

## **Report of the Religious Education Credentialing Committee To the General Assembly, 2007**

The religious Education Credentialing Committee is charged with jurisdiction over religious education credentialing within the Association. There are seven members of the committee and a member of the UUA Board of Trustees serves as a liaison and additional voting member of the committee. The committee formally meets twice a year to conduct business and interview candidates. Committee members also meet by phone and E-mail throughout the year.

Highlights of the work of the committee in the past year:

- The Committee finalized its vision and mission:

### **VISION**

The vision of the Religious Education Credentialing Committee is a strong and healthy educational ministry through faith development in our Unitarian Universalist congregations.

### **MISSION**

The mission of the Religious Education Credentialing Committee is to develop professional standards and credential religious educators to serve the Unitarian Universalist movement.

We will do this by:

- Identifying an accepted core of competencies and skills.
  - Evaluating candidates and granting credentials.
  - Affirming an anti-racist, anti-oppressive perspective in all of our processes and practices.
  - Educating congregations about the need for and advantages of supporting professional growth and development of religious educators.
  - Encouraging the building of accountability and right relationships among religious educators, professional colleagues, and lay leaders.
  - Preparing professional religious educators to provide programmatic resources that strengthen and challenge their congregations in order to transform lives and make the world a better place.
- The Committee completed the work of developing and implementing the policies and procedures under which it will work.
  - The RECC conducted a survey of Religious Educators who had been granted a credential in order to assess how well the program was meeting its desired outcomes. Credentialed Religious Educators and key leaders within their congregations/organizations were surveyed. This assessment will be ongoing. Newly credentialed religious educators will be surveyed a year after being credentialed, and all credentialed religious educators will be surveyed every two to three years to provide ongoing analysis. Some highlights of the results include:
    - Increase in professionalism and sense of professionalism among credentialed Directors of Religious Education and further professionalization of the field of religious education is an important desired outcome. 96% of the Credentialed Religious Educators reported a reinforced or increased sense of professionalism. 71% of congregational leaders indicated a strengthened sense of professionalism in the credentialed religious educator, and 53% indicated a significant strengthening.
    - An increase in the quality of (and then the enrollment in) religious education programs led by Credentialed Religious Educators is another desired outcome. 39% of the Credentialed Religious Educators who responded believed that the process positively influenced the way they operate their

programs. 48% have initiated new programs or activities as a result of learnings through the credentialing program. 22% believe that the increase in size in their program or congregation is directly related to the credentialing process. Of the congregational leaders who responded, 77% indicate that their religious education programs have increased in quality, enrollment, or effective innovations since the religious educator was credentialed.

The survey included questions about other desired Outcomes that will be followed over time such as increased tenure, increased compensation, continuing education, development of new religious education materials by Credentialed Religious Educators, and an increased desire for the development of credentialing for other professional staff. It is believed that future surveys over an extended time, and when a larger number of religious educators have been credentialed will reveal a continued benefit to our congregations through the Credentialing Program.

- The RECC has been working with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee to discuss the importance and process for background checks as part of the credentialing process of professionals within our Association.
- The Committee has maintained its commitment to increasing our awareness of and attention to issues of oppression that impact our work. We have continued to read and discuss material that adds to our own awareness, have brought representatives of groups and programs to share important information about programs and initiatives within our Association, and have looked programs and materials available to candidates with various physical and learning disabilities.

Current Committee Members:

Gail Forsyth-Vail, Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level  
Liz Jones, LREDA Representative, Chair  
Rev. Kirk Loadman-Copeland, Parish Minister  
Steve Lynn  
Rev. Colleen McDonald, Minister of Religious Education  
Sue McGovern  
Rev. Pam Allen-Thompson, UUA Board Liaison  
Kathryn Warrior

Respectfully submitted,  
Liz Jones, Chair