

## **Credentialed Observer's Report:**

Jamaine Cripe  
April 17, 2019

Thank you again for inviting me to be a part of the Religious Education Credentialing Committee interviews with RE Credentialing candidates for 2019. It was a really insightful look into the other side of the credentialing process. As I consider applying for and studying for the Master Level Credentialing, I will keep what I learned from this week with the committee in mind.

Although I haven't served on any denominational committees before this year, I have spoken with many people who have throughout my time in this faith and have heard both good and bad experiences. I have to say that the RECC is one of the healthiest, high-functioning committees I've ever experienced. A lot of that has to do with the love and leadership of the committee's chair, Rev. Dr. Randy Becker. He's created an environment where each voice is heard and valued, where conflict is encouraged and navigated keeping each member's personhood in mind, and where credentialing the most-competent and professional religious educators for our denomination is at the forefront of their work. In particular:

- The ministers on the committee (Rev. Emily Gage and Rev. Becker) modeled positive collaboration with the religious educators and lay leaders on the committee as well as the UUA support staff (Pat Kahn and Aastha Poudel). No one's opinion was held as superior over anyone else's and there wasn't an air of "I know better than you/I went to seminary", which sometimes manifests itself in mixed gatherings of religious professionals. Both ministers know how work within a "mixed marriage". :)
- The religious educators (Kathleen Carpenter and Sara Lewis) brought their own experiences as former candidates and mentors to other RECP candidates to the table. They are well-informed about the program competencies and UUA policies and current events. They brought a lens of practical application to the committee and were reminders of how we as religious educators have to do more than just meet the requests of our congregations. We are called to push them into uncomfortable places to help them grow. This was one of the many challenges Kathleen and Sara offered to candidates in regards to anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multicultural education in our religious education programs -- to guide their feet (or drag them, if unwilling) into a better understanding of beloved community.
- I can't say enough about the lay leaders (Art Nava and Peter Kandis) who took this time away from their families, careers and communities to be a part of this process. They offered up questions and critiques from the UU congregant lens. I appreciate the care they took in asking tough questions and having high expectations of each religious educator presented. They weren't adjuncts in this process. They were in the thick of things, staying up-to-date about the resources, policies and requirements, competencies, and congregational demographics needed for religious educators to provide the most impactful programs for their congregations and fellowships.

Again, it was an honor and a privilege to be a part of the RECC for 2018-19. Unitarian Universalism has been well-gifted by the blessing of this committee's professionalism, loving care, sacrificed time and infectious energy.

Blessings to you all on the journey!

## **Jamaine L Cripe**

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