



Continuing Education Task Force Report

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Introduction

For several years, the UUMA's CENTER Committee (Continuing Education, Network, Training, Enrichment, and Renewal) has been interested in the idea of continuing education requirements for ministers. During their Fall 2017 meeting, the committee met with Alicia Forde, UUA Professional Development Director, Jesse King, Chair of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and David Pettee, UUA Ministerial Credentialing Director to talk about what it might look like to have continuing education requirements for Unitarian Universalist ministers. Out of that conversation was born the Continuing Education Task Force which consisted of Darrick Jackson (UUMA), Alicia Forde (UUA), David Pettee (UUA), Jude Geiger (UUMA), and Shana Lynngood (MFC).

The task force began meeting in January of 2018 with the charge to explore what continuing education requirements might look like and to make recommendations regarding what it could be, and how it might be implemented. Early on in our conversations, we realized that we are talking about a cultural shift. We recognized that we have a ministerial culture that says that we are done learning when we get final fellowship. And we come from a tradition that has revered the "learned ministry." This statement implies that we do not continue to grow in the ministry nor have things that we need to learn. We wanted to shift our culture into being a "learning ministry." This recognizes that excellence in ministry is not a peak that we achieve but a path of continually growing and learning and being shaped by our experiences, a continued understanding of revelation that is ongoing and unending. From this vantage point, we approached this process by looking at how we can encourage and nurture continuing education as a new norm in UU ministerial culture, instead of looking into punitive measures.

The committee started by looking at other models of continuing education. We reviewed continuing education requirements in other denominations as well as looking at other professional organizations. This research showed a range of 10-40 hours a year in cycles of up to five years. This gave us a baseline from which to explore possibilities.

The committee decided to hold focus groups around continuing education to get a sense of what resonated with our colleagues. These focus groups consisted of both people who had not participated in UUMA programming over the past several years as well as open to any UU ministers who was interested in the conversation. During the focus groups we asked the following questions:

- We are exploring adding a requirement for all minister to do Continuing Education. If we were to do so, what amount of hours and how often would be doable and meaningful (for example, 20 hours /year)?

- We are thinking that the priority in continuing education should be around ARAOM and Boundaries. What priorities do you see in Continuing education?
- What would be a great incentive to encourage people to do Continuing Education?
- What is the best Continuing Education experience you have had?

The responses showed that there was interest in moving in this direction and that 20 hours/year would not be too onerous. It also raised the point that time and money were barriers for people doing continuing education. You will find a summary of these conversations in the Appendix.

As we were doing these focus groups, we decided to ask questions on Facebook to get broader consensus around what we were discovering in the focus groups. Over a period of several weeks we asked the following questions:

- We are thinking that the priority in continuing education should be around ARAOM and Boundaries. What priorities do you see in Continuing education?
- How do we ensure the trainings the UUMA offers are relevant to your ministerial context?
- We are trying to get a broad sense of what timing and schedule would be meaningful and considered doable for how on-going professional development expectations are set.

The answers below indicate what you would both be willing to do and be able to do.

The answers to these survey questions generated quite a bit of conversation and questions and helped us further clarify our recommendations for this report. You can see the survey results in the appendix. With all of this information and further conversation, the continuing education task force makes nine recommendations that are elucidated on the following pages.

We offer our gratitude for this opportunity to serve our colleagues and serve our faith. Continuing education is central to a Unitarian Universalist ministry that is alive, vibrant and grounded in integrity and accountability. May these recommendations be the beginning of a lasting change in our faith and our ministry.

Recommendations

Recommends that ministers in final fellowship be required to do 60 hours of continuing education over a three-year period.

This recommendation was derived from our review of other professional organizations continuing education requirements, as well as the polls and conversations with UUMA members. Giving three years allows people time to spread out their continuing education hours if they have a challenging year or a planned sabbatical. Most ministers said that an average of 20 hours a year seemed reasonable for continuing education.

Recommends that everyone must do training in the areas of anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism, and in ministerial ethics and boundaries in every three-year period.

Recognizing that the two largest issues facing ministry at this time are white supremacy culture and sexual misconduct, everyone will be required to do continuing education in antiracism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism, and in ministerial ethics and boundaries. The rest of the continuing education will reflect the individuals personal learning needs.

Recommends that the APC model be used as the model for UUMA

In order to structure the Continuing education requirements, the task force recommends adapting the continuing education model that APC (Association for Professional Chaplains) uses, which can be found at http://bcciprofessionalchaplains.org/files/continuing_education/ce_guidelines.pdf. This model delineates requirements based on the methodology used rather than that topic. It gives clear guidelines on what is counted and how it contributes to the total hours. In preparation for the adaptation of this model, we make the following recommendations.

- Fulfilling the Call be used as a resource for clarifying guidelines
- A continuing education (CE) hour is equal to 60 minutes. Only actual education time is counted (total time minus meals and breaks).
- A continuing education activity may be counted only once.
- Activities that are a regular, or routine, part of one's professional job description that are not intended to contribute to one's professional development may not be used as continuing education.
- CE hours are counted in the following methodologies, and at least two methodologies must be included.

Methodology	What Counts	What Doesn't Count
Attending Educational Events	Workshops, symposiums, seminars, webinars, and academic courses that relate to your ministry context.	Educational activities unrelated to your ministry context

Writing	<p>Writing for publication or presentation, such as articles, books or media materials you have authored on topics related to professional ministry.</p> <p>Writing or compiling a presentation for teaching.</p>	<p>Sermons</p> <p>Newsletter articles</p> <p>Blog entries</p> <p>Op-ed pieces</p> <p>Letters to editors</p>
Teaching	<p>Formal teaching</p> <p>Leading a seminar</p> <p>Conference workshop</p> <p>Seminary class</p>	<p>Supervision of students</p> <p>Facilitating a grief or spirituality group</p> <p>Retreat</p> <p>Leading Religious Education Course</p>
Professional Self-Care (4 hours max.)	<p>Sessions with a Spiritual Director</p> <p>Spiritual retreats</p> <p>Professional counseling with a licensed psychologist, social worker or therapist</p>	<p>Personal massage</p> <p>Yoga</p> <p>Case review</p> <p>Colleague support group</p> <p>Denominational meetings</p>
Reading/Self-Instruction	<p>Reading books and articles about ministry-related topics.</p> <p>Reading for educational coursework toward an advanced degree related to professional ministry.</p> <p>Self-instruction for the purpose of teaching a topic related to ministry.</p>	<p>Anything not related to self-instruction; part of the job</p> <p>Reading not directly related to ministry.</p> <p>Reading that is part of educational coursework which is not related to ministry.</p>

Peer Review	<p>Your personal covenant group, if it includes a formal presentation of your ministry (such as a verbatim or case study) and allows for documented critique and frank discussion by two or more colleagues</p> <p>Your professional consultation about your related ministry that includes a formal presentation (such as a verbatim or case study) and allows for documented critique and frank discussion by two or more colleagues</p>	<p>A covenant or support group (as a leader or as a participant) that does not include a formal presentation of your ministry, as described above.</p> <p>Regular (weekly, monthly, etc.) meetings and groups that are a part of your function as a minister, employee or faith group leader</p> <p>Consultation, review, certification and accreditation meetings for another person</p>
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Recommends that Continuing Education be implemented by the UUMA

The task force had quite a bit of conversation regarding incentives for continuing education. We recognize that these requirements are a major cultural shift for us and looked at how to support that shift in the best way possible. In our conversations, we recognized that if this was an MFC requirement, it would raise the stakes significantly. And this could impede the cultural shift we are trying to make. We also recognized that the UUMA already has the infrastructure to handle Continuing Education tracking. We imagined the MFC making mandatory requirements in the future but feel that starting with the UUMA could better facilitate the cultural shift from a learned ministry to a learning ministry

Recommends flexibility for ministers bound by other continuing education requirements

In our consideration of continuing education, we recognize that many of our community ministers already have continuing education requirements for their community ministry. We want our UUMA requirements to compliment, not be in addition to those requirements. By using the APC structure, we hope that most community ministers current continuing education requirements will fall within that structure easily. We are bringing our parish colleagues in line with what most community ministers are already required to do. The structure for ministerial continuing education should be flexible enough to allow ministers to match requirements. We recommend flexibility and conversation to help make competing continuing education requirements align with one another.

Recommends that resources be available to assist members in completing continuing education requirements.

It is important that we do not set requirements without providing avenues for those requirements to be met. We recommend that the UUMA compile and make available a list of lower costs resources for completing continuing education, in acknowledgment that finances was named as a barrier for ministers. We also recommend that connections to resources around funding opportunities also be made available. This includes the funding opportunities that already exist within the UUMA and the UUA but also other funding opportunities out in the broader world that could be of assistance to ministers. Finally, we recommend that communication regarding continuing education requirements go out to congregations to encourage them to provide adequate professional development funds for their minister.

Recommends that Continuing Education be added into the UUMA Guidelines

As we look towards making a cultural shift around continuing education. we recommend that the UUMA consider adding language around continuing education into the UUMA guidelines. The hope is that having this language in the guidelines will raise the importance of continuing education as part of the expectations of ministers.

Recommends that Continuing education be a requirement for UUMA leadership.

Our UUMA leaders should model the expectations that we have of all our members. Leadership is one of the benefits you receive for maintaining your continuing education.

Recommends that Continuing Education interface with the transitions process

As we looked at ways to incentivize completing continuing education, we believe that connecting the requirements to the transitions process could be beneficial. We recommend that the transitions office include a section on continuing education in the ministerial profile. We also recommend that congregations in search be encouraged to look favorably upon ministers who have completed their continuing education. We could also see some benefits for ministers up to date with their continuing education to have early access to the search process. We encourage the UUMA to be in conversation with the transitions office on what might be possible.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Recommends that ministers in final fellowship be required to do 60 hours of continuing education over a three-year period.
2. Recommends that everyone must do training in the areas of anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism, and in ministerial ethics and boundaries in every three-year period.
3. Recommends that the APC model be used as the model for UUMA
4. Recommends that Continuing Education be implemented by the UUMA
5. Recommends flexibility for ministers bound by other continuing education requirements
6. Recommends that resources be available to assist members in completing continuing education requirements.
7. Recommends that Continuing Education be added into the UUMA Guidelines
8. Recommends that Continuing education be a requirement for UUMA leadership.
9. Recommends that Continuing Education interface with the transitions process

Appendix A

Continuing Education Task Force Focus Group Summary

We are exploring adding a requirement for all minister to do Continuing Education. If we were to do so, what amount of hours and how often would be doable and meaningful (for example, 20 hours /year)?

All of the respondents were comfortable with the idea of 20 hours/year. A couple suggested that we use a multi-year model (i.e. 40 over 2 years). The big question is what counts for hours? That would determine if we could ask for more than 20. And how is the time evaluated? Does collegial time count? How about reading or spiritual direction?

We are thinking that the priority in continuing education should be around ARAOM and Boundaries. What priorities do you see in Continuing education?

Most agreed with ARAOM and ministerial boundaries as priorities. Many see the need for flexibility within any requirements to assess our own needs, and to hold space for a diversity of ministries. A few suggested using Fulfilling the Call as a Baseline. Other topics mentioned:

- Conflict
- Mental health
- Self-Care
- Administration
- Ableism
- classism

What would be a great incentive to encourage people to do Continuing Education?

A few people stressed the importance of compelling and diverse options. Several suggested some sort of recognition, such as Board Certified, or a certificate would be helpful. The opportunity to teach was also lifted up. A couple of people mentioned that it should be required for fellowship. It was also stressed that if this is a requirement, resources should be available to support ministers doing it. The barriers of money and time were lifted up in these conversations.

What is the best Continuing Education experience you have had?

- Parker Palmer
- Larry Peers
- Pilgrimage in Ireland (interest in a topic that gave an opportunity to stretch comfort zone).
- courses at Pacific School of Religion.

- Rev. Eric Baron's training in Intercultural Conflict.
- Center on Congregations class on church finance.
- Programming that includes colleagues
- Workshops at GA.
- workshops at Institute (Marcia McFee was named explicitly)
- Classes at Union Theological School.
- where the conversation/thinking/practice in the prof. dev. experience is able to continue in the ministry site.
- Spiritual Direction program (Hayden Institute in South Carolina was named)
- A week at Navajo reservation learning to weave Navajo blankets (Learned about weaving but also learned about life on the margins.)
- Documentary series "Seeing White" origins of the concept of whiteness.
- Community Ministers Retreat
- monthly UU Chaplain Zoom group
- Chapter Retreats

Other

- Forum or another resource on what continuing education people are doing.
- Regular mailing on CE opportunities.
- Where can the seminaries intersect with this?
- Professional Development plan
- Shared professional development/continuing education as part of shared ministry
- Repository of best practices of church policies and procedures

Appendix B

Summary of Facebook Polls

We are thinking that the priority in continuing education should be around ARAOM and Boundaries. What priorities do you see in Continuing education?

Topic	Votes
Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression/Multiculturalism	90
Addressing Congregational Dysfunction	67
Keeping Worship Relevant in a Changing World	38
Responding to cultural shifts (Family Ministry)	35
Boundaries	24
Current Theological Study	19
Address the perceived irrelevancy of church	18
Developing and maintaining a spiritual practice	11
Family systems theory	8
Community Organizing	8
Ministering to folks who have experienced trauma - how do we care for them? how do we care for ourselves as we do this work?	7
Ministering to folks living with mental illness	6
Closing the backdoor, or how do we keep people, especially our children	5
Staff Supervision	4
Ministering to folks living with addiction	4
Innovative funding options / streams of income	5
Preventing burnout/setting limits around overwork/over-functioning/building real shared ministry	3
Ministering to folks living with domestic violence	5
After pastor (broadly)	2
Evaluating a shared ministry. Noticing when it is time to leave a congregation, even when it is not convenient for you or even them.	1
Theological reflection workshop where on explored theology from formation, experiences in ministry since then, and exploring theology now	1
POC practice of healing from white supremacy	1

How do we ensure the trainings the UUMA offers are relevant to your ministerial context?

Response	Votes
Look at changes in MFC requirements that are very different from what previous cohorts of ministers have been expected to know/learn.	33
Technical trainings should utilize lenses that intersect with adaptive learning (e.g. Supervision + Anti-Racism)	32
Focus on know problem issues and hot button issues	9

Pay attention to the issues colleagues are bringing to their coaching and mentoring sessions.	6
Give APC chaplains credit for the 50 hours of BCCI required C.E.s.	3
Conflict engagement tools for both UUA Staff colleagues and parish based ministers	3
Trainings focused on proven solutions and innovative approaches to basic issues. Ex: sustainable ministry in radically changed economy?	2
Systems theory and cultural sensitivity	2
Look back at what issues have caused flareups in this facebook group-- and what caused them (i.e. lack of listening, boundaries, etc)	1
Trainings should be as general as possible to apply to the widest range of colleagues.	1
Emphases on personal transformation to role model and increase effectiveness and reduce stresses. I.e. require mindfulness, EQ-HR,	1

We are trying to get a broad sense of what timing and schedule would be meaningful and considered doable for how on-going professional development expectations are set. The answers below indicate what you would both be willing to do, and be able to do.

Schedule	Votes
A total of 60 hours of professional development - over a three year schedule.	64
20 hours of professional development -annually accomplished.	14
A total of 40 hours of professional development - over a two year schedule.	4
Flexible scheduling of professional development over a 1, 2, or 3-year plan, averaging 20 hours per year.	3
20 hours of yearly professional development, as averaged over each three consecutive year period if FT; 10 hours if PT.	3
10 hours of professional development -annually accomplished.	3