

## **MFC Fall 2020 Meeting Minutes – Zoom September 30-October 4, 2021**

Rebekah Savage, Co-Chair; Jackie Clement, Co-Chair; Don Brunnuell; Nick Allen; Shirley Lange; Karen LoBracco; Michael Lyde; Shawn Newton; Amanda Poppei; Joetta Prost;; Maddie Sifantus; Michael Tino; Greg Ward; Pamela Wat; Ben Robins, Candidate Liaison; Jaimie Dingus, Candidate Liaison; UUA Staff - Sarah Lammert, Marta Valentin, Jonipher Kwong, Marion Bell.

### **UPDATES from Staff**

Jonipher Kwong, MCD:

- Challenges for internships/CPEs due to Covid
- As of 9/3/20, we have 172 aspirants and 154 candidates, for a total of 326 in formation. Out of that, 53 identify as Black, Indigenous, Person of Color (BIPOC), or roughly 16%. I will be including these numbers moving forward to keep track of the progress we're making to be more inclusive of those with marginalized identities.
- Where we are with Document Management System
- MFC scheduling requests, there are two unfilled interview spots in December and the spring 2021 meeting is full at 21. That will likely change when Marion notifies them that there is availability for the December 2020 meeting.

Marta Valentin, MCD:

- 2019-2020 church year we welcomed 56 ministers into Preliminary Fellowship and 54 into Full Fellowship.

**“FIRST YEAR MINISTER EMISSARY” (FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE “CANDIDATE LIAISON”)**

Each meeting of the MFC has Emissaries to candidates, one per panel.

The major criterion for appointment as Emissary to candidates for the Ministerial Fellowship Committee is that the person has already met with the Committee ~~and received a Category I.~~

The Exec Team is responsible for identifying, recruiting, and equipping the Ministry Emissary at least one month prior to each MFC meeting. A member of the Exec along with the Ministerial Credentialing Director (and/or others) will create and provide an introductory video, explaining the role and expectations of the emissary, while noting the complexity of serving in this role.

All the materials sent to the full Committee are sent to the Emissaries, and the confidentiality of these materials as well as the content of the meeting itself is stressed.

The Emissaries read and sign a confidentiality agreement that itemizes expectations.

- Read packets, do not save any digital notes or packets after the meeting
- Confer only with other MFC panel members on any questions
- Cannot share internal deliberations or conversations about, with or of the MFC to anyone outside the MFC
- Do not engage on social media or any public platform regarding the decisions or deliberations of the panels or MFC
- Emissaries will submit a written report for publication about their observations, honoring the confidentiality of the candidates

The Emissaries are participants in the Committee's deliberations and are encouraged to offer perceptions or insights about a candidate or a topic at hand. They are also allowed to ask questions of the candidates, following the procedures adhered to by the members of the Committee. The Emissaries, however, are not voting members of the Committee, and decisions of the Committee concerning candidates are communicated by voting members only.

The Emissaries participate in the panel prep and Candidate interviews and deliberations. The Emissaries are invited but not expected to attend the Process Working Group. Emissaries do not attend Candidate WG or Settlement WG. Emissaries attend from the first day of interviews through the Sunday business meeting, when they share their report.

The Emissaries' expenses for attending the meeting are paid for out of the MFC budget. They are invited to attend the Saturday night dinner.

At the end of the meeting, before the Committee reviews its process, the Emissaries give a brief report about their impressions of the meeting. [Here](#) are past reports.

After the meeting, the Emissaries are required to write reports for all those preparing for the ministry. Since the reports from the Emissaries are key to the transparency of the work of the MFC, it is of vital importance that the Emissary shares their report in a timely manner.

No motion required-

## **NON-CONFIDENTIAL AGENDA**

### **NEW WORKING GROUP CHAIRS:**

CWG – Karen LoBracco

SWG – Co-chairs: Maddie Sifantus, Greg Ward

PWG – Pamela Wat

### **REVIEW OF THE TRANSFORMING HEARTS PROPOSAL for the April 2021 MFC meeting training.**

It is recommended that there be some pre-meeting work for this continuing ed. PWG will work on scheduling.

### **RESCHEDULED FALL 2020 RENEWAL CALL**

Moved to Friday, October 30, 12-2pm eastern time

### **COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE RECOMMENDATION REVIEW**

An MFC Wider Path Task Force, led by Transformational Shepherd, Michael Tino, will work on proposals for the entire MFC. Task Force representation: PWG, Pamela; SWG, Michael L; CWG, Kären Rasmussen; UUA Staff, Sarah Lammert. The WPTF will work on connecting outside of the scheduled MFC meetings.

Amanda Poppei and Rebekah Savage will work with Michael Tino on setting next priorities. Possibly including Janice Marie Johnson.

## **RECOMMENDED UPDATE TO THE REQUIREMENTS FOR FELLOWSHIP BOOKLET/APPENDIX:**

Recommendation to add the below text in red to the MFC Packet Checklist for candidates (found in the Appendix):

6. First *(and additionally, if applicable, most recent)* unit CPE or CPSP Evaluations:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Self \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor

*For candidates who have completed more than two CPE units: A one-page statement that summarizes any significant learning or growth in between the first and most recent CPE Units may be included.*

Motion to approve the recommended update to the Requirements Booklet/Appendix. Jackie moves, Maddie 2<sup>nd</sup>. Approved, unanimous.

## **RECOMMENDATION TO UPDATE MFC POLICY 3.D.II CHANGE:**

Recommendation to add the text below in red and remove the strikethrough text:

### ***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 ~~application~~ **appointment** fee at the time the MFC interview is scheduled. ~~This fee will be used to build a fund to help offset travel equalization costs.~~ This fee may be waived under extenuating circumstances. Please consult with the Ministerial Credentialing Director for further information.*

Motion to approve the recommended MFC Policy update: Motion approved, unanimous.

## CANDIDACY WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATION TO UPDATE MFC POLICY 3.D.III.L

CWG Proposes a change to policy 3.D.iii.l (removal of the strikethrough text)

All official undergraduate transcripts ~~(and graduate transcripts, if applicable)~~ and graduate transcripts from schools where a degree was conferred, all seminaries and theological schools and all official transcripts for courses taken in fulfillment of a waiver or competency requirement.

Motion to approve the CWG recommended Policy 3.D.iii.l update: Jackie moves, Maddie 2<sup>nd</sup>. Approved, unanimous.

## PROVISIONAL ENDORSEMENT PROPOSAL

Background:

For several years now, the UUA's official Endorser (currently The Rev. Sarah Lammert) has provided provisional endorsements for two categories of individuals preparing for the UU ministry:

### 1) Military Chaplains who are transferring to UU

a) The issue here is that one is required to have an endorsement to continue in employment with the U.S. military. Only 30-60 days are allowed before termination if an endorser drops someone and they aren't picked up by another endorser. While most Endorsing Agents are willing to work with a minister while they meet the requirements for transfer, most can't maintain endorsement for the length of time required to gain preliminary fellowship in the UUA. Current practice is to provide provisional endorsement once a transferring minister already serving

in the military becomes an Aspirant; and provided that continued progress towards fellowship ensues.

2) Candidates who have completed everything but an MFC interview and working as hospice or hospital chaplains and require endorsement for Board Certification

a) Although the UU Society for Community Ministry is in the final stages of developing an endorsement program for lay chaplains seeking board certification, a gap exists for those planning on becoming a fellowshipped UU minister who are simultaneously working through the very rigorous process of becoming a Board Certified Chaplain. There is a time sensitive point in the process where the lack of an endorser could mean failure in achieving board certification. In a handful of instances, provisional endorsement has been offered to Candidates for the UU ministry providing they continue on towards completion of the preliminary fellowship process.

### **Emerging Possibilities**

“Widening the Circle,” which is the report of the Commission on Institutional Change, has called on the UUA to create more equitable processes for serving as ministers --something the Ministerial Fellowship Committee itself has been wrestling with for years. Provisional Endorsement is just one of the ways we could extend and widen the circle (in addition to creating alternative pathways to ministry and revising/simplifying the process of transferring credentials from another faith tradition) but it would be significant for those who might qualify, and it would signal greater inclusion and support for those preparing for our ministry.

In addition to formalizing the process for military chaplains transferring from another tradition, and candidates for ministry seeking Board Certification in Chaplaincy, a third category of individuals would benefit from a transparent process to request provisional endorsement. This third category involves clergy transfers to Unitarian Universalism who are serving in UU or UU-related institutions. This is an exciting opportunity to be more inclusive and welcoming.

Recommended new Policy:

#### ***Provisional Endorsement for UU Ministry***

*Any individual who holds Aspirant or Candidate status with the MFC may request provisional endorsement from the UUA while they continue through the fellowshiping process for the following purposes:*

- 1. The individual is seeking Board Certification for chaplaincy and requires endorsement.*
- 2. The individual is transferring their credentials or ordination from another generally recognized faith community/endorsing agent and wishes to be recognized as a UU minister for professional reasons (examples: they are currently serving a UU or UU-related institution; they are innovators creating a new form of UU community; or they require endorsement for military or VA chaplaincy while in the process of transfer).*

*Process: Once Aspirant or Candidate status is confirmed, the interested individual will submit a 1-2 page essay to the Executive Secretary of the MFC about why they want to be a UU minister within the context they are serving. This essay will be reviewed by a Co-Director for Ministries and Faith Development, the Ministerial Credentialing Director, and the Ministerial Formation Specialist. A follow-up interview may be required for a determination by the group. Provisional Endorsement will be provided so long as reasonable progress continues to be made in the fellowshiping process over time, with a maximum of **seven years**. A standard letter of Provisional Endorsement or the equivalent form (2088 for the Military or VA Endorsement form, etc.) will be made available to successful applicants.*

**Motion to approve the recommended addition of “Provisional Endorsement for UU Ministry” to the MFC Policies: Michael T/Maddie 2<sup>nd</sup>. Approved, Unanimous.**

**Noted after the meeting that this will be added to MFC Policy 3, as MFC Policy 3.E.**

**(update “Preparatory Stages for Ministerial Fellowship” to “Preparatory Stages and Requirements for Ministerial Fellowship”**

## **MFC CATEGORY REFORM PROPOSAL – PROCESS WORKING GROUP- Addendum #6**

### **Issues raised:**

- Are we actually creating Type I and Type II contingencies? Perhaps we create distinctions between “red flag” contingencies and others.
- Burden on staff for tracking further requirements under “affirmed for flowchart”

- Need for flowchart
- Need to figure out contract ministries. Consider adding to “continued in candidacy”: “in the event that this decision is reaching for a candidate, the Committee shall provide guidance to the UUA staff with regard to a candidate’s fitness to serve in contract ministries.”
- “Affirmed” needs to include “have completed MDiv, internship, CPE...”

Also noted the timeline for implementation would be 9 months after the UUA Board approves any changes.

After much discussion it was determined that more clarification is needed and will return to the agenda at the December 2020 meeting.

## **UUMA GUIDELINES CHANGES**

Recent changes to the UUMA Code of Conduct have the potential to appear in complaints heard by the MFC. MFC members can familiarize themselves with the new guidelines at: [UUMA Guidelines - UU Ministers Association](#)