

Credentialed Observer's Report  
Religious Education Credentialing Committee  
San Antonio, TX – 08-12 October 2007

## **Credentialed Observer's Report – October 2007**

I was asked to be the seventh Credentialed Observer for the Religious Education Credentialing Committee October 2007 meeting. I received credentialed religious educator status in October 2005.

### **RECC Members**

The Religious Education Credentialing Committee consists of the following members:

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

### **RECC Vision Statement**

The vision of the RECC is for a strong and healthy educational ministry through faith development in our UU Congregations.

### **RECC Mission Statement**

The mission of the RECC is to develop professional standards and credentialed religious educators to serve the UU movement.

### **Credentialed Observer Responsibilities**

1. Read candidates portfolios and bring to meetings
2. Actively participate in full committee meetings
3. Attend candidate interviews and all discussions
4. Ask questions (or not) during interviews
5. Participate in straw votes but not final vote of candidates competency
6. Give an oral report and then a written report of my observations of the process

### **Observations**

Mornings started with breakfast, opening words that helped up focus for the day, and the lighting of the Chalice. This transformed the environment into "sacred space".

We all received an agenda prior to the meeting. The agenda was well formulated and detailed with estimated time allotments. Chairperson, Liz Jones, did an excellent job keeping us all on task. Decisions on the committee were made by consensus. Chair Liz

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was good about summarizing action items and ensuring clarity about who would do what.

The first two days were spent doing the business of the committee. Day 3 and 4 were spent interviewing 5 candidates. The candidates consisted of one at the Master's level and four at the credentialed level.

Some tough issues were brought before the committee.

1. Is the credentialing process oppressive?
2. Are expectations clearly stated? Is the evaluative component of the interview process clearly articulated?
3. Clarification of "experience" was discussed. Can 12 years of employment at quarter time be an equivalent of 3 years of employment at half time?

These issues were brought before the committee in the form of letters and email from candidates who had completed the process and mentors. All issues were attended to with seriousness and thoughtfulness. I observed members treating each other and the questioners with respect and integrity. The principles of right relations were in play.

1. No interruptions
2. No personal attacks
3. Assumption of best intentions were in operation

As Unitarian Universalists, we are making efforts to incorporate a strong Anti-racism/Anti-oppression consideration in our proceedings. With this in mind, the committee chose to read a book called Unequal Childhoods by Annette Lareau and set aside time on the agenda for discussion. Colleen MacDonald prepared a list of discussion questions as a tool for focus. Questions she asked us to reflect upon included:

1. What images are still with you after reading this book?
2. How did this book remind you of your own childhood (how was it similar to or different from the childhoods of the children in the book)?
3. If you are a parent, what insights did you gain into how you are raising or raised your own child(ren)?
4. How did this book sharpen your awareness of Anti-racism/Anti-oppression issues and challenges?
5. Why is this book a useful resource for UU religious educators?

Chairperson, Liz Jones, adjusted the agenda to give time to Anne Bancroft to come to the committee and talk to us about financial planning for DREs.

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The second day of the meeting was spent working in small groups to plan workshops for future G.A.s and LREDA conferences.

The committee had a full roster of candidates to interview. All the members came well prepared. A reader was assigned for each portfolio. The reader gave a brief summary of information about the candidate. Questions were suggested by the reader and augmented with more questions by other members.

“Soft” questions as well as tough challenging questions were formulated and asked of the candidates. I observed that many open ended questions were used giving the candidate every opportunity to express both detail and broad knowledge of a competency.

The deliberations were respectful and compassionate. The committee always began with positive comments and then went on to concerns. The final decision was arrived at through consensus. The decision was expressed to the candidate in pre-written statements.

The committee awarded one associate level, 3 credentialed level, and one master level status.

Each day ended with a process report and closing words.

Two members are completing their terms with this meeting--Liz Jones and Sue McGovern. Gift and cards of appreciation were given to each by the other members.

Humor was an important element throughout the meeting. This is a really hard working group of people. I feel deeply honored to have been asked to be this meeting's observer. Thank you so much for including me briefly in your hard work.

Joyce Zaugg  
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