



MINISTERIAL FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Sunday, September 30, 2018

24 Farnsworth Street, Chapel

MFC Sunday Business Meeting

Members: Nick Allen, Jackie Clement, Karen LoBracco, Jennifer Hamlin-Navias, Jesse King,
Don Brunnquell, Michael Lyde, Shana Lynngood, Joetta Prost, Maddie Sifantus
Greg Ward, Shawn Newton, Kristen Harper, Jordinn Nelson-Long, Erica Long, Rebekah Savage
Staff: Sarah Lammert, Alicia Forde, David Pettee, Marion Bell
Liaisons: Bethany Russell-Lowe (non-voting)

Settlement Working Group REVISIONS TO RENEWAL FORMS

1. Letter to evaluators
2. Community Ministry Cover
3. Parish ministry cover
4. Self-evaluation

Noted: Self-care is missing, and this is crucial to successful ministry. SWG can update as it sees fit and then go ahead. **Michael asked for feedback in order to get that added to the form. SWG will update accordingly.**

Noted: There's no need for a full vote on the renewal form revisions.

Candidacy Working Group

Non-voting items for discussion:

Internship stipends – CWG will review after discussion with OCSF and propose to MFC re: raising internship stipends.

CWG APPROVED REVISION TO M. DIV. EQUIVALENCY PROCESS

Our national credentialing body, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, expects a minimum of 24 Master's level courses with the purpose of developing the knowledge and skill to become a Unitarian Universalist minister. A brief letter making the request and copies of all relevant Master's level transcripts is part of this process.

They ask you to compare the courses you have taken with the course areas listed below which you feel meet the requirement. Please include a specific plan for addressing any required courses you would need to take prior to interviewing with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

Unfortunately, courses taken or a bachelor's degree program cannot be included with a M.Div. Equivalency request.

Ministerial Arts (worship, preaching, rites of passages, liturgies)	2 Courses
Theology	2 Courses
Pastoral Care	1 Course
Professional Ethics	1 Course
Religious Education	1 Course
Personal/Spiritual Formation	1 Course
Human Development	1 Course
World Religions	2 Courses
Hebrew and Christian Scriptures	2 Courses
Anti-racism, Anti-Oppression, Multiculturalism	1 Course
Social Theory/Social Ethics	1 Course
Administration and Management or Leadership and Organization	1 Course
UU History/Polity (taken at a UU Seminary, on line, independent study with a UU history professor, a GA intensive, UU minister in final fellowship)	1 Course
History of Christianity	2 Courses
Innovations in Ministry (Entrepreneurial Ministry, Social Media and Ministry, Young Adult's and Ministry)	1 Course

The Future of Ministry, etc.)
Electives 4 Courses

You can send your letter, transcripts and description of the courses you have taken (or will take) can be sent % my office. I will make sure they get on the agenda of the next meeting of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. For the upcoming meeting in _____ I will need all this by _____.

When your request has been approved, it is expected that you will have completed all outstanding courses before preliminary fellowship can or will be granted.

Mdiv based on MFC Competencies

One: Worship and Rites of Passage 4 Courses
Ministerial Arts 2 Courses
(worship, preaching, rites of passage,
liturgies)
Theology 2 Courses

Two: Pastoral Care and Presence 2 Courses
Pastoral Care 1 Course
Professional Ethics 1 Course

Three: Spiritual Development for Self and Others 7 Courses
Religious Education 1 Course
Personal/Spiritual Formation 1 Course
Human Development 1 Course
World Religions 2 Courses
Hebrew and Christian Scriptures 2 Courses

Four: Social Justice in the Public Square 2 Courses
Anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism 1 Course
Social Theory/Social Ethics 1 Course

Five: Administration 1 Course
Administration and Management (or)
Leadership and Organization

Six: Serves the Larger Unitarian Universalist Faith 3 Courses

UU History/Polity 1 Course
History of Christianity 2 Courses

Seven: Leads the Faith into the Future 1 Courses
Innovations In Ministry

4 Electives

No need for a motion on this – per JK.

PROCESS WORKING GROUP

Joetta reviewed online packet process.

Nick reviewed the Board's approval and non-approval of the Rules that were submitted in June.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Jackie moves to accept the below recommendations from the PWG, Maddie 2nd/ approved, unanimous

These changes were put forth during the Process Working Group's 2017 revision of MFC Policies. The UUA Office of Ministries and Faith Development (MFD) engaged the Faith Trust Institute to evaluate our policies. In general, our shared vision with the Institute has been to:

- Establish a fair process for the complainant
- Enable restorative justice for those directly affected by ministerial misconduct
- Ensure for safety of congregations and institutions that have witnessed ministerial misconduct

Expanded the authority to initiate misconduct complaints to include:

- a. UUA Congregational Life staff**
- b. MFC members who are not members of the Executive Committee**
- c. Custodial parents of minor children.**

Under current policies, Ministries and Faith Development (MFD) staff are the only UUA body allowed to bring forth a complaint. In practice, other institutions frequently learn about ministerial misconduct, and MFD staff are often remote from the original complaint. We have expanded this power to two UUA bodies that also receive and evaluate complaints. We have also looked to ensure that the Executive Committee, which reviews findings and initiates fellowship review, is not its own petitioner.

Removed the restriction of “first-hand knowledge” and “direct involvement” on parties initiating a complaint.

Under current policy, only persons with “first-hand” knowledge of the complaint may bring a complaint forward. “First-hand” knowledge would require that only congregants directly harmed by misconduct would be eligible to initiate complaints. We have also removed the condition that the Intake Person will “not generally advance” complaints from persons not directly involved in the complaints. Many directly affected parties do not have “first-hand knowledge” of misconduct. These changes were recommended by the Faith Trust Institute’s review of our policies.

Modified how affected institutions are notified about the complaint

We have replaced a policy of notifying the “leadership” of community ministry settings about complaints with a blanket policy that compels us to notify a single supervisory authority in both congregational and community settings (e.g. Board President, direct supervisor). We believe this is a more consistent and direct way to protect affected institutions.

Removed the six-year restriction on occurrences of misconduct

Current policy requires that “unbecoming conduct” have occurred within six years to be reviewed unless for “good cause,” including child abuse, repetitive actions, or “egregious” misconduct. These restrictions required the MFD Director to make highly subjective judgments and are incompatible with giving all misconduct survivors full standing.

Added policy on “Governing Rules” at the time of misconduct

This policy requires that a complaint be reviewed under the UUMA Guidelines, MFC Rules, and UUA Bylaws in force at the time of the alleged misconduct. This restricts us from reviewing actions that would not have been considered “conduct unbecoming” at the time of their occurrence.

Added requirement that Executive Committee indicate their recommended action when referring a complaint to the Full Committee

This allows the Executive Committee to be clear about their reasons for recommending a candidate for a full review and transparent with the Committee about their deliberations.

Removed requirements for “Full Committee review” for ministerial candidates

Under current policy, removal from candidate status could only be compelled by a full committee review. Similar to the previous change, this allows the Executive Committee to recommend removal of candidate status after completing its review.

We had previously allowed the Ministerial Credentialing Director to make some of these decisions at their full discretion. We believe this provides a more consistent treatment of candidates without overwhelming committee resources. Full review has never been conducted in practice.

Removed re-admission procedures for ministerial candidates

Under current policy, individuals removed from candidate status for unbecoming conduct may be restored to this standing upon “furnishing appropriate evidence that the concern no longer exists.” Our experience is that complaints that lead to removal of candidate status cause enough concern to make an interview untenable. Furthermore, we believe the MFC’s relationship to non-fellowshipped individuals does not require the same allowance for appeals.

Changes are attached, with additions highlighted and removals in strikethrough.

17. Procedures for Complaints against Ministers

A. Initiating a Complaint

Complaints involving alleged unprofessional/unbecoming conduct of a minister or other violation of the rules of Fellowship shall be received and reviewed by the Office of Ethics and Safety Intake person (hereafter called the “Intake Person”). Complaints ~~should~~ **may** be from: a person or persons with ~~first-hand~~ knowledge of the circumstances **(or, if a minor child, their custodial parent)**; the congregational, institutional, or agency board with whom the minister works; the UUA Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group; **UUA Congregational Life Staff; or a member of Ministerial Fellowship Committee who is not a member of the Executive Committee.** The Intake Person will determine whether the complaint is a congregational matter or an ethical matter requiring further inquiry, and shall refer such ethical matters to the Consultant for Ethics in Congregational Life (hereafter called the Consultant). **The congregational Board President and/or direct supervisor of the minister will be informed that an investigation is being undertaken, and informed of the nature of the complaint.** The Consultant will **investigate and** determine whether the matter should go before the Executive Committee of the MFC for a Fellowship Review. Decisions to not refer a complaint to the consultant or the Executive Committee of the MFC require review and unanimous agreement of the Director of Ministries and Faith Development and the Chief Operating Officer of the UUA. The Chair of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee may also be consulted. ~~Except in cases involving children or dependent adults, the Intake Person will not generally advance complaints to the MFC that were filed by persons who were not directly involved in the circumstances covered by the complaint.~~ An advocate will be assigned by the Intake Person to individuals considering filing a complaint. The role of the advocate is to provide neutral, compassionate assistance in determining whether to file a complaint, and to provide information and support through the processing of a complaint. Complaints must be in writing and signed by the complainant(s) or Board and shall contain a brief statement of the facts upon which the complaint is based. If necessary, the Intake Person will assist the complainant in reducing the complaint to writing. ~~Contact information for the Intake person is: 617-948-6462 or safecongregations@uua.org.~~

~~B. TIMELINESS AND STALE MATTERS~~

~~Complaints should be received by the Director of Ministries and Faith Development within a reasonable time period following the circumstances giving rise to the complaint. Unless the Director of Ministries and Faith Development determines otherwise for good cause, complaints regarding events occurring more than six years prior to the date of the complaint will not be considered. Good cause shall include, but not be limited to, complaints involving abuse of children or particularly egregious behaviors or repetitive actionable behavior.~~

B. Governing Rules and Policies

Determinations of unbecoming conduct, incompetence or other specified cause shall be governed by the rules of Fellowship in force at the time of the acts under review. In all cases, complaint procedures and decisions will follow MFC Rules and Policies in force at the time of the receipt of the complaint.

C. Confidentiality and Communication

Confidentiality is key to the complaint process, and all parties are asked to respect the sensitivity of the information generated. The parties shall have, except where confidentiality and privacy concerns warrant, comparable access to information about the process, including the outcome of the proceedings. The complainant will have the ability to review and respond to the written response of the minister to the complaint. ~~If the minister is currently working in a congregation or community ministry setting, the leadership of those institutions will be informed that a complaint has been filed.~~

D. Resolution of Complaints

Upon receipt of a complaint, the minister may be invited to meet with the Executive Committee of the MFC and is expected to be accompanied by a UUMA Good Offices person in Final Fellowship. The cost of meeting with the Committee will be borne by the Committee. The Executive Committee shall also invite the complainant to meet privately with the Executive Committee, accompanied by the advocate designated by the Office of Ethics and Safety. The option to appear before the committee shall be in person or by secured teleconference software. The choice between such methods of appearance shall be at the discretion of the invitee. All expenses involved in the travel and appearance of the minister and the minister's Good Offices person will be borne by the Committee. All expenses involved in the travel and appearance of the person filing the complaint, or individual representatives of classes of complainants, will be borne by the Committee.

The Executive Committee may determine that no further action is warranted, may propose to the full Committee a mutually agreed upon course of redress, or **may recommend removal from fellowship to the Full Committee (this may require further investigation and a Full Committee Fellowship Review if the minister is in Final Fellowship).** ~~may determine that further investigation and a full Committee Fellowship Review is warranted.~~

Written confirmation of a resolution agreement shall be sent to the minister within 14 days. A copy will be placed in the minister's file. Additional copies may be sent to other persons or institutional representatives as deemed appropriate by the MFC.

E. Complaint Investigations

The type of investigation required by a complaint will depend upon the alleged circumstances and the type of additional information required.

When the Executive Committee calls for a Full Fellowship Committee Review, it will charge the Executive Secretary to determine the type and scope of the investigation and appoint an investigation team from outside the Ministerial Fellowship Committee's membership, in consultation with the MFC Chairperson.

If interviews are required as part of an investigation, both the individual (s) bringing the complaint and the minister have a right to an individual interview, and to know the identity of the interviewer(s) and makeup of the investigation team before the interview.

The following are guidelines which are to be used by the investigators in conducting its investigation:

- In consultation with the Executive Secretary and the MFC **Chair** ~~Chairperson~~, it is the responsibility of the investigators to develop a full and complete record of the facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint and any other relevant information which may be useful to the Committee in its deliberations.

- Each individual appointed to be an investigator is expected to maintain neutrality and an open mind throughout the investigation. All information obtained through the investigation must be held in the strictest confidence.
- In consultation with the Executive Secretary and the MFC Chair, the investigators should determine what, if any, additional information is required to assist the Committee in its deliberations and the most efficient method for obtaining that information.
- If it is determined that personal interviews would be appropriate, the appointed investigators will interview the complainant, the minister against whom the complaint has been made, and as many other individuals with knowledge of the issues or circumstances raised by the complaint. Any summary of an individual's statement must be approved by that individual to be included in the report.

The appointed investigators will file a report and all information collected with the Executive Secretary promptly after the conclusion of the investigation. All notes and other information gathered by the investigators should be transmitted to the Executive Secretary for archiving as soon as possible following the completion of the investigation.

The MFC Chair and the Executive Secretary shall review the report. If it is determined that additional information is required, the investigators shall obtain the additional information before the report is forwarded to the Executive Committee.

F. Recommendation for Fellowship Review

Once the report is complete, the Executive Committee shall determine whether or not there is sufficient concern to believe that the minister has engaged in unprofessional/unbecoming conduct or other conduct in violation of Rule 24.

If it is determined by the Executive Committee that there is insufficient grounds for a Fellowship Review, the Executive Secretary shall so notify the minister, complainant(s), and other interested parties. The determination by the Executive Committee to not recommend a Fellowship Review may be appealed by the complainant(s) to the full Committee. The appeal should be written and contain a review of the reasons why the determination to not recommend a Fellowship Review should be overturned and must be received within one month of the receipt of notice of the no cause determination. As soon as an appeal is received, the Executive Secretary should give notice to the minister involved and the minister may file a response.

If it is determined that there are sufficient grounds for a Fellowship Review, the Executive Secretary shall so notify the minister, complainant(s), the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association Executive Director, and other interested parties and schedule a Fellowship Review before the full Committee.

G. Fellowship Review

The Fellowship Review before the Committee shall follow the guidelines set forth in Rule 21 of the MFC Rules.

H. Right of Appeal by the Complainant(s)

The complainant(s) has an opportunity, on the basis of newly discovered evidence, to request reconsideration of a decision to not terminate Fellowship. ~~within the reasonable time periods described in Policy 18B.~~

18. Procedures for Complaints against Candidates

A. Complaints and Notification

Any individual wishing to file a complaint against a Candidate must contact the Professional Development Director. Complaints must be in writing ~~and contain first-hand knowledge or experience.~~ As soon as appropriate after receipt of a complaint, the Professional Development Director will notify the candidate **as well as the board chair and/or supervisor if they are working in a ministry setting.** With the initial notification, a request shall be made to the Candidate to provide a written statement of the Candidate's position on the allegations in the complaint within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the notice of complaint. At the "intake" stage, the Professional Development Director hears the complaint, provides information on the process, responds to questions from the Complainant and conducts an assessment to determine whether the complaint should be referred for further investigation. The Professional Development Director **will consult with the Ministerial Credentialing Director** to determine if further investigation is warranted and keep the complainant informed of the ongoing process and any actions.

B. Investigations

If an investigation is warranted, the Ministerial Credentialing Director will be notified to conduct the investigation, which will generally include consultation with all involved parties (candidate, Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group, complainant(s), theological school, supervisor, etc.) and review of any additional information, including the candidate's file, etc. If the complaint involves either a Candidate or complaint from a traditional marginalized community, the UUA Multicultural Growth and Witness Staff may also be consulted. The Candidate may be invited to meet with the Ministerial Credentialing Director and **the Executive Secretary of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee** to discuss the complaint. In consultation with the Ministerial Development Director, the Ministerial Credentialing Director will prepare a written report of relevant findings and recommendations that will be presented to the Executive Committee of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

C. Resolutions

The Executive Committee may consider a range of resolutions to the complaint, including, but not limited to, a letter of reprimand, suspension, counseling, return to aspirant status or removal from candidate status, etc. The Executive Committee will inform the Candidate of the resolution and a copy of the letter will become part of the candidate's permanent file and sent to the complainant.

D. Removal of Candidacy Status

If the Executive Committee believes removal of candidacy status is warranted, they shall make a recommendation to the Full Committee.

~~E. CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATION~~

~~The candidate and the complainant(s) must be notified at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting of the Full Committee at which the recommendation for removal will be considered. The candidate and the complainant(s) should be advised of their right to request a meeting with the Full Committee and to bring a support person. A support person for a candidate must be a minister in final fellowship. All costs and expenses involved in the travel and appearance of the complainants, the candidate and the~~

~~support person(s) shall be borne by the candidate. The appearance may be by secured conference call. The meeting with the Full Committee shall be for the purpose of providing the candidate with an opportunity to provide any additional facts of mitigating circumstances regarding their candidate status, and for complainants to offer their views about the recommendation for removal.~~

~~F. DETERMINATION OF THE FULL COMMITTEE~~

~~The Full Committee shall consider all relevant information, including the complaint, the candidate's file, written documents, the recommendation of the Executive Committee, and if requested, the meeting with the candidate and the complainant(s). If the Full Committee decides to remove a candidate from candidate status, such decision shall be based on a determination that the continuation of the candidate's status is not in the best interests of the Association or its ministry.~~

E. Notification of the Decision of the Full Committee

The decision of the Full Committee shall be communicated as soon as possible to the candidate, the complainant(s), and the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association Executive Director.

E. READMISSION TO CANDIDATE STATUS

~~A candidate whose candidate status is removed may, upon furnishing appropriate evidence that the concern no longer exists, apply to the Executive Committee for readmission to candidate status.~~

19. Procedures for Complaints against Aspirants

When a complaint is received by the Ministerial Credentialing Director regarding the conduct of an Aspirant, the Ministerial Credentialing Director will confer with UUA staff and/or Ministerial Fellowship Executive Committee members as is helpful, conduct an investigation and may consider a range of resolutions, including, but not limited to: reprimand, suspension, counseling, or removal of aspirant status. The Ministerial Credentialing Director will draft a letter regarding the complaint and the resolution(s) and send it to the Aspirant and the Executive Committee of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. A copy of the letter will become part of the Aspirant's permanent file.

20. Notification of Termination of Fellowship

The Committee shall inform all ministers, complainant(s), congregations, and the Executive Director of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association in writing of cases of fellowship termination when Rule 24 B or C or Rule 16 A applies and shall publish such terminations in the *UU World*. In the event that a minister voluntarily resigns from Fellowship during a Fellowship Review falling under Rule 24 (B or C) or Rule 16 B, notification of the resignation will appear in the *UU World* and include a statement describing the stage of the review process at the time of resignation. For example, the statement shall read: "Resigned (complaint pending)"; "Resigned (after failure to comply with probation)." The President of a congregation in which the minister serves/recently served will be notified of the circumstances of the termination, as will appropriate UUA staff. If the minister is serving in a non-UU setting such as a hospital or community organization, the minister's supervisor will be informed.

21. Procedures for Readmission to Fellowship

A minister seeking readmission shall submit a Readmission Application form.

1. The **Executive** Committee shall review such application and determine whether or not to readmit the minister to Fellowship, or to require further consideration of the application subject to conditions which the Committee shall prescribe.
2. An assessment by a mental health professional, ministerial career center counselor, or other specialist may be required. The focus of such an assessment shall be determined by the Executive Committee. A release for the disclosure of the findings of the assessment, including any recommendations for follow up work by the applicant, must be given in writing in advance and such reports will be the property of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and filed in the minister's file. The minister will also receive a copy of the findings.
3. Upon receipt and review of the **assessment**, the Executive Committee will determine whether or not to further consider the applicant for readmission. If the Executive Committee finds in favor of the applicant, cooperation with the recommendations of the assessment process and progress reports or other appropriate documentation will be required. ~~A release for this information must be given in advance and will be the property of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and filed in the minister's file. The minister shall also receive copies of such reports.~~
4. If the Executive Committee determines to review further the application it shall notify the appropriate officer(s) of the congregation(s) affected, any original complainant(s), and appropriate field staff that such application has been received. The Executive Committee will receive invite their comments prior to determining and determine if the re-admission process shall continue.
5. Upon the applicant's successful completion of the plan approved by the Executive Committee, the full Ministerial Fellowship Committee shall determine whether or not to readmit the applicant to Ministerial Fellowship. If re-admission is granted, a re-entry plan and/or conditions shall be designated by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee in conjunction with the Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group.

Nick will roll all changes into the revised Rules and Policies Document and send to Marion.

Approval of March 2018 Minutes

Don move to approve March 2018 minutes/ Maddie 2nd/ approved 1 abstention (Marion will post nonconfidential on uua.org)

What is basic competency?

1. Do No Harm

What is the level of risk of putting this candidate forward?

All ministers are capable of doing harm, no matter how they do in their interview.

Refer to the statements of competence and the details within them.

We need to maintain consistency

Is the mechanism of evaluation the problem and not the requirements?

Go to Fulfilling the call and pull out/condense what we think is basic competence

Do we see a minister in the room – that is very subjective and a necessary part. It's not part of the competencies.

Reminders

Fall renewal decisions due October 15

Fall Renewals call on Thursday, November 1st renewal call (12pm EDT)