

**Report to the UUA Board of Trustees
for its April 2008 Meeting
from the
UUA Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group**

**Office of the Director of MPL
Beth Miller, A'Llyn Ettien**

New Position Coming to MPL

Thanks to funding by an individual donor, we are currently seeking a Worship and Music Resources Director. The position will be funded for three years with the possibility of an endowment to continue it if it proves to be successful. Appropriate candidates will be ministers with strong music backgrounds. Applications are due the end of March and we hope to have someone in place by August '08. You can see the full job description on the UUA website at <http://www.uua.org/aboutus/careeropportunities/index.shtml>.

As I write this, I am considering applications for the Director of the Office of Church Staff Finance. I hope to be able to announce the new Director by the time of your meeting, although I don't expect that person to begin until August 2008.

Service of the Living Tradition

The preacher for the 2008 Service is the Rev. Victoria Safford of White Bear UU congregation in MN, and the music director is Ian Riddell of James Reeb congregation in Madison, WI.

Excellence in Ministry Projects

I and/or members of my staff have been involved in three of the eight projects funded by the Panel on Theological Education at its October '07 meeting. These projects were all to be completed by 3/31/08 and reports will be reviewed by the Panel at their meeting following the Board meeting. MPL partnerships have been with 1) the Senior Ministers of Large UU Congregations on developing a two-year study program for potentially excellent large church ministers; 2) C.E.N.T.E.R. (the continuing education committee of the UUMA) on revisioning their approach to ministerial continuing education; and 3) with the Youth Office on a Roundtable with stakeholders on improving ministers' and religious educators' competency in ministry to and with youth.

Community and Military Ministry Update

Robin Tanner, our part time intern, is making great progress in our assessment of community ministry. At this writing a survey is almost completed which will help us determine what our community ministers and seminarians are doing, where, how and with what kinds of support or lack thereof, and how they view their relationships with colleagues and the denomination. Robin has been in a great deal of personal contact with leadership of the Society for Community Ministries, individual ministers, District staff, and seminarians, and participated in the first year ministers seminar with Jory Agate and

a regional gathering of community ministers with me. Institutional support for community ministry is the ultimate goal of this two-year assessment process.

I attended a conference for endorsers of military chaplains and learned a great deal about how we can better serve and keep track of our chaplains. We have a small but growing number of chaplains and chaplain candidates. Some will be present at GA to talk with others wishing to consider military ministry.

UU Musicians Network

As has been the intention for several years, the UUA is taking financial and staff responsibility for the UU Musicians credentialing program. Beth Williams, Director of Religious Education Credentialing in MPL, is helping them. We hope to partially fund the credentialing program in 2009 and fully fund it in 2010, pending Board approval of our budget projections.

Professional Leaders Coordinating Council (PLCC)

The PLCC will meet April 17 in Boston. Leaders of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, Liberal Religious Education Directors Association, Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network, Association of Unitarian Universalist Administrators, and Society for Community Ministry have been the members of the PLCC. We are adding the Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and Partners Association (UURMAPA) and the Accredited Interim Ministers' group (AIMs) to the PLCC. These leaders gather in the spring and again at GA each year to discuss matters of mutual concern, build relationships among the various disciplines, and develop joint programs to bring their groups together at GA. To be a member of the PLCC, the organization must have clear requirements for membership and a covenant or statement of ethical standards that members must agree to. The new groups are working on these foundational documents.

UUA Teams

In addition to staff supervision, participation on the Leadership Council, partnering and building relationships with constituent groups, convening the PLCC, and functioning as Executive Secretary to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and the Religious Education Credentialing Committee, I serve on several of the UUA's special teams or groups. These are made up of representatives of the various staff groups and non-staff stakeholder group representatives who engage in specific projects. I am active on the following ongoing teams: Diversity of Ministry, Large Congregations, Panel on Theological Education, and Youth Ministry Working Group.

Ministerial Credentialing

David Pettee, Christine May, Mohammed El-Khatib, Kim Wilson

Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy

By the time of the April UUA Board meeting, three of the four RSCCs will have met to interview aspirants and I will have been present at all three meetings. Regrettably, we have observed a growing pattern that a number of aspirants seem to be delaying seeing

the RSCC, which defeats the purpose of the interview. In response, I will be asking the Ministerial Fellowship Committee at their upcoming meeting in late March to consider requiring all interns to have had an RSCC interview before their internship begins.

Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression and Multiculturalism

In the learnings involved in response to a complaint against a white candidate from a minister of color, the Ministerial Credentialing Office has been updating the complaint procedures and policies to make certain that dynamics central to race are more clearly addressed, and that support for the complainant becomes a higher priority. The Ministerial Fellowship Committee policy regarding complaints against candidates is being updated.

In response to the Diversity of Ministry Team's plan to support ministers of color, the Ministerial Credentialing Office has set aside funds to support interns of color/from historically marginalized communities to serve in congregations that have made a clear commitment to anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism, and would serve as an excellent teaching congregation. One congregation has successfully recruited an intern and another congregation is still searching. While the pool of qualified applicants was quite limited this year, we hope it will be larger next year.

Internship Clearinghouse

To our knowledge, 31 new interns have been placed so far for the 2008-09 year and another 14 will be continuing in their second year of a part-time placement. The St. Lawrence Foundation grant to support a community-based internship was awarded to an intern serving at the UUSC for 2007-08. Kim Wilson is in the process of applying for a similar grant for the 2008-09 year.

In response to requests for more guidance for the internship committees, Kim will be offering a panel-style workshop at GA focusing on the role of the committee in the internship. The one-day training for supervisors held prior to GA last year was a success and Kim is coordinating a second training.

Finally, a recent analysis of the internships shows that of the 16 internships which terminated early over the past five years, the majority of these interns had not interviewed with a Regional Subcommittee on Candidacy prior to the start of that internship.

Religious Education Credentialing **Beth Williams, Paula Welling**

Religious Education Credentialing Program

There are currently 42 active participants in the program: 14 are seeking Masters Level, 20 are seeking Credentialed Level, and eight are seeking Associate Level. Four applicants were accepted into the program, three participants withdrew from the program, and five participants were put on Inactive status. The RECC continues to examine the causes for the recent loss of participants to the program which may include a closer monitoring of

candidates' active engagement with the program. Beth helped develop an online interface for the initiation of background check reporting prepared by Oxford Document Management Company. We have received the first of such reports for candidates scheduled to meet with the RECC in April 2008.

Renaissance Module Training for Religious Educators

Six Renaissance module trainings were conducted in the last reporting period, with four additional modules scheduled so far for the remainder of the fiscal year. We have begun the process of updating resource display materials that accompany the modules.

Interim DRE Training

The annual Interim DRE Training in Boston has been set for July 23 – July 25. Registration material will be sent out soon. We are developing a UUA website material that will focus on interim religious education.

UU Musicians Network

As UUA Liaison to the UU Musicians Network (UUMN) Beth Williams consulted with the organization as it begins to operate under a new modified policy governance structure. This included helping them develop a professional rights procedure. Beth shared with the UUMN Board the UUA plans for hiring a Worship and Music Director (donor financed) and for assuming responsibility for the UUMN certification program. They were most appreciative of these plans and what they mean for the future of worship excellence in congregations.

UUMN Certification Program

This office has worked in close consultation with the UUMN Leadership Development Board to continue to develop the administrative functioning of the UUMN Certification Program, particularly in support of performing the first annual evaluations of current candidates, and the review of seven new applicants for admittance to the program.

Settlement

John Weston, Emily Schwab

Technology

The Transitions Office is working with the Information Technology Services staff group on a major upgrade of the online Ministerial Settlement System. Overarching goals include improved security, flexibility, reliability, independence, and access to information for all users. Specific goals include improved service to ministers in search of opportunities in community ministry and to District staff, smaller congregations, and ministers in publicizing and facilitating placement in consulting ministry positions. The great leaps forward in the quality and sophistication of the UUA's IT resources in the nine years since the inauguration of the first online Settlement System are something to behold!

Search Overview

Fifty-five congregations are currently in search of a minister to serve full-time, all but one in senior or sole positions. Most of the search committees will recommend a candidate to their congregation by late March.

Interim Minister Training

AIMs (Accredited Interim Ministers) and AIMITs (AIMs in Training) will gather in Houston in mid-April for training and preparation for deployment. Ministers who will conduct their first interim ministry in 2008-9 will attend the Orientation to Transitional Ministry in Boston in July. There having been a shortage of interim ministers in the past couple of years, we are greeting the coming year with some anxiety.

Ministerial Development

Jory Agate, Margaret Montore

Addictions Ministry

The Addictions Ministry Task Force met and developed a mission statement and vision for its future work. Attending were representatives for the UUA BOT, UUMA Exec., MPL, DE's, Congregational Services, Young Adult Office, and YRUU. We will be submitting to the Board and the Administration for the Addictions Ministry Task Force to become an actual staff committee of the UUA with staff assigned from MPL, Congregational Services and Youth/Young Adult Ministries. Funding is currently available from the UUFARE reserve fund to support such a committee. Extensive visions were developed regarding potential programs and resources.

First Year Ministers' Seminar

Thirty-one new ministers gathered in Boston March 3-5 to reflect on the start of their ministerial careers, share support and resources, and develop skills to assist them as they start forth in their new careers. Six community ministers attended and the workshop was co-led by me, Martha Neibanck, and Maddie Sifantus. Considerable time was spent in the nuts and bolts of proceeding through preliminary fellowship and I expect the process to go smoother for these folks who have been oriented to the rules and procedures.

Out of Compliance Ministers

One of my goals is to assist the 53 ministers who are in Preliminary Fellowship, but have not received a renewal of Fellowship in at least three years, to either complete their renewals towards Final Fellowship, move to Associate Fellowship Status (Inactive Status if new rules are passed), or be removed from Fellowship. Currently, of those 53, there are only 20 who have still not communicated with us or complied with the MFC rules in some way. Action will be taken at the forthcoming meeting to remove 12 ministers from Fellowship, while I am contacting the remaining eight.

Continuing Education & Career Counseling

Since the beginning of this fiscal year that began July 1, 2007, more than \$45,247 has been allocated to approximately 106 ministers for continuing education grants. Over

\$12,672 has been granted for sustentation to 14 ministers for longer-term counseling and career assessments.

Deceased Ministers

Gene Bridges	January 27, 1929 - January 3, 2008
Elium Gault	March 9, 1922 - November 16, 2007
A. Frazier Mitchell	August 27, 1925 - Unknown
Keith Munson	November 1, 1922 - February 5, 2008
Frank Robertson	September 15, 1936 - February 6, 2008
Carl Thitchener	March 31, 1932 - February 15, 2008
Peter Weller	February 10, 1926 - January 22, 2008

We will remember them...

Friends and colleagues are encouraged to share their reflections on their ministries at this site: <http://uuminmemorialpage.blogspot.com/>

Office of Church Staff Finances

Ralph Mero, Joyce Stewart, Tracy Withy-Browne, Jim Sargent, Kati Deneen

2008 Congregational Salary and Benefits Survey

The design and creation of the 2008 Congregational Salary and Benefits Survey is on schedule for distribution to our congregations. This year's survey will be sent to our congregations via Email, with the responses being returned electronically to the Church Staff Finances office via the software program, "Survey Monkey." Our congregations will be asked to tell us not only what they are paying their staffs, but also what benefits are provided for them, and some general questions about other personnel issues. We will use the results of the survey as a basis for setting the 2009 salary range recommendations, and for gathering statistical data on the compensation programs of our congregations.

UUA Health Plan

The UUA Health Plan completed its first year of operations on December 31, 2007.

We completed a successful open enrollment for 2008, finishing at 680 enrolled employees, or about 100 more than we had at the same time a year ago, growth of nearly 20%. Based on known congregational activity in the pipeline, we will pass the 700 subscriber mark this spring and likely hit 750 by the fall of 2008.

The Plan had a net operating gain of \$940,000, after allowing for reserves of \$425,000. We were able to use our strong financial condition and better-than-expected claims experience to renegotiate our excess loss insurance contracts, further improving the Plan's financial position heading into 2008.

We are now in the process of doing a complete evaluation of claims experience for 2007, and will use the information to work with Highmark and our actuaries to develop targeted

programs that address concerns specific to our population, from basic wellness initiatives to exploring how to make better use of support services for acutely ill members.