



UUA

Office of the President

January 9, 2013

To: UUA Board of Trustees
From: The Rev. Peter Morales, President
Subject: Significant recent developments in professional ministry

Background: The Strategic Review of Professional Ministries

At the beginning of my term I convened a strategic review of professional ministry. There were several reasons for initiating such a review. First, we are clearly in the midst of a period of rapid change in religious life. American society is becoming much more diverse culturally and ethnically. In addition, we are continuing to witness a rapid departure from traditional religious institutions. Second, we are entering in a period of rapid turnover of our ordained ministry serving congregations. The combination of the “baby boomer” demographic bulge and the fact that so many ministers enter ministry as a second or third career means that when I entered office half of our ministers were 58 and older.

The Strategic Review of Professional Ministry report was issued in 2011. The Board has yet to discuss the recommendations or the implications of this report. The report was initially issued as a draft and invited input from the UUMA, LREDA, our seminaries and other stakeholders. The “SRPM” recommendations have guided our efforts for the past two years. The recommendations of the report are included in the “Strategic Plan for Professional Ministries”:

http://www.uua.org/documents/mpl/110406_sppm.pdf. The entire report is at:
http://www.uua.org/documents/mpl/110406_srpm.pdf.

The plan made eight recommendations:

1. Aggressively Recruit Leaders
2. Support Multicultural Immersion Learning

3. Re-imagine and Evaluate our Credentialing Efforts
4. Expand Transition Systems
5. Support Advanced Learning for All Religious Professionals
6. Be More Strategic in the Use of Scholarships and Grants
7. Measure What is Truly Important
8. Go Deeper: Partner with Related UU Organizations.

Scope of this Report

This report will not survey all the initiatives we are pursuing in the area of professional ministries. Rather, I will provide a brief update on three areas that are timely and that have implications for future work of the Board. The three areas include:

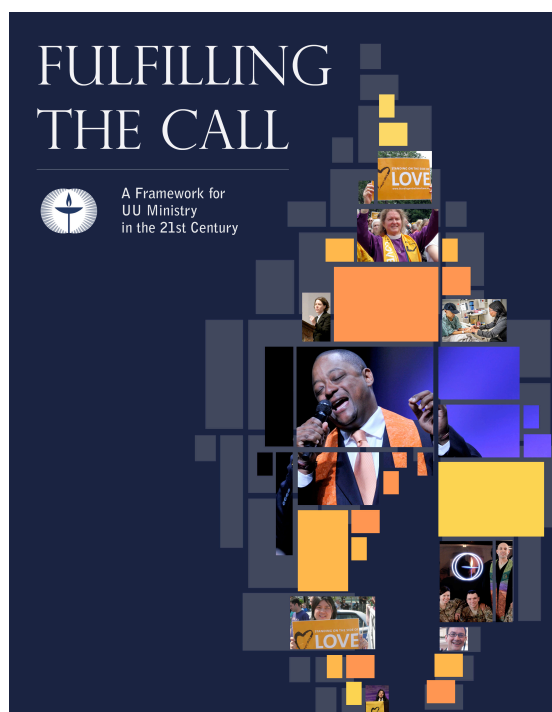
- The work to define the skills necessary for successful ministry: “Fulfilling the Call”
- In Care programs for seminarians
- The development of entrepreneurial leadership skills

What follows below is a brief description of each initiative and some suggested topics for the board to discuss.

Fulfilling the Call

What do our best ministers actually *do*? Which areas of competence are most important? The initiative we have named “Fulfilling the Call” (FTC) is an attempt to identify the critical competencies based on looking at actual ministers who are widely seen as among our most capable. Beyond this, FTC seeks to lay out the developmental stages, from novice to expert, in each of these competency areas in a simple, concise grid format. The implications for this tool are enormous if it is used well. It can help each minister in his or her self assessment. It can help congregational boards and committees on ministry provide useful feedback. The FTC grid can help mentors, seminaries, congregational search committees and the MFC. Hard copies of the grid will be available for board members at our upcoming meeting.

Fulfilling the Call is a partnership of the UUA, the UUMA and Educational Development Center (EDC). EDC is a nonprofit organization that designs and evaluates programs for organizations worldwide. The process of developing the grid for UU ministry involved a series of meetings with seven highly respected UU ministers, UUA staff and UUMA leadership.



A booklet is in final development and will be published this spring. The Ministerial Fellowship Committee is in the process of reevaluating its 17 areas of competency. The FTC skill set will be an important part of that discussion.

Question for board discussion:

- *Assuming the MFC incorporates much of this work, what are the implications for the membership of the MFC and the credentialing process?*

In Care for seminarians

One of the quiet and significant developments of the last few years has been the effort to involve seminarians with congregations and mentor ministers throughout their seminary experience. Seminary is too often a period in which seminarians are removed from congregational life. The aim of the new programs is to create a seamless continuum between the academic experience of seminary and the practical application of that experience to ministry.

In November, an In Care Summit brought together leaders of district based programs supporting seminarians, especially the majority of seminarians who are in non-UU theological schools. Currently there are programs in Mountain Desert, Metro NY, JPD and Prairie Star. There is also a fledgling program in Southern California. The most developed of these programs is the “Living Into Covenant” program in Mountain Desert (a program in which I participated while a parish minister in Colorado).

Our dream is that every UU seminary and UU seminarian will have access to such a program. I would emphasize that this is an example of a creative effort coming from the field and then being promoted nationally by the UUA. As such, it is an example of how we hope to work in the future.

Question for board discussion:

- *Our congregations have historically been involved in the training of new ministers primarily through internship programs. Does the board have a role in promoting active congregational involvement in the mentoring of seminarians? Is advocacy part of linkage?*

Entrepreneurial leadership development

This is the newest initiative, and one that I am personally excited about. It is also the least formed. The initial planning is just getting under way. This is envisioned as another close collaboration between the UUA and the UUMA. (Incidentally, the growing partnership between the UUMA and the UUA is one of the most gratifying developments of the last few years.) This initiative clearly falls under goal five of the SRPM recommendations: support advanced learning for all religious professionals.

We know that in a period of rapid change entrepreneurial leadership is especially important. We are convinced that some of the best work being done to understand leading organizational change is being done in leading business schools. Don Southworth, the executive director of the UUMA, has done significant research into what he calls “calltrepreneurship”—the intersection of pursuing a religious call and entrepreneurship.

Next month, we are bringing together a small group to begin imagining what how a collaboration among the UUA, the UUMA, and one or more business schools might bring advanced training to our religious professionals.

The initial meeting will include Don Southworth, myself, Rev. Scotty McLennan of Stanford University, Prof. John Kotter of Harvard Business School, Rev. Cheryl Walker (UUMA Board), Rev. Jim Sherblom (former venture capitalist) and Rev. Ned Wight of Veatch.

Question for Board discussion:

- *In the coming years creative leaders are going to be creating UU communities that are distinct from congregations as we know them. This is already occurring. What are the implications for the governance of the Association?*