

Staff Transitions

We've said farewell to Michelle Bentley and welcomed Jory Agate as Ministerial Development Director (MDD, formerly Professional Development Director, PDD). Jory join us with a wealth of relevant experience from serving as Chair of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) and a member of the UU Ministers' Association Continuing Education committee(CENTER), as well as prior employment at the UUA. Angela Merkert, MDD Assistant, will be leaving soon as we are in search for someone in the Boston area to fill this position. Leslie Staples, MFC Assistant, resigned this summer to pursue a law degree and we have happily welcomed Mohammed El-Khatib in that position. Ralph Mero will be working remotely from Pennsylvania until his retirement scheduled for June 30, 2008. John Weston has indicated his intention to retire within the next two to three years.

Summit on Ministry To and With Youth

I was privileged to be among the UUA staff in attendance at this remarkable event. I am committed to doing what I can to keep our religious professionals and the UUA staff and committees who serve them engaged in the process and responsive to the outcomes as this initiative moves forward. As I know the Board knows, we have much work to do.

Panel on Theological Education

I sit on the Panel and, along with David Pettee, Exec. Secy., have been involved in getting both the request for proposal documents and the survey that is being conducted up and running. I have also spoken with, and mostly listened to, some of the critics of the Board's initiatives regarding funding for theological education. I have encouraged several organizations to submit proposals and will continue to encourage their engagement. We have the opportunity to greatly strengthen our support for ministerial formation, development and excellence through this process.

Diversity of Ministry Team

I sit on this group along with David Pettee and John Weston from MPL. We are currently working on the plan to encourage and support congregations who will engage ministers of color and the ministers who will serve those congregations such that our long term success rate is greatly improved from past experience.

Community and Military Ministry

MPL has received a grant and engaged a quarter-time intern, Harvard Divinity School student, Robin Tanner, for two years (2007-08 and 2008-09) to help us figure out how to better support and maintain strong connections with UU ministers serving in non-parish settings. Robin will be conferring with the Society for Community Ministry (SCM) and the UU Ministers Association (UUMA), theological schools, agencies that employ UU ministers, and others to get a clear picture of the breadth of service our ministers are engaged in and to learn what they believe they need to most effectively serve as Unitarian Universalists in the larger world. Ultimately, I hope to be able to serve them, and thus UUism, better.

In a separate initiative, we have developed a comprehensive protocol to endorse and support military chaplains and those pursuing this career option. We have a Committee on Military Ministry (CMM) in place, chaired by the Reverend Lisa Presley who was instrumental in

creating the protocol. This summer I made visits to the Army school for chaplains at Ft. Jackson and presented a UUA banner and the Navy chaplains school in Newport, RI. We have a small but growing group of ministers and seminarians interested in military ministry and I am very happy to be in a better position to support them in this important ministry.

Professional Leaders Coordinating Council (PLCC)

At its meeting in June during General Assembly, the PLCC agreed to welcome two new member organizations which are in the process of becoming recognized Professional Organizations: Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and Partners (UURMAPA) and the Accredited Interim Ministers group (AIMs). UURMAPA was an Independent Affiliate that lost its status last April. After much consultation between UURMAPA, Kay Montgomery, the new UUMA President, and other groups on the PLCC, it was decided that they should have a place as a Professional Organization. The AIMs are a group that has previously existed only under John Weston's care as Transitions Director. With John's announcement of his retirement within the next couple of years, we began to look at the AIMs and how they fit into the larger MPL and UUA world. It has become clear that they serve a huge number of our congregations and interact with numerous other religious professionals as colleagues and that they should be at the PLCC table. UURMAPA and AIMs will develop clear guidelines for both membership in their organizations and ethical behavior toward colleagues and congregations.

Ministerial Fellowship Committee and Religious Education Credentialling Committee

I continue to serve as Executive Secretary to both the MFC and RECC. I am grateful to the Committee on Committees for recruiting Phyllis Daniel to take over as MFC Chairperson temporarily as Jory Agate steps out of that role and into her staff position as MDD Director. Phyllis brings her experience and wisdom at a time we really need those qualities as we consider rule and policy changes and examine complaints filed against several of our ministers. I look forward to working with Phyllis and with the UUA Board members newly assigned to these committees, Burton Carley on the MFC and Will Saunders on the RECC, in the coming months.