

**UUA Religious Education Credentialing Committee**  
**Meeting Precip**  
**October 18-23, 2004**  
**Chicago, IL**

Members Present: Liz Jones – Chair, Gail Forsyth-Vail, Rev. Kirk Loadman-Copeland, Steve Lynn, Sue McGovern, Rev. Betty Jo Middleton, Kathryn Warrior. Ex Officio: Rev. David Hubner, Rev. Beth Williams, Gina Ruvido – Recorder. Credentialed Observer: Gaia Brown.

Liz brought the meeting to order at 9:15 AM on October 18, 2004.

The minutes from the February meeting were approved. The action items list from the February meeting was reviewed.

**Report from the Director of Ministry and Professional Leadership** – David encouraged conversations between all staff members of congregations (ministers et al.) to afford a practical cross-pollination of information, and to help church professionals to collaborate instead of working individually.

**Report from the RE Credentialing Director** – Beth reviewed accomplishments since February 2004, including the modifications to the UUA Bylaws that establish the RECC as a standing committee of the UUA Board, and the Renaissance Program coming back to the UUA, a guide for Compensation Consultants to help congregations place their non-credentialed religious educators in salary recommendations. She indicated that inquiries about the program are down, and there is low volume on the RE Credentialing List serve and the Online Settlement system. The office is strategizing about what this means and how to address this. For the future: FAQ online, small group processing at LREDA Fall Conference and M/L Winter Institute, possible pilot project with John Weston for the Interim DRE, additional UUA Bylaw change.

**Report from the RECC Chair** – Liz welcomed new member Steve Lynn and gave a history of the RECC, an overview of its process, progress, and what it needed to accomplish in this meeting (including continued work on rules and procedures), and highlighted the importance for the Committee viewing its work with an anti-racist/anti-oppressive lens. She gave an overview of the candidate portfolio and how it is put together, as well as the upcoming interviews with the candidates.

**Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Accountability** – Gail reported on a conversation with Taquiena Boston regarding suggestions of how the RECC might develop an accountability relationship. The suggestions included: formalizing a link with LREDA Integrity Team; establishing a small accountability group of religious educators; creating a formal link with the UUA Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee.

**Reading List Substitutions** – Betty Jo and Kathryn reported on the process established: a request form must be submitted to the office for between-meeting approval by the

RECC sub-committee; a copy the book must also be lent to the sub-committee if not already available. One request had been received and approved: "Understanding the Bible" by John Buehrens. The RECC voted to add this book to all reading lists. A future agenda item will be to review the reading lists for anti-racism/anti-oppression compliance.

**Portfolio Competency Format** – Kirk submitted a proposal, which, after subsequent refinement, was approved by the RECC, for a standardized format for portfolio competencies. The Committee also voted to direct the Office to return any portfolio that was incomplete, did not follow the format, or included more than 1-3 work samples for each competency (a candidate needs to demonstrate a discernment of his/her best work). These policies and format will be published and will go into effect by **????** David submitted a proposal for a Portfolio Cover Sheet to provide additional information about the candidate that is typically not in the portfolio.

**Review of Equivalencies** - Committee members will come to the February 2005 meeting with proposals for equivalency requirements for graduate course work in: Learning Theories; Teaching Methods; and History and Philosophy of UU Religious Education.

**RECC Transparency Issues & Requirements** – Liz described the process during the current meeting (Time for Comments, Credentialed Observer) to further facilitate UUA's initiative for more transparency of committee process. The RECC agreed to the additional future actions: possibly alternating an Open RECC session with Time for Comment; meeting précis available on website; facility on website to direct comments/questions to Committee chair.

### **Small Group Work**

**Mission/Vision Statement** - a proposed set of anti-racism/anti-oppression statements to be included in the draft RECC Mission/Vision Statement. RECC affirmed proposal.

**RECC Rotation** - a proposed schema for members' rotation on/off the RECC was presented. RECC affirmed proposal.

**Feedback from LREDA Fall Conference 2003** - a proposed list of RECC action items resulting from LREDA members comments regarding the RE Credentialing program was presented. RECC affirmed proposal.

**RE Credentialing Program Plan** - Beth will provide a draft at the February 2005 meeting of a rewritten plan that will reflect updated information regarding the current program.

**Scholarship Funding** - current availability and future plans for providing scholarship funding for RE Credentialing participants was discussed. The need for guidance to congregations to plan their budgets for this type of funding was affirmed.

**Responsible Staffing Guide** - David reported on the UUA's effort to draft a guide for congregations and other UU organizations as they are calling ministers, hiring staff and engaging volunteers in order to help make our congregations/organizations as safe as

possible. This guide is in addition to the Safe Congregations effort. It should be released some time this year. Beth reported on the status of the RE Credentialing Conviction Disclosure form.

### **Small Group Work**

#### **Review of Brochure Draft: RE Credentialing & Congregations - Benefits/Resources**

- Brochure was reviewed and edited. Editing process to continue after meeting.

#### **Clarify RE Credentialing Program Requirements** - Initial proposal submitted.

Clarification process to continue after meeting.

**RE Credentialing Program Communications/Publicity Strategy** - Initial proposal submitted. Development process subsequently refined (workshops (GA and elsewhere, electronic media, brochures, etc.) This will also be an agenda item for February 2005 meeting.

**Incomplete Portfolio Materials** - The RECC established policies on portfolios and reading lists that are submitted incomplete.

**Who May Apply to Program?** - A policy made at the February 2004 RECC meeting was clarified: anyone may apply to the program, but only those who meet the program requirements (including work in religious education) are eligible to receive a Religious Education credential.

**Program Rules and Procedures** - Beth submitted a draft of RE Credentialing program rules and procedures. The RECC reviewed and edited the rules. The procedures will be reviewed at the February 2005 meeting. Any additional work needed on the rules will be done at that time. The rules must be approved by the UUA Board before they go into effect.

**Equivalency Format** - Kirk submitted a proposal for the format for the academic equivalency (proposal and fulfillment) of graduate course work for the Credentialed Religious Educator - Masters Level. The proposal was affirmed by the RECC.

**February Meeting Location** - The discussion from February 2004 continued regarding evaluation of Madison WI as not very accessible in the winter for people with physical disabilities. The weighing of physical accessibility and economic accessibility were included in the discussion. Suggestions of different meeting locations and times of the year were offered. The RECC decided to meet in Madison in February 2005 but to continue to consider other options. Dates for the next meeting are February 13-17, 2005.

**Mentoring Process** - A discussion was conducted on what the RECC wanted from the Mentoring process. Gaia, who is chair of the LREDA Committee on Mentoring, explained the current process. The importance of the role of the mentor in the life of the participant was affirmed by the Committee, especially in encouraging the participant in the self-examination process. Suggestions for the future: a self-assessment on the Committee on Mentoring on mentor matching/administration process; a survey of mentors to be shared with RECC that might give the Committee insight on trends of

issues that are arising with program participants; a refinement of communication procedures among mentors/Committee on Mentoring/RE Credentialing Director.

**Interview Process** - Liz reviewed the candidate interview process (as described in “What to Expect from the RECC Interview Meeting”) in preparation for the upcoming candidate interviews.

**Hold Status** - A discussion was conducted on program participants who are requesting (or are determined to be in) a hiatus from the program. The RECC voted to initiate a “hold status” (no more than 1 year, no re-entry requirements, limited program benefits) and an “inactive participant status” (no program benefits, must petition for re-entry, re-entry at discretion of RECC.)

**Additional Assessment Tools** - Kirk suggested a “competency ranking” tool to be included in the portfolio. The RECC voted to require the Letter of Endorsement to include an indication of candidate areas for growth that might be developed while a participant in the program, and require that this information be shared with the applicant. The RECC also voted to require the Letter of Recommendation to come directly to the RECC from the author (via the Office - with a copy send to candidate) to encourage a candid assessment of the candidate.

**Candidate Interviews** - The following candidates were interviewed and awarded Credentialed Religious Educator status: Pat Kahn, Layne Richard-Hammock, Alice Springer, Kathy Walker.

**Mentoring Discussion Continued** - Gaia requested clarity from the RECC about policy regarding the required length of the mentoring relationship and frequency of mentoring contacts. The RECC affirmed the need for a mentor, but not a minimum relationship period. It voted to establish the following policy: those candidates desiring to complete the RE Credentialing program in less than a year are required to have a mentor with the ideal being approx. 1 hour a month for how many months it takes for the candidate to complete it. David also suggested developing a “Guide for using a Mentor.”

**“Lay Professional” Terminology** - It was brought to the attention of the RECC that the use of the term “lay” in describing (primarily) DREs as “lay professional religious educators” was felt by some to be demeaning to the profession. The RECC agreed to substitute “professional religious educator” for this term in all published documents (electronic and paper) relating to the RE Credentialing program. Beth agreed to also avoid using the term when she must distinguish between religious educators who are also serving as ministers, and those who are not.

**Time for Comments** - After reminding the RECC of the purpose and ground rules of this time for public comment, Liz did the same for those gathered. Beth read Betty Skwarek’s previously submitted statement for three minutes, after which the Time for Comments was concluded. The RECC reconvened its meeting, reviewed the Time for

Comments, and agreed that the process was unsatisfactory. The process will be revised for the next time it is held.

**Credentialed Observer's Report** - Gaia presented a verbal report to the RECC. A written report will follow.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm on October 23, 2004.