

## **Proposed process for Board Conversation on Ministerial Credentialing**

The Committee on Committees (CoC) has been wrestling with questions around proper board roles in committee appointments. The board is responsible for approximately 150 appointments to 20 committees. The current practice of asking the board to solicit applications, call references, monitor the functioning and needs of the 20 committees, and make the best appointments is simply not sustainable. About 60 appointments involve credentialing committees – the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, four Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy, and the Religious Education Credentialing Committee.

The CoC is clear that we cannot continue to make these appointments. However, in considering possible solutions, what was less clear were basic understandings around credentialing, such as the Association's role or interest in credentialing and, if the Association does have an interest in credentialing, what is the board's role and what should the board delegate to staff? We note that while the board appoints the members of credentialing committees and sub-committees, staff provide significant support and direction for the credentialing processes. What is missing or unclear is differentiation between staff and board roles, and whether the board should articulate ends or executive limitations in policies that can be monitored.

At the August 2011 meeting by conference call, the Board agreed to begin a conversation on credentialing at the October 2011 board meeting with the goal of answering these basic questions in April 2012. In preparation for this conversation, the CoC is including in the board packet the Rev. Susan Ritchie's historical summary of ministerial credentialing and fellowshiping, and the Rev. Wayne Arnason's reflections on ministerial credentialing. Rev. Arnason is chair of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. The process outlined below also reflects discussions with the Rev. Harlan Limpert, Vice President for Ministries and Congregational Support, and the Rev. Sarah Lammert, Director of Ministries and Faith Development.

Credentialing processes also are currently available to our religious educators and musicians. The Music Leadership Credentialing Program exists as a committee of the administration. The RE Credentialing Committee is board-appointed, but the process differs significantly from ministerial credentialing. To focus our thinking, we propose limiting our conversation in the next six months to ministerial credentialing because

- \* it is more complex and includes not just credentialing but also fellowshiping, and
- \* questions around credentialing of RE and Music professionals will be easier to address once we figure out ministerial credentialing.

*We also want to emphasize that this initial conversation is about who is responsible for credentialing and not the credentialing process.*

The Process:

**In October**, we will ask the board to

1 -- contemplate *but not try to answer* the following questions:

\*Does ministerial credentialing/fellowshipping belong to the Association?

What is the purpose of credentialing and fellowshipping? What is the Association's interest in a centralized process? Who are the stakeholders?

\*If so, what is the appropriate board role?

Is ministerial credentialing a board or staff function under Policy Governance?

How or should appointments to credentialing bodies be managed by the board under Policy Governance?

Should some appointments (particularly for committees deemed to be "staff functions") be delegated to the administration or some other body?

2 -- Identify any additional questions that would help us clarify board and staff roles.

3 -- Determine what additional information would help us answer these questions

5 -- Ask Susan Ritchie (convener) and Harlan Limpert (or his designee) to take the outcomes of the board's October conversation and solicit the necessary feedback and information. They may invite others to work with them, board or non-board. Should the need arise, we will call them the Basic Questions About Credentialing Task Force (referred to as BQACTF, or "Bequacktif"). Otherwise, we will refer to them as Susan and Harlan.

**January 2012** – Taskforce guides the board in a review of information received. At that time, they may suggest additional questions or information needed for the board to make a decision in April. Between January and April, taskforce solicits the information needed.

**April 2012** – Taskforce guides the board discussion through answering the critical questions and formulating a next steps plan.