth Programs Director in Lifespan Faith Development), Beth Dana (Youth Ministry Associate in Lifespan Faith Development), Judith A. Frediani (Director of Lifespan Faith Development)
- Julian Sharp (UUA Board Youth Trustee At-Large 2005-2007)
- Sara Eskrich (non-YRUU youth)
- Two youth appointed by the YRUU leadership
- One youth appointed by DRUUMM

- Two adults appointed by the Co-Conveners.

The charge of the Taskforce on Ministry to and with Youth is to:

- Implement the process.
- Review the process guides that will be created by staff.
- Select and work with additional staff/consultants.
- Facilitate the process in districts and core stakeholder organizations, and be consultants for congregations.
- Prepare and publish the reports created by the congregational, stakeholder, and district gatherings.
- Work to create buy-in from all stakeholders.

Overall Process

The design team recommends three levels of discussion within the consultation process at congregational, district, and key stakeholder gatherings.

A survey instrument will precede these discussions to both maximize participation and to focus the group discussions in productive ways. All feedback from the survey and conversations will be shared on UUA.org and in reports available to all Unitarian Universalists.

A representative gathering – the Summit on Ministry to and with Youth – will take the input from all the consultation discussions in the form of the reports prepared by the Taskforce on Ministry to and with Youth and recommend specific actions for the renewal of our youth ministry.

It is important that an anti-racist/anti-oppressive lens be applied throughout the process. Attention should be paid to the creation of the survey and process guides, the selection of facilitators, and the selection of the stakeholder organizations we work with.

The design team also recommends regular evaluation of the process using the desired outcomes and process goals as guides.

A detailed recommendation of each part of this process follows.

- **Congregational Conversations:**
 1. A survey instrument will be developed that will collect information about UU youth ministry. Congregants will respond to the survey before they participate in the congregational conversation so that the survey questions help frame the discussion and make the reporting among congregations more topically consistent.
 2. A congregational process guide will be developed to help congregations engage youth, parents, lay leaders, and professional staff in a focused conversation about their youth ministry. It will include suggestions and resources for facilitating effectively and building a group vision.
 3. Congregations will be provided with a standard report form to help them capture their discussion. This standard report form and the surveys will be sent to the Taskforce for their report.
- **Stakeholder Organizations**

1. The Taskforce on Ministry to and with Youth will review the list of stakeholders from design team and identify core stakeholder organizations. The list of core stakeholders might include:
 - Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU)
 - Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA)
 - Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA)
 - Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM)
 - Interweave
 - Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network (UUMN)
 - Association of Unitarian Universalist Administrators (AUUA)
 2. Leadership from each core stakeholder organization and Taskforce members will design a cost-effective process to engage that organization's membership in a discussion of their ideas about, and their role in, youth ministry.
 3. The stakeholder process guide will be used by non-core stakeholder organizations. This guide will propose a self-facilitated process and will include a standard report form for feedback to the Taskforce.
- **District Gatherings**
 1. Districts will be asked to schedule time – an extra day if possible – at their annual meetings to bring together a diversity of district youth and adults to discuss youth ministry at congregational, district, and continental levels with a focus on supporting congregational programs.
 2. A district process guide will be designed specifically for district gatherings to discuss overall youth ministry issues. It will be flexible enough for districts to adapt to their needs.
 3. Teams of youth and adult facilitators from the Taskforce will be trained to work with the districts on their process.
 4. A facilitated meeting to envision the future of youth ministry, with limited time spent on addressing past/present conflict, will take place in each district. The design team recommends that DREs, ministers, YRUU, non-YRUU, district staff and lay leadership, congregational leadership, parents, youth advisors, and people with diverse demographic identities participate in these meetings.
 5. District gatherings will be most productive if a critical mass of participants have participated at a congregational level.
 6. A standard report form will be used to communicate the content of the district discussions to the Taskforce for its report.
 - **Summit on Ministry to and with Youth**
 1. The Summit will be authorized to take all the input received and make specific recommendations for ministry to and with youth.
 2. The Taskforce on Ministry to and with Youth will identify a facilitator to help design and lead a decision-making process.
 3. The Taskforce will decide the size and composition of the Summit on Ministry to and with Youth.
 4. The recommended charge for the Summit:
 - Review the Taskforce report on the input gathered from the congregational, district, and stakeholder processes.
 - Evaluate the consultation process based on the stated desired outcomes.

- Decide how the Association can deliver a renewed ministry to and with youth, making specific policy recommendations.
 - Make recommendations to UU organizations, committees and boards for their ministry to and with youth.
 - Work to create buy-in with stakeholder groups, congregations, and districts.
 - Define a UU theology of ministry to and with youth.
5. A comprehensive report of decisions and recommendations will be published and given to the UUA Board of Trustees and UUA Administration for approval and action. The report will also be made public.

Consultants to the Process

It is the recommendation of the design team that an organizational development consultant work with the Taskforce on Ministry to and with Youth. The consultant should understand how issues of oppression operate in organizations. They recommend that this person facilitate the opening retreat of the Taskforce and facilitate the Summit on Ministry to and with Youth. This consultant might also review the process guides that are created. The design team believes that U.T. Saunders, who facilitated the February meeting, would be an appropriate consultant for this process.

It is recommended that the survey instrument be developed in consultation with a consultant with expertise in the field.

Process Timeline:

June 05:

- Process approved by Consultation Co-Conveners Bill Sinkford and Megan Dowdell.
- Process shared at General Assembly with Youth Caucus, Congregational Presidents, LREDA, and Religious Professionals at Professional Days.

July 05:

- Twelve-member Consultation Taskforce selected:
 - Non-YRUU member appointed;
 - Two YRUU Taskforce members elected at Youth Council;
 - One youth appointed by DRUUMM;
 - Two adults appointed by the co-conveners.
- District Staff contacted to:
 - Share information about the process and enlist their support, input, and participation;
 - Discuss getting youth ministry conversations on district meeting agendas;
 - Obtain lists of congregations with youth programs or populations.
- Canadian Unitarian Council contacted with approach similar to that for districts.
- Begin website development to provide updated information about the consultation process. Plan listserv.

September 05:

- Survey consultant selected.

October 05:

- First Taskforce meeting to:
 - Work with survey consultant to create a survey instrument that will collect information about UU youth ministry and will frame the discussions held in congregations, districts, and stakeholder organizations;
 - Create an outline for the Congregational Process Guide;
 - Develop an outreach strategy for congregational conversations.
- Outreach to Religious Educators at LREDA Fall Conference.

November 05:

- Survey tested.

December 05:

- Survey finalized and ready for distribution.
- Congregational Process Guide ready for distribution.

January 06:

- Survey process begins.
- Congregational Process Guide distributed to congregations. Distribution options include:
 - UUA.org
 - UUA Congregational Mailing
 - LREDA Mailing and List Serve
 - UUMA Mailing and List Serve
 - USPS mail to all congregations with youth programs
 - Workshops at district gatherings.
- Taskforce members contact district youth and adult leadership regarding district gatherings.
- Taskforce members contact core stakeholder organizations.

March 06:

- District Process Guide published.
- Stakeholder Process Guide published and distributed.

- Stakeholder conversations begin and continue through April 07.

April 06:

- Survey data compiled.

May 06:

- Data from congregational conversations compiled.

June 06:

- Report to General Assembly based on data from the survey and the congregational conversations.

July 06:

- Taskforce meets for second time to:
 - Train for adult/youth co-facilitation of district and core stakeholder conversations;
 - Plan coverage for district and core stakeholder conversations.
- Youth Council meeting: Continue to engage youth leadership in the process.

September 06:

- District gatherings begin.

May 07:

- Data from district and stakeholder conversations collected and compiled.
- Taskforce meets for the third time to:
 - Synthesize all the data from the survey and the congregational, district, and stakeholder conversations into a format useful for the Summit on Ministry to and with Youth;
 - Prepare its final report to the UUA Board of Trustees;
 - Prepare a report for General Assembly;
 - Finish planning for the Summit on Ministry to and with Youth.

June 07:

- Present a report to General Assembly.

July 07:

- Summit on Ministry to and with Youth meets and makes recommendations regarding the UUA's ministry to and with youth.

- The Summit evaluates, or makes recommendations for the evaluation of, the overall process of the Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth.

October 07:

- UUA Board of Trustees receives report with recommendations.

Stakeholders

Youth and Youth Organizations

- YRUU Youth Council and Steering Committee (current and former)
- YRUU Working Action Manager and Continental Social Action Coordinators
- Anti-Racism Trainer-Organizers Program (ARTOP)
- Canadian Youth
- Youth and Young Adults dissatisfied with anti-racism/anti-oppression (AR/AO) work
- District Youth-Adult Committee Leaders (including adults)
- District/Local Youth AR/AO Leadership
- Non-YRUU Youth
- Active local youth
- Uninvolved youth who desire religious community

Congregational Professional Leadership:

- Parish Ministers
- Religious Educators
- Parish Administrators
- Paid advisors
- Social justice coordinators
- Church of the Larger Fellowship Leaders including Church of the Younger Fellowship

Congregational Lay Leadership:

- Congregational presidents
- Church boards
- Committee leaders
- Youth group leaders/advisors

Parents:

- Of involved youth
- Of uninvolved youth

Other

- Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC)
- Other interested parties to balance representation of other identities and perspectives

Affiliate Organizations

- Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multi-cultural Ministries (DRUUMM)
- DRUUMM Youth and Young Adults
- Latino/a Unitarian Universalist Networking Association (LUUNA)
- White Allies
- Interweave
- UU Women's Federation
- UU Ministers Association (UUMA)
- UUMA Group for Multiculturalism & AR/AO
- Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA)
- UU Service Committee (UUSC)
- UU Young Adult Network (UUYAN)
- Camps and Conferences (CU2C2)

UUA Staff

- Lifespan Faith Development (including the Youth Office)
- Anti-Racism Identity Development Working Group
- Identity-Based Ministries
- Leadership Council
- District Staff
- Finance
- Young Adult and Campus Ministry Office

UUA Volunteer Leadership

- UUA Board of Trustees
- ARMAT (BOT)
- Commission on Appraisal
- JUUST Change Consultancy
- Jubilee I and II Trainers
- Disabilities Awareness Group
- District Boards/Leadership
- District Justice Leadership
- Congregational Leadership

