

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

**MINISTERIAL FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE
NON-CONFIDENTIAL SUNDAY BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA**

Michael Tino, Cindy Malley, Amanda Poppei, Karen Rasmussen, Alison ALG McLeod, Rebekah Savage, Lindasusan Ulrich, Karen LoBracco, DC Fortune, Nathalie Edmond, Takiyah Amin. (Absent: Beth Norton, Shirley Lange, Paul Langston-Daley). UUA Staff: Sarah Lammert, Marta Valentin, Marion Bell

Open Meeting

Registered guests: Kellie Kinsman (aspirant), Meg Richardson, Darrick Jackson, Jules Taylor, Michelle Favreault (manager of UUMA MFN), Margaret Rieser (candidate)

Approve March 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve March 2023 minutes. Karen moves/Michael 2nd. Approved, two abstentions.

Open Conversation about collaboration between the MFC, MFN, UUMA and UU-identified Theological Schools/Seminaries

Noted concern about all changes and how to get the word out to those in process as well as ministers in preliminary fellowship.

From Michelle Favreault (UUMA) UUMA/MFN would love to have a contact/point person so that we can collaborate on a communications plan around changes with the MFC so we can keep both the Candidates/Aspirants we work with connected to the latest information, but also to be thoughtful in supporting our UUMA colleagues in general - intern supervisors and vocational advisors in particular! We're thinking podcast/webinars and multi-faceted training packets and in addition to emails and newsletter.

From Jules Taylor (Meadville Lombard)- Proposing options for efficient communications to stakeholders regarding rollout of MFC updates to R&P and processes, specifically to ministers already in fellowship (i.e., internship supervisors, "home" church ministers for candidates, etc.). Jules noted that often it is difficult to get info on changes out to colleagues, which leads to inaccurate information being passed on by those who are incorrectly informed.

Proposing a partnership between the MFC/MCO/UUA, UUMA, Meadville, and Starr King to create messaging on the current MFC information in several mediums (podcast, video, "blog" posts, emails, etc.), then essentially market to our various constituencies. The goal is to reach as many UU ministers, aspirants/candidates, and communities as possible with current and

accurate information, all while squelching rumors. Recognizing also, the importance of sharing information quickly when changes are made, the plan included having a few elements ready to send out/record right after this September meeting.

Amanda noted the timeline of where we are. Working on revised reading list. Moving toward a self-selection. Educational Resources vs. a “book list.” Addition of an eighth competency in theology.

Jules Taylor wanted to know how to share with Meadville faculty. Amanda noted that this is public info, as it has been discussed in other public forums.

Darrick noted that it’s a good partnership with UUMA. Conversation needs to go to all colleagues, not just candidates. Maybe a place on UUMA website with this news. Where can this info live so people can find the info. How can UUMA be a resource?

Not enough folx reviewing packets. Not enough ARAOMC embodiment. Many folx coming too soon. As MFN works on mentoring, making sure that evaluation and difficult conversations and clarity about growing edges is crucial in the process.

Staff Reports

From Sarah: Lots of change brewing in UUA leadership and Ministries and Faith Development (MFD) staffing!

- ❖ The Ministerial Credentialing Director position is posted and we are accepting applications now. We begin interviews at the end of this month and our goal is to onboard someone wonderful on November 13th!
- ❖ The UUA is planning to hire a VP for Programs and Ministries to help align strategic planning for MFD, Congregational Life and the Organizing Strategies Team. Look for a posting any day. (Same for my replacement).
- ❖ We have openings for Chief Financial Officer, HR Director, Comptroller, and three Youth and Emerging Adult Staff members.

I also want to note my gratitude to our UUA staff who support the MFC and ministerial credentialing process: Mary Krigbaum, Marion Bell, Marta Valentín, Emily Cherry, and Aastha Poudel. I’m especially grateful to everyone for their help in bridging the gap between Ministerial Credentialing Directors!

From Marta:

The Mentor Training Project that the Professional Development Office and the UUMA have been working on is nearing its launch of asynchronous modules. Revs. Larry Peer (who created the original training) and Kimberly Q. Johnson have updated the information and are creating the modules attentive to the ARAOMC lens.

The Community Ministers Retreat now has a team in place with five community ministers (Michelle Pederson, Jessica James, Qiyamah Rahman, Joy Christi Przeworski and Allison Farnum as well as Rev. Darrick Jackson and myself. It is a new design with the intention of maximum attendance to honor their request for collegial time together and rest and renewal.

The New Communities Design Team charged with creating a program/process to support innovative ministries has been approved by the UUA Board and will now move forward with an initial partnership with Beloved.org, an organization that works in small groups “planting seeds in their Beloved Garden” with innovative ministers. We will soon be accepting applications for eight innovative ministries to create the first UU cohort, with more cohorts to follow. We are trying to come up with a name for our UU group.

NON-CONFIDENTIAL WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Settlement Working Group Recommendations – Michael -Addendum B

1. Transforming Preliminary Fellowship – Proposed MFC Rules and Policies Changes. See Addendum B.

Motion to accept the Revised Rules and Policies. DC moves/Cindy moves. Unanimous. Rules will need to be approved by the UUA Board of Trustees. (once Rules have been approved by the UUA Board, Rules AND Policies will be updated).

Name Change for Working Group: Preliminary Fellowship Working Group

Motion to change the name: Michael moves/Lindasusan 2nds. Unanimous.

Candidacy Working Group Recommendations – Karen

Consent Agenda:

1. [UPDATE TO POLICY 3.D. I.III](#) (Letter of Reference for MFC Packet) (updated Policies 10/2/23 – Mbell)

This was tabled at the December 2022 and then again at the March 2023 meeting. An acknowledgement that candidates are on different paths and that especially post-pandemic, congregational programming is different. Also, many congregations may not have a religious educator. Added text in red.

- iii. A religious educator; or in the event a Religious Educator is not available, someone who can best describe the candidate's experience with religious education.

The CWG recommends the full MFC adopt the suggested change.

2. UPDATE TO THE SIGNED APPLICATION FOR CANDIDATE STATUS AND WAIVER OF CLAIMS AND AUTHORIZATION FORM

Rationale for change:

1. Adding the UUMA Code of Conduct, UUA Bylaws, and MFC Rules and Policies and any subsequent changes. Added guidance from the UUA/MCO. Tightened, specific language.
2. Clarifies what needs to happen if someone enters the process and they are currently serving in a UU congregation
3. Violation of the policy has stronger repercussions, keeping in alignment with MFC policy 18.C.

This relates to [Policy 3.B.iv](#):

Signed Application for Candidate Status and Waiver of Claims and Authorization. This form stipulates agreement to abide by the Rules and Policies of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and to defer accepting any UUA congregationally-based position other than internships and student ministries unless approved by the Ministerial Credentialing Director.

Current Document which is found in MFC Requirements Manual Appendix:

Application for Candidate Status and Waiver of Claims and Authorization

Name _____

Address _____

Email address _____ **Phone** _____

I hereby apply for candidate status, agreeing to abide by the Rules and Policies of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and by any amendments thereof.

I further agree to defer accepting any UUA congregationally based position other than internships and student ministries unless approved by the Ministerial Credentialing Director. Violation of this policy shall render the candidate ineligible for an interview with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee or Ministerial Fellowship for four years from the commencement of the position.

I hereby understand, consent, and agree that as part of my application for Ministerial Fellowship that inquiries will be made by the Unitarian Universalist Association and/or its designated committee(s) or agent(s) as to my background, moral character, reputation, health, and fitness.

I hereby authorize every person, firm, company, corporation, governmental agency, law enforcement agency, court, institution, counselor, medical provider or mental health provider having control of any documents, records or information concerning me to provide all such documents, records of information without delay or exception to the Unitarian Universalist Association.

I also understand and agree that as a part of this application process I may be asked questions of a personal or private nature about my background, moral character, reputation, health and fitness (including but not limited to questions about my medical and/or mental health background), and that I must respond to these requests in a good faith, truthful, complete, candid, and prompt fashion.

I irrevocably release, waive and discharge the Unitarian Universalist Association and its officers, employees, committees, ministers, attorneys and agents from any and all claims of any type which I have, or may in the future have, as a result of or concerning the application process identified above, the decision made as a result of this application, and/or any inquires made of anyone during this application process.

Signature _____

Date _____

Cleaned up version recommended by Kay Hodge/Carey McDonald (Updated 10/2/23-Mbell)

I am applying for candidate status on the path to credentialed ministerial Fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). In doing so, I agree to follow 1) the Bylaws Rules and Policies of the UUA, 2) the Rules and Policies of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC), 3) the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association Code of Conduct, 4) any future amendments to these Bylaws, Rules and Policies, and 5) guidance about the credentialing process from the MFC or UUA staff authorized by the MFC.

As an Aspirant/Candidate prior to receiving preliminary fellowship, I agree not to accept any UUA congregationally based paid position, other than internships and student ministries, unless it is approved by the Ministerial Credentialing Director or other authorized person. If I am already serving in a congregational setting prior to entering the credentialing process, I recognize I must discuss this with the Ministerial Credentialing Director or other authorized person in order to receive guidance about how to remain in right relationship with the UUA.

Violation of the application policy and/or any other policy, rule or procedure in the credentialing process may result in disciplinary action including but not limited to a letter of reprimand, suspension, counseling, return to Applicant or Aspirant status, or removal from Aspirant/Candidate status, etc. and may make the person ineligible for UU ministry.

I agree to honestly and completely represent myself in my application materials and all communications in the credentialing process. I understand that as a part of this application process I may be asked questions of a personal or private nature, or that inquiries may be made about me by the MFC or UUA staff authorized by the MFC. These questions and inquiries may be about my background, moral character, reputation, medical background, health, mental health, and overall fitness for ministry. I commit to responding to these requests promptly.

I hereby authorize every person, firm, company, corporation, governmental agency, law enforcement agency, court, educational institution, counselor, medical provider, or mental health provider having control of any documents, records or information concerning me to provide those documents, records of information upon request to the UUA.

I further understand that becoming and being a Unitarian Universalist minister is a privilege, not a right. In seeking Fellowship, I agree to be bound by the Rules, Policies and procedures of the MFC as they exist now and as amended in the future. I further agree that the credentialing of UU ministers is a core religious function of the UUA made by the MFC and is wholly protected as the free exercise of religion under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. I recognize that the MFC and the UUA Board of Review hold the ultimate authority to decide questions related to ministerial Fellowship, as defined by the UUA bylaws. I understand that the courts do not have jurisdiction to decide issues related to ministerial Fellowship with the UUA.

I therefore permanently release the UUA, including its officers, employees, contractors, agents and anyone else authorized to carry out the UUA's responsibilities for overseeing ministerial Fellowship, from any and all claims concerning: my candidacy for the ministry, the application or credentialing process, my

future status as a fellowshipped minister, any decisions of the MFC, and/or any inquires, comments, or information made by or received from anyone during this application process. I also agree to hold the UUA harmless and indemnify it from any liability related to my ministerial status or credentials.

The CWG recommends that the full Committee adopt the above change

3. POLICY 3.D UPDATE FOR READING LIST AND COMPETENCIES (updated 10/2/23-Mbell)

3. D. Further Requirements prior to the MFC Interview

In addition to the items completed for Candidate Status, a Candidate will have:

- i. Completed the MFC Appointment Request form;
- ii. Submitted the \$250 appointment fee at the time the MFC interview is scheduled. This fee may be waived under extenuating circumstances. Please consult with the Ministerial Credentialing Director for further information.
- iii. Submitted the following paperwork required for inclusion in the MFC interview packet:
 - a. Digital (head shot) photograph;
 - b. Biographical Information Form;
 - c. Personal Narrative Essay as described in the “Checklist for MFC Interview” in the *Requirements for Fellowship Appendix*;
 - d. Career Assessment report from an approved career assessment program (career assessments older than seven years at the time of an MFC interview will be reviewed by the Ministerial Credentialing Director and may require an update);
 - e. Statements of Competence and Reading ~~Reading~~ Educational Resource list as described in the “Checklist for MFC Interview”;

The CWG recommends that the full Committee adopt the above change

4. UPDATE POLICY 18 (updated 10/2/23 Mbell)

18. Procedures for Complaints against Aspirants and Candidates

A. Complaints and Notification

Any individual wishing to file a complaint against an Aspirant or Candidate must contact the Professional Development Director. Complaints must be in writing. As soon as appropriate after receipt of a complaint, the Professional Development Director will notify the Aspirant/Candidate as well as the board chair and/or supervisor if they are working in a ministry setting. With the initial notification, a request shall be made to the Aspirant/Candidate to provide a written statement of the Aspirant/Candidate's position on the allegations in the complaint within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the notice of complaint. At the "intake" stage, the Professional Development Director hears the complaint, provides information on the process, responds to questions from the Complainant(s) and conducts an assessment to determine whether the complaint should be referred for further investigation. The Professional Development Director will consult with the Ministerial Credentialing Director to determine if further investigation is warranted and keep the Complainant(s) informed of the ongoing process and any actions.

B. Investigations

If an investigation is warranted, the Ministerial Credentialing Director or Designee will be notified to conduct the investigation, which will generally include consultation with all involved parties (Aspirant/Candidate, Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group, complainant(s), theological school, supervisor, etc.) and review of any additional information, including the Aspirant/Candidate's file, etc. If the complaint involves either an Aspirant/Candidate or Complainant(s) from a traditionally marginalized community, the LGBTQ+ and Multicultural Programs Director may also be consulted. The Aspirant/Candidate may be invited to meet with the Ministerial Credentialing Director and the Executive Secretary of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee to discuss the complaint.

During an active investigation process, a Candidate may not schedule a meeting with the MFC. A previously scheduled meeting with the MFC will be canceled immediately until a resolution is reached.

In consultation with the Professional Development Director, the Ministerial Credentialing Director will prepare a written report of relevant findings and recommendations that will be presented to the Executive Committee of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

C. Resolutions

The Executive Committee may consider a range of resolutions to the complaint, including, but not limited to, exoneration, a letter of reprimand, suspension, counseling, return to Applicant or Aspirant status or removal from Aspirant/Candidate status, etc. The Executive Committee will inform the Aspirant/Candidate of the resolution and a copy of the letter will become part of the candidate's permanent file and sent to the Complainant(s).

D. Removal of Candidacy Status

~~If the Executive Committee believes removal of Aspirant/Candidacy status is warranted, they shall make a recommendation to the Full Committee.~~

E. D. Notification of the Decision of the Full Executive Committee

The decision of the Full Executive Committee shall be communicated as soon as possible to the Full Committee, Aspirant/Candidate, the Complainant(s), UU professional and credentialing bodies such as the UUMA, UUSCM, LREDA, RECC, AUUMM, MLCC and such others as deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee. As the situation warrants, this may include but is not limited to current and/or former ministry contexts, educational institutions, advocates and Good Officers.

The CWG recommends that the full Committee adopt the above change

5. CONTRACT MINISTRIES (Updated in Req Booklet 10/2/23-Mbell)

- a. Jonipher Kwong and Keith Kron are recommending that to apply for a contract ministry, people need to be in candidate status.

Current language in the MFC Requirements Manual:

CONTRACT MINISTRIES

~~Aspirants and~~ Candidates may be considered for contract (not interim) ministry positions if there are no fellowshiped ministers interested and available. The Aspirant/Candidate must wait at least six weeks after a position is posted on the Transitions page before applying.

- b. Jessica York suggested we get rid of the letter of recommendation from regional staff because it might hold greater weight and create conflict of interest. Currently these are the letter requirements:
- c. Recommendations from at least two of the following UUA-related sources:
 - ~~Congregational Life Staff~~
 - UUMA Vocational Advisor
 - Fully Fellowshiped Mentor who is a member of the UUMA
 - Fully Fellowshiped Colleague from your UUMA Chapter

The CWG recommends that the full Committee adopt the above changes.

6. UPDATE to POLICY 3.B.iii recommending adding text below (Updated 10/2/23-Mbell)

- iii. *Evidence of acceptance to a Master of Divinity (MDiv) program at an Association of Theological Schools (ATS) accredited theological school, such as an acceptance letter, enrollment verification letter, or unofficial transcript. Or, if graduated from an ATS accredited theological school, submission of that official MDiv transcript. Also, submission of all official transcripts from prior graduate level academic preparation where a degree was conferred.*

The CWG recommends that the full Committee adopt the above change

7. Update MFC Policy 3.C. iii to read (added language in red): (Updated 10/2/23-Mbell)

- iii. Submitted final **self and supervisor** evaluations from a Level 1/Unit 1 Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) from an accredited Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE)/College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP)/Center for Spiritual Care and Pastoral Formation (CSPCF) site or an internship.

The CWG recommends that the full Committee adopt the above change

8. Addition to MFC Requirements Manual Appendix - Letters of Reference – (Updated 10/2/23 – Mbell)

Similar to the reasoning in #5 above dealing with Contract Ministries.

No letters of reference should come from Congregational Life staff.

The CWG recommends that the full Committee adopt the above change

Motion to accept the consent agenda #1-8. Karen moves/Karen 2nds. Approved, unanimous.

PWG – update in upcoming ethics training. We are due. PWG working on it for the May 2024 retreat.

Project Updates-

Michael – Transformations Shepherd. To help MFC transform all processes to root out white supremacy culturally and systemic oppression. COIC asked us to widen pathway to fellowship. Currently it's prohibitive, financially, culturally, the way their brains work. Delayed work because it's such a big project. Michael talked with Sofia who will be working with us to move this work to office of the president. Working with Panel on Theological Education.