

## **Update from the Panel on Theological Education June, 2012**

*The important lesson for me, which was to play a part in my presidency, was that until the Association could provide significant financial support for the schools, the relationship with the schools would continue to be strained and the Association's influence minimal.*

*Interview with former UUA President Gene Pickett, 2007*

In January of 2012, the UUA Board voted to adopt Policy 2.10.5, which accompanied the transfer of oversight of the Panel on Theological Education from the Board to the President and provided boundaries for the Association's use of the Panel's funds. The policy defined "Unitarian Universalist identity" as an asset to be protected:

### **2.10 POLICY TITLE: ASSET PROTECTION**

*The President shall not allow the Association's tangible, intangible and intellectual assets to be unprotected from undue risk. Further, without limiting the scope of the foregoing by this enumeration, the President shall not:*

...

*5. Jeopardize the formation of Unitarian Universalist identity within our professional ranks. Furthermore the President shall not:*

*5.1 Jeopardize right relationship with Meadville Lombard and Starr King School for the Ministry*

*5.2 Jeopardize the historical relationship between the UUA and Harvard Divinity School*

As the single Board representative currently serving on the Panel, I have been asked by the President to remain on the Panel until the October meeting to insure a smooth transition.

The information in this report will in the future come through the monitoring of Policy 2.10.5. Because of the past sensitivity around this issue (see *Panel on Theological Education Briefing* included in the January 2012 Board Packet), and a few concerns raised by trustees in the January board survey, I am providing an interim report on the Panel's actions at their April meeting.

As identified in the draft operational definition provided in the January board packet, there are three priorities for the Panel:

1. Contribute to the financial sustainability of UU identity seminaries
2. Ensure that advanced scholarship related to UU identity is supported.
3. Create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Meadville Lombard Theological School and Starr King School for the Ministry that establishes things like a predictable financial agreement, a covenant

for accountability standards, and an agreement about coordinating communications around fundraising efforts.

The first meeting to establish the MOU took place in April, with Peter Morales, Rebecca Parker, Lee Barker, and Sarah Lammert, with Rob Eller-Isaacs, POTE Chair, facilitating.

As a first step in providing predictable financial support, the Panel voted to recommend 30% of the dispersible funds or \$200,000 (whichever is greater) in operating funds annually for five years to each of the schools, subject to certain restrictions primarily based on the performance of the Trust. The remaining (roughly) \$120,000 for the coming fiscal year was earmarked for UU Scholars (\$40,000 plus \$20,000 for the UU Scholars' Conference), and grants for In-care, the UUMA, and establishing performance-based profiles for professional ministry.

Neither Andover Newton nor Harvard Divinity School were funded by the Panel for next year. There was considerable discussion about funding to "non-UU identity schools", including discussion of what steps could be taken to make it easier financially for UUs to attend Starr King or Meadville Lombard. Other topics included potential relationships with multi-denominational schools, creating a focus for distribution of discretionary funds, and synergy between Administration and Panel efforts.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

In faith,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Linda Laskowski".

Linda Laskowski  
Member, Panel on Theological Education  
Trustee, UUA Board