

Report of the Religious Education Credentialing Committee To the General Assembly, 2005

The Unitarian Universalist Association by-laws were amended in June of 2004 to make the Religious Education Credentialing Committee an official committee of the Board. The RECC has jurisdiction over religious education credentialing with the Association. There are currently seven members of the committee, and we meet twice a year to conduct business, meet with candidates, and grant credentials.

The Committee worked over the year to finalize its Rules and to clarify its Policies. The Rules were submitted to the Board of Trustees at its April, 2005 meeting and were approved. The policies are still being clarified and we will continue to work on them in the coming year.

The RECC continues to work on various parts of the credentialing process. We approved a standardized portfolio format which clarifies for the participants what is expected and makes the portfolio easier to assess by the committee. We are working on annotating the required reading lists for the program to help participants in choosing which books to read. We are also working to assess the reading lists with an anti-racist, anti-oppression, multi-cultural lens and are adding selected works to the list with this in mind. In keeping with our commitment to making this program accessible to individuals whose life circumstances do not make a traditional academic path to credentialing possible while still maintaining professional standards the RECC is continuing to define equivalency formats for the academic requirements.

We are continuing our process of working to create accountability relationships with traditionally marginalized groups within our association. We are currently in conversation with the Integrity Team of the Liberal Religious Educator's Association and the Office of Identity Based Ministries, among others, as a way of finding the most appropriate way to establish this accountability. The committee members are aware that we need to continue our own personal growth and awareness in this area so we have made a commitment to read essays between our meetings and to set time aside on our agenda to discuss what we have read.

With issues of accessibility in mind, the RECC has had concerns about our winter meeting which we have held twice in Madison, WI in connection with the Meadville Lombard Winter Institute. The weather in Madison in February can be difficult for people with mobility issues, and Madison is often more expensive to travel to because it is not a hub airport. When we combined this with our desire to spread our meetings more evenly throughout the year, we have decided to move our winter meeting to late March, 2006, in Boston on a trial basis. We will assess the value of this move before making a permanent change.

As a new program in our association we are keenly aware that we need to educate our congregations and our religious professionals about the Religious Education Credentialing program. We are working on a communications strategy which includes brochures, workshops, articles, and other means of communication. Our most recently completed brochure is titled "The Religious Education Credentialing Program & the Unitarian Universalist Congregation: Benefits Received, Resources Required." Our workshop at General Assembly this year as well as the one at Professional Days will focus on this topic.

As a means of keeping our process as open and transparent as possible, the committee continues to do several things. We held a "Time for Comment" on the last day of our meeting in October. Individuals were invited to make short verbal comments to the committee as well as provide single page written notes. At our February Meeting we held an open session and invited observers to attend. The committee plans to

continue alternating these two sessions at our two annual meetings. At each of our meetings, there is an official Credentialed Religious Educator observer who attends our full meeting and reports back his or her observations. These observations are posted on Program's Website for anyone who is interested to read. Also posted on the program's Website is the Précis of our meeting, and feedback that the committee has received. These and the program requirements can be found at <http://www.uua.org/programs/ministry/reco/recp.html>.

During the year the committee has interviewed and awarded the status of Credentialed Religious Educator to 8 individuals. There are currently 47 active participants in the program.

The current members of the committee are:

Gail Forsyth-Vail, Credentialed Religious Educator – Masters Level
Liz Jones, Chair, and nominated by the Liberal Religious Educators Association
Kirk Loadman-Copeland, Parish Minister
Steve Lynn, Lay Member
Sue McGovern, Lay member
Betty Jo Middleton, Minister of Religious Education
Katherine Warrior, Lay Member

Respectfully Submitted,
Liz Jones
Chair