

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

**Office of the Director of MPL
Beth Miller, Marion Bell**

New MPL Staff:

Since mid-August we have welcomed the Rev. Richard Nugent, Acting Director of Church Staff Finance, the Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom, Worship and Music Resources Director, and my Assistant, Marion Bell, replacing A'Llyn Ettien who received her Masters Degree in Library Science and landed a great library job at Boston University Medical Library.

Excellence in Ministry:

As the discussion on this expands and becomes more focused, several initiatives have already begun. You were apprised last year of the small grants awarded by the Panel of Theological Education for the development of innovative ideas and projects. The Panel submitted a proposal to the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, N.Y. for funding of continuing work on several of those projects and was awarded \$100,000 for a year's work on two specific projects:

- **Dreaming Big**, the study group to help prepare twenty ministers for service in large congregations, was announced last spring when ministers were invited into a very rigorous application process. Although most of the sixty-eight applicants were well qualified, the twenty participants are: Kathryn Bert, Howard Dana, Nathan Detering, Gail Geisenhainer, Susan Frederick-Gray, Matthew Johnson-Doyle, Daniel Kanter, Kathy Huff, Elizabeth Lerner, Suzelle Lynch, Rosemary Bray McNatt, Aaron McEmerys, Kathleen McTigue, Allison Miller, John Gibb Millspaugh, Sarah Gib Millspaugh, Manish Mishra, Shawn Newton, Joshua Snyder, and Vanessa Southern. MPL and our Senior Ministers of Large UU Congregations (SMOLUUC) partners have worked on curriculum and organizational details this summer. The first seminar will be held in November in Concord, MA. As we create this program and experiment with the model, we hope to eventually offer accessible resources and similar programs for a variety of ministries in the future.
- **Nurturing Excellence in Transformational Ministry** is an 'in-care' formation program for seminarians in non-UU schools developed by the Mountain Desert District with the small Panel grant they received last year. This larger grant will fund implementation in MDD and help MPL and Districts and congregational partners to replicate similar programs for seminarians in non-UU schools in several other Districts. Again, we are creating as we go with an eye toward providing robust in-care programs for all seminarians.

The Excellence in Ministry Summit sponsored by the Panel will take place in Seattle December 10-12. Sixty representatives from all the essential stakeholder groups have been invited to engage in this topic under the facilitative leadership of the Rev. Susan Beaumont, Senior Consultant, at the Alban Institute. Look for news from the Summit on the Panel's website early in the new year.

The Community Ministry:

We are in the second and final year of a project to assess the needs of community ministers and the congregations, parish ministers, and other church staff members with whom they affiliate. Robin Tanner, ministerial intern working on this project, personally contacted all stakeholder groups, District Executives and many community ministers and seminarians and conducted an extensive survey. Survey Results can be found on the MPL section of the UUA website at <http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/communityministry/index.shtml>. Robin will follow up on some of the information gleaned from the survey and collect more information and specific stories. My goal is to develop a clear vision and sufficient resources to help facilitate community ministers and their ministries as the ambassadors for Unitarian Universalism they can and ought to be and to more effectively engage the congregations in their work wherever possible. Right now, I believe we are missing opportunities because of insufficient resources and lack of vision in this area.

UU Trauma Response Ministry:

The Tennessee Valley and Westside UU Congregations have been in our hearts and on our minds following the tragic and very troubling shooting in Knoxville on July 27th. We continue to support the members, ministers and staffs as they go through the long and chaotic process of grieving and healing. I am grateful to UUTRM for their excellent work in the wake of that tragedy. UUTRM members deployed to Knoxville included: Karen Reagle, Julie Taylor, Rosemary Bray McNatt, Susan Suchocki-Brown, Lisa Presley, Aaron Payson, Craig Hirshberg, Laurel Cassidy, Margie Allen, Kelly Murphy Mason, and Flo Gelo. These people and the rest of UUTRM volunteer their time to take training and go into whatever kinds of crisis situations they are called to on behalf of all of us. It is no wonder that they received the Outstanding Service Volunteer Award two years ago at GA. Many District staff and other ministers in the area responded with support and help as well. More funding is needed for UUTRM's work.

Ministerial Credentialing

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

Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy:

Over the course of the summer, I initiated an on-line survey of the RSCC system that was in response to the final recommendation of the RSCC Evaluation from 2003. The district staff who interview aspirants, all RSCC members including administrators and all current aspirants, candidates and those ministers who had seen an RSCC between 2003 and 2008

were sent a survey. Overall, more 50% of those surveyed chose to respond. I am planning to analyze the results and present a report to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee for consideration at their meeting in late September. Beginning September 2009, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee will require all interns to have had an RSCC interview before their internship begins.

Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression and Multiculturalism:

In response to the Diversity of Ministry Team's plan to support ministers of color, the Ministerial Credentialing Office did set aside funds to support an intern of color at All Souls in Washington, DC. While there were two other congregations who indicated a willingness to host an intern of color/from a historically marginalized community, there were not other interns seeking a congregationally based internship.

Internship Clearinghouse:

In addition, the Internship Manual was also revised in August, incorporating all the recent MFC changes and it has been reduced by ten pages and re-organized. Because of an increased focus on utilizing www.uua.org as a primary resource, we encourage folks to access the Manual on-line, enabling us to post an updated Manual each September. An announcement about the new Manual, with a copy attached, has been e-mailed to all current supervisors and interns.

All supervisors are aware of the new requirement to be a member in good standing and to our knowledge, all UUA supervisors are members, including a supervisor who has recently joined. A welcome letter has been sent out to all interns on the Internship Clearinghouse list. At present, there are 52 interns. Typically, there are 70-75 internships in any given year, so it is expected that somewhere around 20 interns will be in touch with the Clearinghouse soon to gain approval of their Learning/Service Agreements. We were also delighted to offer a \$10,000 St. Lawrence Grant to a community based intern who is serving at Beacon House.

Religious Education and Music Leadership Credentialing

Beth Williams, Paula Welling

Religious Education Credentialing Program:

There are currently thirty-nine active participants in the program: eleven are seeking Masters Level, twenty one are seeking Credentialed Level, and seven are seeking Associate Level. One candidate, Aisha Hauser of North Haledon, NJ was awarded Credentialed Religious Educator Associate level status. Five applicants were accepted into the program, four participants withdrew from the program, and two participants were put on Hold status.

Renaissance Module Training for Religious Educators :

Five Renaissance module trainings were conducted in the last reporting period, with nine additional modules scheduled so far for the remainder of the fiscal year. We look forward to working with the Lifespan Faith Development staff group in improving the content and creating new content in this module program.

Interim DRE Training:

The annual Interim DRE Training was held on July 23-25, 2008. We had seven participants in the training.

Religious Education Scholarships :

The Barbara Marshman & Ann Fields Memorial Scholarship was awarded this year to Karen Fisk of Augusta, ME. The Norma Veridan Fund for Religious Education Excellence was awarded to Greta Porter of Pittsburgh, PA. In addition continuing education funds of \$2,230 were awarded to six religious educators.

UUMN Credentialing Program:

Four new candidates joined the existing roster of nine in participating in credentialing program offerings at the annual UUMN Conference in August 2008. These offerings included a Professional Development Day presented by Rev. Mark Belletini on UU history and theology as reflected in UU Hymnody, a course on care and ethics presented by Rev. Gretchen Woods and Ken Herman, a course on leading a rehearsal presented by Annease Hastings and Beth Norton, an orientation and a reception for candidates and advisors. Advisors also participated in advisor training. Beth Williams served as director of the UUMN Credentialing Program and this office supported the many credentialing related activities held at the UUMN Conference. This office has begun work on Rules and UUA Bylaw changes required for transitioning this program to a UUA Music Leadership Credentialing program with a UUA Board appointed Music Leadership Credentialing Committee.

UU Musicians Network:

As UUA Liaison to the UU Musicians Network (UUMN) Beth Williams helped support the UUMN in its participation in the UUA Professional Leadership Coordinating Council, gathered information and made connections with UUA staff regarding a possible UUMN participation in future UUA mid-size and larger church conferences, collected information from other UU professional organizations about their staff compensation practices, participated in a conversation with UUMN Board leadership about the ordination of ministers of music, participated in a conversation with the UUMN and UUA on the future of possibility of professionally staffing UUA districts with music consultants, and was in dialogue with the UUA about the possible transition of the UUMN certification program over to the UUA. At the UUMN Annual Conference in August 2008, Beth introduced the UUMN to Erik Wikstrom who has taken over the role of UUMN Liaison in his position of UUA Worship and Music Director.

Transitions Office

John Weston and Emily Schwab

The formidable task of digitizing and electronically storing the files maintained by Ministry and Professional Leadership on all living UU ministers and the files maintained by the Transitions Office on all congregations that have used our settlement services is under way. By Spring the existing paper files will be shipped off site, and from then on MPL will be, if not paper free (it is to laugh), then fully digital. The security afforded by electronic storage will relieve the UUA of the significant risk of loss of priceless records.

Forty-eight ministers were called to ministries new to them in the past year: 29 women, 19 men. The average length of tenure of the ministers departing those positions was 8.7 years; the median tenure, 6 years. The financial terms of the new settlements will be reported upon in our next reports.

One hundred interim and consulting ministries are in being this year, ten more than the last five years' average. Filling all the congregational applications has become an annual struggle.

Ministerial Development

Jory Agate, Margaret Montore

Addictions Ministry :

The Addictions Ministry Task Force continues to meet by conference call and has submitted a request to the Administration to broaden its work and become a multi-staff group committee. It hopes to do more in support services and program development engaging MPL, Youth and Young Adult Offices and Congregational Services. They have currently established an Addictions Ministry listserv and are working on design of a website. They are also planning workshops to present at GA and Ministry Days.

Dreaming Big:

Ministerial Development with MPL Director, Beth Miller, and SMOLUUC is creating a two-year continuing education program for ministers who wish to develop their skills to minister large congregations. Sixty-eight ministers applied for the program last May and 20 were selected. The first of 6 retreats will be held next month in Concord. This year's future retreat sites include weekends at Unity Church in St. Paul, MN, and the First Unitarian Church in Albuquerque, NM.

First Year Ministers' Seminar:

At General Assembly this past June we held receptions for both last year's First Year ministers as well as ministers who are just now entering their First Year. A retreat will be held in Boston in February for all new First Year ministers.

Culminating Chapter:

The Ministerial Development Office is sponsoring a conference called “Creating a Culminating Chapter for Your Ministry” for ministers who see themselves as retiring in 5-7 years. This is a program designed to enable ministers to vision and craft a legacy and final shape of their ministry so that they don’t enter into retirement in burnout. The Office of Church Staff Finances will be joining the program to assist in retirement planning. It will take place from April 13-17, 2009, in Jacksonville, FL.

Preliminary Fellowship:

There are currently 344 ministers in Preliminary Fellowship and 51 ministers in Inactive Fellowship Status. Of the ministers in Preliminary Fellowship, 23 are out of compliance with MFC rules that require them to submit applications for renewal of fellowship. Action will be taken on those ministers at the upcoming meeting of the MFC. All ministers who are in Inactive Status are now required to register each year and pay \$25 to maintain their fellowship credential.

Continuing Education & Career Counseling:

Since the beginning of this fiscal year that began July 1, 2008, \$24,162 has been allocated to approximately 50 ministers for continuing education grants. Over \$6,749 has been granted for sustentation to 8 ministers for longer-term counseling and career assessments. Last year a total of \$71,750 was granted to 172 ministers for continuing education and \$17,397 to 22 ministers for sustentation.

Deceased Ministers :

The following are the ministers whose deaths we have learned of since June 2008:

David M. Blanchard	August 18, 2008
Donald W. Male	August 14, 2008
John R. B. Szala	January 1, 2008
Mounir R. Sa’adah	July 25, 2008
Penelope A. Binger	June 1, 2008
Roy A. Ockert	July 16, 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/UUA Health Plan

Richard Nugent, Joyce Stewart, Tracy Withy-Browne, Jim Sargent, Kati MacDonald

I am honored to follow Ralph Mero as heading up the OCSF/Health Plan staff team. Ralph assembled an outstanding staff team as anyone who has used the services of our office knows quite well. I know that I benefited greatly from their work and caring

attention during my 11 years of interim ministry to seven congregations. If you have a question, but not sure where to direct it or if I can be of assistance to you in any way, please don't hesitate to contact me at (617) 948-6456 or rnugent@uaa.org.

2009 Salary Recommendations :

The Compensation, Benefits and Pension Committee is scheduled to vote on the 2009 Salary Recommendations at its October 2 meeting. Pending the Committee's approval, the new recommendations will be available on the UUA website at <http://www.uaa.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/compensation/index.shtml>. The 2009 salary recommendations are based largely on the results garnered from the salary survey that was distributed to all UU congregations in May, 2008. The Compensation Committee also used as guidelines the salary data provided by the Economic Research Institute that was gathered from other comparable non-profit organizations. The Geo Indices have been updated and will also be available at the same website. The Geo Indices have been revised based on the salary survey, advice from our District Compensation Consultants, and from the Economic Research Institute information.

Request for Proposal – UU Organizations Retirement Plan:

The Compensation, Benefits and Pension Committee requested that a Request for Proposal (RFP) and Evaluation Process for the UU Organizations Retirement Plan be undertaken. Fidelity, our current provider, and two other eligible providers responded with detailed proposals. These responses are being reviewed, and additional information sought prior to the oral presentations before the Committee. By early October, a brief electronic survey will be sent to all plan participants to gauge their opinions. The Committee is expecting to be able to make a decision on the retirement plan's service provider at the April 2009 meeting. If there were to be a change in providers, it appears at this point that the conversion would take place effective January 1, 2010. These dates are subject to change as we move through this complicated process. Contact Joyce Stewart (jstewart@uaa.org) for more details.

UUA Health Plan Announces 2009 Open Enrollment :

The UUA Health Plan is ready for the next Open Enrollment Period. During the month of November, all eligible staff – everyone working 750 or more hours per year – will be able to join the plan effective January 1, 2009, even if they have not taken advantage of past enrollment opportunities. Now is the time for congregations to take a close look at health insurance costs and policies regarding contributions to the cost of staff's health insurance and to join nearly 300 other congregations that look to the UUA Health Plan for their health insurance. We will be sending 2009 plan and rating details to all subscribing employers with the November invoices. The UUA Health Plan website is updated regularly – go to <http://www.uaa.org/leaders/healthplan>. If you have any questions, you can call Health Plan Director Jim Sargent at (617) 948-6405 or jsargent@uaa.org.

Office of Worship and Music Resources
Erik Walker Wikstrom

Worship and Music Resources Director:

As this position only came into being on September 2nd, there's not much to report on what has been done. What will be done, though, could fill a book. Here's a brief synopsis:

Spread the word and start gathering information. Through several avenues we'll publicize this position as well as the invitation for people with experiences and/or expertise to share to make contact. We'll begin developing a database upon which we'll draw in later phases of this three-year experiment.

Establish some baseline metrics. We'll be developing a survey to assess feelings from ministers and music professionals concerning the UUA's resources around worship, as well as a more in-depth survey for congregations in our pilot program looking at the experience of worship within these congregations from multiple points of view (i.e., worship leaders, musicians, lay people, visitors, etc.)

Create a pilot worship enrichment program. We'd look to enroll some number of congregations (of varying size) in a pilot project which would begin by assessing the current feelings of satisfaction with their worship service and then tailor resource offerings to their perceived weaknesses. Close contact would be maintained throughout the trial period. At the end of the program another survey would be taken, and the congregations would agree to serve as mentors to others.

Expand Worship Web. This will no doubt be the most visible dimension of the WAMR position, expanding worship web into a true one-stop portal for any and all conceivable worship resources: e.g., church architecture, dance, drama, intergenerational worship, the internet, lay worship, music, symbols, technology, podcasting, preaching, video, and the visual arts. A guiding vision will be to coordinate and collaborate with the CLF, CYF, LREDA, UUMN, as well as non-UU partners, so as to make this resource as comprehensive as possible.