

**Report of UUA Trustees
Ministerial Fellowship Committee
March, 2008 . . . Chicago, IL**

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) gathered at a hotel near O’Hare airport from March 25th – 30th, 2008, and the following report highlights the activities of the MFC that may be of particular interest to the UUA Board of Trustees.

Summary of Candidates Seeking Preliminary Fellowship:

We saw a total of 21 candidates (6 men and 15 women) ranging in age from 25 to 73 (with ten candidates under 50, and eleven over 50). There were two return candidates who originally saw the MFC 12-18 months ago. Both of them were entered into preliminary fellowship.

The Committee grants the following Categories:

- I (“good to go!”)
- II (cleared for fellowship providing contingencies are met)
- III (individuals the MFC would like to see again following additional work on ministerial formation)
- IV (discouraging the candidate from further preparation for ministry)
- V (no potential for ministry)

The following table summarizes the MFC decisions at our March meeting:

SCHOOL	MFC DECISION/ CATEGORY					
	I	II	III	IV	V	Total
Starr King	3	3	1	0	0	7
Meadville Lombard	4	0	1	1	0	6
Harvard	1	0	1	0	0	2
Andover Newton	1	0	1	0	0	2
Other - non UU	1	3	0	0	0	4
Total candidates	10	6	4	1	0	21

Orientation: The MFC met one day early for orientation and AR/AO/MC training. We welcomed four new members: MFC Chair, Wayne Arnason; Karen Eng, lay leader from First Unitarian Church, Oakland, CA; Lt. Cynthia Kane, a US Navy chaplain; and, Anthony Stringer, a member of the UU Congregation of Atlanta, GA.

AR/AO/MC: It was decided that the MFC will schedule a day-long AR/AO/MC training every 12-18 months, beginning in March 2009. At other meetings we will address issues that may arise out of interviews and 1 – 1 ½ hours will be devoted to AR/AO/MC work through case studies, book reviews, focused discussions, etc. The Process Working Group adapted the Process Observation tool used by the BOT for use by the MFC to enhance our reflections on how we’re doing our work.

From our new Chair: In his first report to the MFC, Wayne noted that “changing personalities and leadership style do bring changes. However, it is striking for me, coming back to service on the committee after a two-year absence and in the midst of all this transition, to see how stable the culture of the committee as a whole remains. It is a culture of common dedication to excellence in ministry. It is a culture of deep respect for the journey of ministerial formation. It is a culture that respects precedent and the wisdom of guiding policy, but does not hesitate to innovate when change is warranted.”

Wayne then laid out three areas where he would like to see the MFC innovate during the next two years:

- Policy Review: The MFC has already begun the process of bringing our policies into alignment with the recent rules and by-laws changes. Regular policy review will be good stewardship.
- Competencies: Wayne noted that “our competencies are a mixture of academic disciplines, arts of ministry, and tools from cultural knowledge and transformation. Lately, they have been augmented more through our unfolding political and cultural awareness, rather than as a result of any considered step backwards to ask ourselves basic questions about what are the most important things UU ministers need to be able to do in the 21st century. It’s time to ask and answer those questions.”
- Theological Education and Excellence in Ministry: In referring to the upcoming Summit on “excellence in ministry” in December ’08, Wayne stated that “the MFC is an important stakeholder in that summit, and we owe the Board our best work. Work on the competencies as noted above is one of the tasks that we can uniquely undertake. We also need to engage more deeply with the leaders of our theological schools as we review our competencies and recognize the important role the competencies can play in core curriculum development.” To begin that process, Wayne invited Lee Barker, President of Meadville Lombard, to meet with interested members of the MFC while we were in Chicago.

From the Director of Professional Development: Jory Agate reported that there are plans to phase out ministry days at GA by 2010. Instead, there will be a 5-day annual education conference for ministers at another time during the year. She also noted that the most “controversial issue” at the new ministers’ training a few weeks ago was the topic of “excellence in ministry.” There was some anxiety and feelings of having their competency challenged among the 32 participants.

Actions taken by the MFC included:

- A new policy with regard to the timing of RSCC (Regional Sub-Committee on Candidacy) interviews and internships was adopted due to the fact that in the past 4 years 16 internships have “gone up in smoke” with 10 of the interns having yet to see the RSCC. The committee voted that: **“All aspirants must have interviewed with the RSCC prior to the commencement of their internship.”**
- The new Skinner House edition of The Cambridge Platform was added to the required MFC Reading List.
- An additional by-law change is being forwarded to the BOT for consideration at the April meeting. The proposed changes to Section 11.9 Procedure on Appeal are consistent with the move away from a legalistic approach to appeals.
- The MFC voted to accept Calvin Dame’s resignation from fellowship as a UU minister.

Respectfully submitted by Jackie Shanti and Burton Carley