

UUA Religious Education Credentialing Committee
Meeting Précis
October 17 - 21, 2005
Philadelphia, PA

Members Present: Liz Jones – Chair, Pam Allen-Thompson (UUA Board Liaison,) Gail Forsyth-Vail, Kirk Loadman-Copeland, Steve Lynn, Sue McGovern, Betty Jo Middleton, Kathryn Warrior. Ex Officio: David Hubner, Beth Williams, A’ashia Short (Recorder.)
Credentialed Observer: Layne Richard-Hammock.

The meeting was opened at approximately 8:30 am on October 17, 2005.

The minutes from the February meeting were corrected and approved. Action items from February were reviewed.

A/O-A/R Issues – Gail facilitated a discussion on the essay “Not Somewhere Else, But Here: The Struggle for Racial Justice as a Struggle to Inhabit My Country” by Rebecca Parker and contained in the book Soul Work: Anti-racist Theologies in Dialogue, Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley and Nancy Palmer Jones, eds. This reading and discussion, which will similarly be held at every RECC meeting, was undertaken by the RECC to further its own education in AO/AR issues. The reading identified for the next meeting is “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” by Peggy McIntosh. Kathryn reported on the AO/AR training she attended after GA 2005 as a member of a UUA Board appointed committee. Gail reported on her conversation with Sofia Craethnenn, new UUA Program Coordinator: Racial and Ethnic Concerns, about developing a network of accountability for the RECC. Gail’s discussion with Keith Kron identified the following as issues with which a credentialed religious educator should be knowledgeable: trans-racial adoption, atypical family configurations, negative experiences outside of congregations of youth with sexual identity issues. Deborah Greenstein made recommendations of resources related to accessibility issues.

Candidate Awards - The following candidate was awarded Credentialed Religious Educator – Associate Level status: Carolyn Freud. The following candidate was awarded Credentialed Religious Educator status: Kathleen Carpenter, Natalie Fenimore, Benette Sherman, Joyce Zaugg. The following candidate was awarded Credentialed Religious Educator – Master’s Level status: Jan Devor

Equivalency - Bachelor’s degree (Credentialed Level) - The portions of the previously published requirements for this equivalency that will need to be fulfilled by a candidate will depend upon how many undergraduate credits have yet to be earned by the candidate (rather than fulfilling all (120 semester hour credits) requirements regardless of how many credits have yet to be earned.) The REC Director will have the authority to approve the proposal based on how the additional credits (up to 120) should be pro-rated.

Equivalencies - Graduate Credit in a Required Subject (Master’s Level) - What have previously been presented as “sample” equivalencies (currently for UU History and UU

Polity, in the future for Learning Theories, Teaching Methods, and History and Philosophy of UU History) will now be requirements for the equivalency. The previously published requirements for the UU History and the UU Polity equivalencies will be revised to conform to the previously published “generic” requirements for equivalency for graduate credit in a required subject. An “optional” or “suggested reading” category will be added to the required bibliography. UU History and UU Polity are considered separate subject areas, and require separate equivalencies. The same is true for Learning Theories and Teaching Methods. The History and Philosophy of UU Religious Education is considered a single subject, and requires one equivalency.

Equivalency Evaluation – The following candidate had a program requirement equivalency evaluated and approved: Dana Regan – Equivalency for a Bachelor’s degree.

Equivalency Proposals - a subcommittee of the RECC was formed to review equivalency proposals (which are required for all academic equivalencies) outside of the RECC meeting on a periodic basis throughout the year. A format for a proposal for a Master’s degree equivalency, based on previously published requirements for this equivalency, was developed. A format for a proposal for the Bachelor’s degree equivalency is in development. Proposal forms no longer need to be submitted for an equivalency for graduate credit in a required subject, since any deviation from the specific requirements for each subject must be requested and approved via a waiver. New requirements of the Evaluator (formerly called the Academic Evaluator) specified in the proposal include having a graduate degree, being from outside the candidate’s district, an explanation of how the evaluator knows the candidate and what qualifies the evaluator to evaluate the candidate’s work. Guidelines for the Evaluator are being developed and refined.

Equivalency Proposal Evaluation – The following candidate had a proposal for a program requirement equivalency evaluated and approved: Sparrow Alden – Equivalency for a Master’s degree; The following candidates had a proposal for a program requirement equivalency evaluated and approved with contingencies: Cindy Leitner – Equivalency for a Master’s degree, and Equivalency for graduate credit in UU History and UU Polity; Cathy Tauscher- Equivalency for graduate credit in UU History and UU Polity.

Forms/Documents- Existing – *Recommendation forms* submitted that are over one year old will need to be recertified or amended by the author. This requirement does not apply to Endorsement forms. *Recommendation forms* and *Endorsement forms* may be returned if they are not filled out to a satisfactory extent. This means that forms having more than a few “I don’t know” responses, or stock responses for each category (i.e. “s/he’s great!”) will not be acceptable. *Portfolio Competency Area Reflections* will need to be provided for all work samples. This reflection must include a short description of the work sample, why it demonstrates competency in this area, and an identification of the candidate’s relationship to it (created, significantly adapted, etc.). These policies will take effect for the March 2007 meeting and will be optional (but much appreciated) before then.

Forms/Documents - New – A draft of a *Self-assessment of Competencies* form was reviewed and approved. This form is meant to help the RECC determine candidates' ability to self-evaluate their knowledge and work as represented in their portfolios. Questions/information proposed for this form included "Which 3 to 5 competencies do you want to strengthen over the next 3 years? Provide two to three sentences describing what you want to improve and what you may need help with." The form will be required beginning with March 2007 meeting and will be optional before then.

A draft of a *Professional Context* form was reviewed and approved. This form is meant to give the RECC a better understanding of the unique circumstances under which a candidate works as a religious educator. Questions will relate to the details of the congregation, organization, or constituency served, including accomplishments in religious education, and challenges or constraints of the environment. The form will be required beginning with March 2007 meeting and will be optional (but much appreciated) before then.

A draft of a *RE Credentialing Program Outcomes* survey was reviewed and approved. This survey is meant to help the UUA determine whether the RE Credentialing program is realizing the Committee's desired outcomes for it. The survey will be sent to all credentialed religious educators this year, and on an ongoing basis. A shorter optional survey for congregations will be developed in the near future.

Future Meetings – The winter 2006 meeting will take place March 26-31 in Boston, MA. Because the scheduling of the future LREDA Fall Conferences conflicts with the UUA Board meeting (a conflict for some RECC members,) the fall RECC meetings will take place after the LREDA conference. The RECC Fall 2006 meeting will take place in Orlando FL, possibly October 23-27, with candidate interviews taking place early in the week. A western location is being considered for the winter (March) 2007 meeting.

Publicity - The RECC will be doing a workshop at GA 2006 geared to the interests and needs of congregations considering the RE Credentialing program for their religious educators. They will seek to do a workshop at LREDA Professional Day 2006, perhaps related to portfolios. Examples of well done portfolio sections will be developed as a resource for district staff and perhaps put on the UUA website. The RECC will not seek to do a workshop at UUMA professional days this year, and will probably only do so periodically in the future, rather than every year.

Reading Lists Review – A small group is looking at reorganizing and revising the reading lists. The current proposal is to reorganize the lists according to competency areas, to standardize terminology across lists, to distribute books using an AO/AR lens across competencies and to add more books that use this lens, and to give the Credentialed Level list more an better reading options by having one list for Credentialed and Master's Level and using current Master's level as a beginning point for it. A proposal for this work will be reviewed at the next meeting.

RE Credentialing Competency Areas – At the Master’s level, UU Polity is separated from UU History to make two distinct required competency areas, and Teaching Methods is separated from Learning Theories to make two distinct required competency areas. This separation applies to the graduate credit requirement (course or equivalency) as well as the portfolio. At the Associate Level, an understanding of the UUA Initiatives of AO/AR and safe congregations are to be emphasized, as they are at all credentialing levels.

Reports

RECC Chair, Liz Jones: Helped present workshops on RE Credentialing at Large Church Conference, Professional Days, and General Assembly. Reported for RECC at GA Plenary and represented RECC at GA’s Service of the Living Tradition. In addition to regular reporting to the UUA Board, met with the Board’s “Our Association” working group to present RECC Rules and to discuss their proposal that a Board Liaison be appointed to the Committee. The RECC Rules were subsequently approved by the UUA Board. Reached out to Journey Toward Wholeness working group to ask for recommendation on best way to create relationships of accountability.

RECC Director, Beth Williams: Currently 47 active participants in the program: 20 seeking Master’s Level, 22 seeking Credentialed Level, and 5 seeking Associate’s Level. Currently 27 religious educators are credentialed at some level. Met with prospective applicants at Meadville Lombard Theological School and GA. Participated in GA’s Service of the Living Tradition. Contributed to articles in Interconnections and The Religious Leader. Led a workshop on RE Credentialing at RE Week at The Mountain, and supported RECC members at their workshops during this period. Made reports to Veatch Committee and UUA Panel on Theological Education. Made regular reports to the UUA Board.

Director of MPL, David Hubner: Explored possibility of getting an article about RE Credentialing published in UU World. Promoted quality of RECC’s annotated reading lists to UUA groups. Pursued issues related to developing a conviction disclosure/criminal history/background check for all credentialed individuals and applicants. Reported news of PLCC.

Responsible Staffing – The RECC will follow the lead of the MFC in what policies and procedures it chooses to implement regarding background checks and other *Responsible Staffing* recommendations.

Time for Comments – The following individuals presented comments on the RE Credentialing program to the RECC: Benette Sherman, Kathleen Carpenter on behalf of Cindy Leitner, and Kathleen Carpenter on behalf of Jan Weinstein. Any decisions made by the RECC related to issues raised or questions asked in the Time for Comments will be posted on the UUA website.

Waivers - any deviation from RE Credentialing program requirements (including equivalency requirements) will need to be requested as a waiver of requirements. All waivers must be approved by the RECC. A Waiver form is being developed.

At the end of the meeting, Layne presented a verbal Credentialed Observer's report to the RECC. A written report will follow.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm on October 21, 2005.