

Congregational Boundaries Working Group
Report to Board of Trustees
October 17, 2014

I. Amendments Proposed by Ministerial Fellowship Committee. In the April 2014 UUA Board meeting, the Congregational Boundaries Working Group was charged to:

Work with Sarah Lammert, Ministries and Faith Development, to revise the MFC process for investigating complaints so that no part of the investigation is conducted by members of the MFC and better directly engage complainants in the process and provide equal opportunities in, and access to, the process for complainants and defendants?

Submitted with this report, for Board discussion, are proposed amendments to Rule 21A, B and D of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee Rules. Also included are transmittal comments from Rev. Wayne Arnason, Chair of the MFC, requesting that the Board formally approve these amendments. Please note the MFC welcomes guidance from the Board regarding possible accommodations for victims who have not formally filed a complaint.

If the Board approves these amendments, I suggest that, for clarity, the MFC similarly amend the related MFC Policies (19C and 19D). Comments 1 and 2 below ask whether similar accommodations for complainants should be made in cases of complaints against candidates and ministers in preliminary fellowship.

1. The amendments proposed by the MFC relate to Rule 21, entitled "Procedures for Review of Final Fellowship". Should an individual filing a complaint against a candidate have an opportunity, as the candidate does, to meet with the Ministerial Credentialing Director and the Director of Ministries and Faith Development (MFC Policy 20B)?

2. Are any additional amendments required to allow an individual bringing a complaint against a minister in Preliminary Fellowship the opportunity to meet with the Executive Committee (Rule 16B)?

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II. Additional Comments on MFC Complaint Process. In the January 2014 UUA Board Meeting, the Congregational Boundaries Working Group was charged to:

Assess the current process that the UUA and the committees of the UUA Board follow that ensures just and equitable treatment of the complainant and defendant, and/or religious professional related to complaints of misconduct. Make recommendations to the Board and MFC as appropriate; and

Propose changes to handling charges of misconduct, as appropriate.

The Working Group continues to review the complaint process. We would like to make further recommendations within a framework of “best practices” (for both complainant and defendant) for receiving, investigating and resolving complaints of misconduct. We request the Board approved the following charge to the Working Group:

- 1. Provide to the Board and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee a set of best practices for receiving, investigating and resolving complaints of clergy sexual misconduct.*
- 2. Report to the Board and Ministerial Fellowship Committee where rules, policies and communications may not reflect those best practices.*
- 3. Request a report from the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and Director of Ministries and Faith Development suggesting revisions to such rules, policies and communications to reflect those best practices. The report shall also note the need for and availability of additional resources to implement such practices.*

Best practices, as developed by the Working Group in consultation with a professional consultant and Advisory Group, shall reflect UU principles of justice, equity and compassion in human relations, and the inherent worth and dignity of each person. They shall be consistent with achievement of relevant Ends of the Association.

Examples of what might be included in “best practices” for individuals bringing complaints:

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Rev. Debra Haffner's 2010 report , "Toward a Sexually Healthy and Responsible Unitarian Universalist Association", provides a list of Rights of the Victim/ Survivor:

- to be heard and taken seriously
- to be dealt with in a timely manner
- to be informed about procedure and outcome
- to be offered an advocate for procedures
- reimbursement for associated, time-limited counseling
- apology by perpetrator and institution

III. Timeline of Working Group and Staff Tasks. Submitted with this report is a timeline of tasks for Working Group and staff. The Working Group and staff will both re-assess in the Spring for fiscal year 2016.

IV. Advisory Group. The Working Group has created an Advisory Group to ensure that voices of individuals who have brought complaints of CSM, and of individuals who have experience and professional background in the needs of congregations in the aftermath of CSM, are included in the ongoing work of the Working Group. A description of that group is also submitted with this report.