

**THE FINAL REPORT OF THE  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION'S  
PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE**

**April 11, 2018**

## **Introduction**

In June of 2010 through a by-law change, the General Assembly established a Presidential Search Committee (PSC). The following individuals were elected or appointed in June of 2013 to serve on this new committee for a term of six years: Wayne Arnason, Joanna Fontaine Crawford, Matthew Johnson, Liz Jones, Michael Tino, Elandria Williams, and Jacqui C. Williams. This committee is accountable to the General Assembly of Congregations and to that end we are providing this report on both our process, and our thoughts and recommendations. Our intention is to give both the Board of Trustees and the next Presidential Search Committee a complete overview of what this first PSC experienced in responding to our charge.

You will find in this report,

- An executive summary of our recommendations
- An explanation of our reflections on our process and other events that led to our recommendations
- A detailed timeline of what we did
- An Appendix of the documents and forms we generated.

## **Executive Summary**

Here are our recommendations. Explanations of why we recommend these steps follows in the next section.

1. Informed by the reports of the Election Campaign Practices Committee and the Presidential Search Committee for the 2017 election, we recommend that the Board of Trustees undertake as soon as possible a comprehensive study and evaluation of the election processes for our lead officers, to include the advisability of a shorter election process and campaign cycle that would be entirely funded by the UUA.

2. We recommend a shorter election process and campaign cycle, as follows:

Candidates nominated by the PSC are announced by February 1 in the year of the election. Candidates campaign at one General Assembly and have four months to prepare for that GA. The campaign continues over the summer, and the election is held by congregation-based voting in late September to early October. The new President's term does not begin until the end of the following General Assembly.

3. We recommend that the PSC continue to include at least one elder of color, widely respected within UU communities of color, and at least one former member of the UUA Staff.

4. We recommend that the next Presidential Search Committee should have a more expansive and specific charge than the first one has had.

5. We recommend that the UUA Board articulate a vision for the work of the Association in advance of the next Presidential Search.

6. We recommend that a new job description for the President should be created by the next Presidential Search Committee as an early task. The job description created by our Presidential Search Committee will be useful to the next Search Committee, but the next President's job description will also depend on the evolution of the Board's and the current President's understanding of this job.

7. We recommend that the next PSC conduct "recruitment interviews" with people considering being candidates before they submit applications, as an additional way of assisting a broader diversity of candidates to make the decision to run. We further recommend that the next PSC establish an advisory group to help potential candidates discern. These "on-call elders" would be available to potential candidates.

8. We recommend that the by-law that allows for running for President by petition be eliminated (9.6a, as it pertains to the office of President). In the absence of the will to eliminate this by-law completely, we believe that the threshold for petition candidates should be raised significantly—to at least 50 congregations, from at least two regions, and certifiable only by the action of duly-called congregational meetings.

9. We recommend changing the bylaws to give the PSC the authority, in the event a candidate drops out before the election, to recommend whether an additional candidate shall be brought forward from among already vetted applicants, and to recommend the candidate(s) the Board, who will be empowered to approve their nomination without a petition process.

10. We recommend that in reviewing the budget for the next PSC, that the Board be committed to generous limitations on the number of people that the PSC can interview, so that the number of candidates considered is not unduly constrained by the budget. We further recommend that the communication link to the UUA and expense approvals for PSC spending go through the Moderator and not through the office of the Chief Operating Officer.

11. We recommend that the Board and the next Presidential Search Committee create a covenant between them. We recommend that this covenant include public and private neutrality in the election process, and the timing of a Board discernment interview to meet prospective nominees and have a confidential opportunity to express the Board's views or questions to the PSC.

12. We recommend that the next PSC learn from the experience of the 2016 election and nominate at least three candidates as opposed to two.

13. We recommend that the current President undertake a comprehensive study of the restraints that should be imposed, if any, on candidates for President who serve on the UUA staff. Such a study could include consideration of identifying possible resources for a paid sabbatical for a UUA staff person who is a candidate, and how such support could be equitably given to all other candidates who are serving congregations or other institutions. Such a study should be staff based, but would need to be coordinated with any Board study as recommended in #1.

14. We recommend that the Board's study of the job and role of President include the possibility that this role can be carefully and intentionally shared by more than one person. The PSC supports changing our By-Laws to make this possible. We further recommend that the PSC process should allow for a team of people to apply together to be co-Presidents.

## Reflections on the Process

The first UUA Presidential Search Committee held its first meeting and began work at the UUA General Assembly in June 2013, when we were elected and appointed to the committee. Subsequent to that meeting, we held seven in-person meetings and twenty-seven meetings via conference call or video conference. This final report is a consensus document from the seven committee members. In the course of writing our report, one of our members became the Co-Moderator of the UUA. While she participated in the consensus process around the report, she did not participate in drafting the language of the recommendations of the final report. Our **Recommendation #1** recognizes and calls for further leadership from the Co-Moderators and the Board in taking up the recommendations of our report and that of the Election Campaign Practices Committee (ECPC) and acting upon them.

### Charge to the Committee

The Presidential Search Committee was instituted as an attempt to change the entire system of electing a UUA President by changing only one small part of the system. We gathered with no charge other than the minimal requirements outlined in the By-Laws (i.e. to have at least two candidates by a specified date). Instead, we found many things projected onto us: desires for different outcomes, desires for different processes, and demands for Presidential candidates with certain identities that had not been represented in that office. As an outcome of our recommended study by the Board of Trustees of the search and election processes, we believe that the next Presidential Search Committee should have a more expansive and specific charge than the first one has had. (**Recommendation 4**)

Aware of these expectations and projections, and unwilling to be restrained by them, we began our work by deciding on the values on which our process would be based. We developed an internal covenant as well as a public statement of values.

*The members of the Presidential Search Committee are stewards of a process, and not advocates for a particular outcome. We acknowledge that there is a value in diversity of leadership, and we also maintain that in our process, we will consider people with regard to their qualifications. We are committed to engaging in the conversation about what kind of leader our time calls for. We invite people to nominate diverse candidates for this position in the context of our commitment to becoming an anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multicultural Association.*

*We are not limiting our qualifications to a particular type of leadership, but we expect that successful nominees will have been involved at some level in Unitarian Universalist leadership. We will be relying heavily on Unitarian Universalists to be the "eighth member" of our Committee, helping identify qualified leaders and encouraging them to apply.*

*We are committed to a process that is as open and transparent as possible, given the demands of confidentiality required for a personnel matter. We also seek a process accountable to communities of people whose identities marginalize them in our society. We intend that the criteria we use for selection will be public and that every member of the committee will review every application.*

Early in our work, the committee also agreed on our internal procedures and standards, including that none of us would individually endorse candidates. We believe that this is a standard that should be specifically required of future PSC's. (**See Recommendation 10**).

We operated on a modified consensus basis, in which expressed concerns spurred further and deeper conversation. All of the decisions made by the committee were the unanimous consensus of the seven members of the committee.

We settled into a committee structure that worked for us. While our initial intention was to rotate roles half-way through our work, we found ourselves comfortable with delineated roles that lasted our entire term. They were:

- Internal Co-Chair, to run meetings, put together agendas;
- External Co-Chair, to be the primary contact with the UUA Moderator, Board, and staff;
- Recording Secretary, to keep internal records
- Communications Secretary, to manage public communications and social media
- GA Coordinator, to manage our presence at GA (booth, materials, etc.)

We believe that it behooves the next PSC to begin working immediately after their election to establish group norms and dynamics.

The roles and identities our committee members represented that we found helpful during our process have included:

- Religious educator
- Former UUA Staff members
- Former UUA Board members (including, in our case a former UUA Secretary)
- People with access to former centers of power in presidential elections
- People with experience in previous presidential elections
- People from different regions of the country

Three of our members were over the age of fifty-five. Two of our members identify as people of color (POC). Our experience suggests that among the roles that we recommend the Nominating Committee and Board should consider for the next PSC are an elder of color with significant authority in the UU POC community. (**Recommendation 3**)

Above all, members of the next PSC should be committed to innovative thinking in order to fundamentally shift the direction of our Association to be in alignment with our values and vision, and make real our commitment to an anti-oppressive democratic process.

## **Job Description**

Because the UUA By-Laws define the role of the President minimally, we felt it necessary to create a job description against which we could compare candidates. In creating this job description, we interviewed a wide variety of stakeholders and groups, including sitting and former Presidents, Moderators, and Executive Vice Presidents, senior UUA Staff, and leadership of organizations to which we felt the process should be accountable. Understanding that the exact role of the President shifts over time, we intended this job description to be our guide for selection, and not a permanent document.

Understanding the role of the Board in setting vision for the Association and the role of the President in determining priorities and methods for implementation of that vision, we meant the

job description as a framework into which these things could fit. We believe that the UUA Board should articulate a vision for the work of the Association in advance of the next Presidential Search, which will assist the PSC in creating the job description of the next President.

**(Recommendation 5)**

Our draft job description was made public for comment and brought to the 2014 General Assembly in a hearing. Based on the feedback we received, we released the job description on October 28, 2014 and called for people to suggest potential candidates to us.

We strongly believe that the next PSC should use this same process and devote time and energy to the job description. **(Recommendation 6)** The work of identifying and engaging with stakeholders in this process, especially those whose voices are often unheard, is vital, and the work of crafting a job description is helpful to set group norms and help the committee focus their selection process.

## **Recruitment**

People were invited to discern their interest in applying in a variety of ways. The PSC leveraged our wide variety of contacts and relationships to develop a list of people who, along with those suggested by the wider UU public, were invited to apply. The job description provided a useful tool for helping people discern if they met the qualifications to apply. We note that certain groups of people, notably people of color, trans\* folk, laypeople, and ministers of smaller congregations, faced different recruitment obstacles than white ministers serving larger congregations or serving on UUA Staff (who perhaps felt more entitled to be nominated). We have heard that people with marginalized identities did not, by and large, immediately believe they had actual access to this process.

We talked to over 50 people, suggested by the UU public and by members of our committee. We had individual conversations with them about the process (although no collective interviews). We asked each of them to discern whether they wanted to fill out the required application to be considered as one of our candidate nominees. The list of people we talked to was multigender; multiracial; included lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual people; included both ministers and laypeople; included people ranging in age from their late 20s to their early 70s. Ultimately, we received eight applications to be considered for nomination; all of them were from cisgender, white, women ministers. All four candidates who were either nominated by us or who ran by petition in this election were among this group of eight initial applicants and were background-checked and interviewed by our committee.

Our self-evaluation has brought forth some dissatisfactions with our new process for inviting candidacies for President, and with the former process that still remains within the bylaws. We believe that the next PSC as a whole should consider having formal recruitment conversations with people specifically invited to apply, prior to their decision to submit an application.

**(Recommendation 7)** Care should be taken not to imply in these conversations that they are guarantees of a nomination.

A suggestion coming from our broad request for evaluative comments on our process that we have embraced had to do with having “on-call elders” available to potential candidates. We believe that that the next PSC should establish an advisory group to help potential candidates discern. **(Recommendation 7)** The PSC could introduce potential candidates to these “on-call elders” who would be chosen for their depth of involvement in Unitarian Universalism, and for the diversity of identities they might represent. These elders would be asked to covenant with

the potential candidates and with the PSC to maintain confidentiality. Such a group would need to be selected early and deliberately in the committee's process.

Along the way, the members of our committee had many individual opportunities for conversations with people discerning their interest. We have noted, however, that the ministers on the committee had many more such conversations than the laypeople, in part because of large collegial gatherings. We believe that the next PSC needs the resources to identify and budget for opportunities for all members to engage in such conversations at a wide variety of venues. **(Recommendation 10)**

The General Assembly and the Board should decide whether they trust the process that we created and followed described in this report. Our committee was concerned from the beginning of our work that the potential candidates could choose not to engage with us and easily run by petition, or to decide to run by petition after our process was over. We see the current petition process, arguably, as a low bar. So we are recommending that the by-law that allows for running for President by petition be eliminated (9.6a, as it pertains to the office of President). In the absence of the will to eliminate this by-law completely, we believe that the threshold for petition candidates should be raised significantly—to at least 50 congregations, from at least two regions, and certifiable only by the action of duly-called congregational meetings. **(Recommendation 8)**

### **Vetting of Candidates and Interviews**

We believe it is time to shift our culture to be an Association where we balance power by cooperation and inclusion and not by creating separate centers of power in competition with one another. The next PSC needs to be even more attentive to power dynamics in the election, especially with regard to UUA staff people and people with marginalized identities.

In vetting candidates, we developed a common matrix, based on the job description, for assessing applications and interviews. In retrospect, we see that a separation of authority for candidate discernment between of the PSC and the Board was unnecessary. So we are recommending strongly that the Board and PSC develop a covenant, which should include an agreement that Board members will not individually endorse candidates and be supportive of the committee's work and process. We are further recommending that the Board have an opportunity to interview prospective nominees and express their opinion to the PSC. **(Recommendation 11).**

We felt some budget constraints on how we conducted face to face interviews with prospective candidates. So we are recommending that the PSC be given a budget adequate to complete their work. This should include the possibility of at least two face-to-face interviews with finalists. We hope that the number of finalists in the future will not be constrained by budget. **(Recommendation 10)**

### **Campaign Finance issues**

In order to make running for President more accessible, we engaged with the Board around campaign finance changes, which ultimately led to a revision of Rule G-9.13.8. The new rule imposed a lower cap on total campaign spending as well as a lower maximum individual contribution to campaigns. We believe that this limit helped create a more level playing field and a style of campaign better reflecting UU values. Nevertheless, in our evaluative interviews

following the election, we heard unanimous feedback from the most recent and former candidates that our election process is too drawn-out and too expensive. We were especially persuaded by feedback from former UUA President Bill Sinkford among others that fundraising for the UUA involves different skill sets than fundraising for a campaign. So we are recommending that future shorter Presidential campaigns be funded entirely by the UUA. **(Recommendations 1 and 2)**

### **Decision to Nominate 2 Candidates**

In our process we feared that having more than 2 candidates would confuse the election. This concern stemmed from the fact that the Nomination Process was a new one for the Association and that having more than two candidates would require the automatic run-off process that might further confuse the issue. In the end, we note that having three candidates was a good idea and did not complicate the election in ways we had feared. We heard some feedback in the evaluations we solicited from stakeholders that having three candidates offered a better field, better process, and better outcome than having two candidates. So we are encouraging the next PSC to nominate at least three candidates, although not recommending that this be enshrined in the by-laws. **(Recommendation 12)**

### **Confidentiality and Transparency**

We spent a lot of time balancing the need for transparency in the process with the importance of maintaining confidentiality around the candidates in discernment.

Towards this end of transparency the PSC posted following each meeting on our blog (<https://uupresidentialsearch.wordpress.com>), and on our Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/presidentialsearchcommittee/>). We also communicated through posts on Twitter, open surveys, an open meeting, hearing at GA, booths at GAs, reports to the GA, on The VUU, and in the UU World.

We note that confidentiality is not a concern that is shared equally, and that our attempts at encouraging or enforcing confidentiality within the broader UU community were met with disdain by some. We feel strongly that confidentiality in this process is important, understanding that the need for confidential discernment processes is unequal along lines of power differentials. People serving smaller congregations, people of color, religious educators, and people who are not religious professionals often have more need to engage in a confidential process.

We feel it is important to note that there is also a network of gossip in UU circles connected to the staff at headquarters that we believe got out of hand. When the PSC pointed this out and asked for respect for the process, we were ridiculed by some prominent voices on social media.

### **Process After A Candidate Drops Out**

During our process, at a time when the by-law defined mandate of the PSC to bring forward nominees had expired, one of the candidates we nominated, Sue Philips, withdrew her candidacy. (See the UU World report <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/phillips-withdraws> for more details.) This revealed an authority gap in the by-laws which we believe needs to be corrected. An opinion from the UUA's attorney was requested and declared that the PSC no longer had a role in nominations after putting forward the slate of nominees by the required deadline. The Moderator and Secretary nevertheless used their authority to ask the PSC to



nominate an additional candidate to replace her. The UUA subsequently offered assistance to one candidate we nominated and one candidate we did not nominate to enter the race by petition. We are recommending that the PSC should be given the by-law authority to decide to recommend to the Board new candidate(s) when there is a withdrawal from the process after nominations are announced. We presume such a decision would draw from among already vetted applicants. **(Recommendations 9)** We are also recommending that the ability to run by petition be eliminated or that the bar to achieve petition candidacy be raised. **(Recommendation 8)**

### **Campaign Practices, Including Role of UUA Staff in Elections**

As our process proceeded towards a final list of prospective candidates, it became clear to us that senior UUA staff had invested themselves in the nomination of people whom the committee did not choose. It subsequently became clear that the Secretary of the Association was publicly surprised by our ultimate nominees and somewhat disappointed by them. There is at least the appearance that senior UUA staff exerted unfair influence on the election at several points along the way, including in the events that led to Sue Phillips dropping out of the race and the subsequent decisions around Susan Frederick-Gray and Jeanne Pupke joining the race.

We refer you to and support the Election Campaign Practices Committee's recommendation in its final report that the roles and responsibilities of the PSC, ECPC, ECPC Chair, Secretary, and UUA COO be clarified. **(See Recommendation 1)**

We want to note that the Editor of the UU World, through editorial decisions regarding the candidates and how they were covered, also exerts influence in the election process in ways that should be considered in a review and evaluation of the current process. **(See Recommendation 1)**

Based in part on the opinion offered by the UUA's counsel, the UUA's Chief Operating Officer insisted that the PSC's work was done once we had submitted nominations. As a consequence, subsequent requests (including budget requests) to the UUA became more difficult. As a committee elected/appointed to a six-year term, we felt it important to remain engaged in the process so that we could report back to the member congregations of the UUA. We are recommending that the Moderator, and not the Chief Operating Officer, should be our point of contact for accountability and budget authorization within the UUA in the future. **(Recommendation 10)**

Issues around UUA Staff running for President are significant, and need to be carefully considered before the next election. The internal personnel policy issues involved within the UUA are beyond our mandate to discuss. We recommend that the current President undertake a comprehensive study of the restraints that should be imposed, if any, on candidates for President who serve on the UUA staff. **(Recommendation 13.)** Such a study could include consideration of identifying possible resources for a paid sabbatical for a UUA staff person who is a candidate, and how such support could be equitably given to all other candidates. Such a study should be staff-based, but would need to be coordinated with any Board study as suggested in **Recommendation 1**.

### **Election Timeline and Structure**

We are recommending that the timeline and venue of the UUA Presidential election be fundamentally altered to create a shorter campaign, accessible to more people, and based in direct voting in congregations through their delegates. This would require significant revision of

the by-laws. Members of this PSC have been doing preliminary work on sample drafts of changes which we can offer as requested. We would like to see the next PSC announce three candidates for election by February 1 of the year before the beginning of the Presidential term. This announcement would begin a campaign period no longer than nine months, and formal campaigns of six to seven months. This would provide one General Assembly at which candidates could participate in forums in front of a continental audience and meet with a wide circle of representatives of our congregations. The campaign would culminate in a voting period from mid-September to mid-October, at which point the election would be over. The President-Elect would then have seven months prior to the beginning of their term to prepare for their new role. **(Recommendation 2)**

### **Different Models for Presidential Leadership: Co-Presidents?**

We see no reason why the job and role of President cannot be carefully and intentionally shared by more than one person, and support changing our By-Laws to make this possible. The PSC process should allow for a team of people to apply together to be co-Presidents. **(Recommendation 14)**

## **Timeline**

In June 2010, the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations voted to create a Presidential Search Committee, composed of 5 elected members and 2 members appointed by the UUA Board. In Section 9.5 of the UUA Bylaws, they are charged:

*The Presidential Search Committee shall submit no fewer than two nominations for the office of President for an election at the end of a presidential term or for a special election. The report of the Presidential Search Committee shall be announced by February 1 of the year before the General Assembly at which there is to be a presidential election, except in the case of a special election, in which case the report of the Presidential Search Committee shall be announced by December 10 of the year before the election.*

Appointed or elected in 2013, the Presidential Search Committee members are:  
Wayne Arnason, Joanna Fontaine Crawford, Matthew Johnson, Liz Jones, Michael Tino, Elandria Williams, Jacqui C. Williams

June 23, 2013

After being officially elected/appointed, the Presidential Search Team(PSC) meets while at General Assembly. Those who haven't already done so attend the UUA's Multiculturalism Consultation and Training for Leaders June 24 and 25.

October 25-26, 2013

PSC meets in Chicago at Second Unitarian Church, creating our covenant, preliminary timeline, and establishing leadership roles. It is planned that the roles will rotate in two year blocks (team will instead stay in these roles for the duration of their terms). Roles: Co-Chair for Outside Liaison & Budget: Matthew Johnson; Co-Chair for Team Facilitation: Liz Jones; Communications Coordinator for External Communication: Joanna Fontaine Crawford; Recorder: Michael Tino. Coordination of General Assembly activities would later be coordinated

by Jacqui S. Williams and Elandria Williams. The PSC decided to continue meeting monthly, primarily through conference calls.

November/December 2013

Feeling that the goal in the GA's decision to create a Presidential Search Committee was to create a more democratic process, the PSC begins researching past history of UUA presidential campaigns and their funding.

January 21, 2014 The PSC meets with Policy Governance consultant Laura Park of Unity Consulting to discuss how policy governance affects the role of UUA president.

January-April 2014

In order to create a job description for the UUA president, the PSC interviews current/former UUA presidents, moderators, and some UU organizations about past history of the position, and disseminates a survey for other individuals and groups. Based on our research of past campaigns, the PSC also determines campaign finance reform should be addressed by the General Assembly in order to move towards a more democratic process, and a proposal is sent to the UUA Board.

May 16-17, 2014

The PSC meets in person in Houston, TX at First Unitarian Universalist Church – Museum District. The meeting agenda contains public times open to the public and closed times. During the meeting, a draft of the Job Description and Committee values around selecting candidates is created. Work begins on a detailed process to be shared publicly online and at GA 2014 including our timeline, how to submit nominations, the application process, and when potential applicants can meet with the PSC.

May 22, 2014

The Committee Values Statement and Draft Job Description are made public on The VUU, the PSC's blog, Facebook, and Twitter. Feedback is solicited with an online survey made available.

June 13, 2014

The PSC meets by conference call to finalize GA details. In addition, we have an in-depth discussion on the issue of confidentiality, in light of the controversy around the SKSM presidential selection. We feel it paramount to maintain appropriate confidentiality to protect the privacy of potential nominees and discuss pragmatic safeguards, e.g. password-protection, care of one's personal computer, etc.

June 26, 2014 General Assembly: The PSC holds a GA Workshop, "Presidential Search Committee Hearing" to share information with GA attendees and receive feedback.

September 2014

After discussing the need to be as transparent as possible while holding confidential the personnel information of potential candidates, the PSC releases a Statement on Confidentiality of the UUA Presidential Search Committee.

October 24-25, 2014

The PSC meets in person at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Atlanta, GA to study the survey results and draft the final versions of the Job Description and Search Process. These are made public via blog and social media on October 28, 2014.

November 1, 2014

A form to suggest people for nomination and the application for nomination are made available via blog and social media. These are also disseminated as widely as possible through professional groups, UU organizations, and personal contacts.

January – May, 2015

The PSC continues our work promoting the process at different events, and preparing for GA. We begin compiling a draft document of interview questions that can be shared publicly for feedback.

June, 2015

At General Assembly, the PSC hosts a booth in the Exhibit Hall for sharing information about the process and gives a progress report to the General Assembly during Plenary. We also hold private, scheduled meetings for those in discernment to ask questions and discuss the process, and the job of president, with us. Practically all of those who will later apply meet with us.

July-September 2015

Deadline for applications is July 15, 2015. The PSC meets in closed session via conference calls to discuss the applications we received. We conduct phone references and select finalists.

October 2015

The PSC meets and conducts in-personal interviews of potential candidates, using the interview questions that had been made public, and with a rubric to analyze which potential candidates were addressing key areas of concern.

November 2015

The PSC meets in closed session via conference call to discuss finalists and plan the announcement of our nominees, planned “on or about February 1” in order to give the nominees time to confidentially notify necessary people (i.e. church boards for parish ministers, supervisors for UUA staff) and prepare for campaigning.

November 17, 2015

Feeling that the integrity of the process is being damaged by outside individuals openly conjecturing about potential nominees and sharing confidential information, the PSC releases an open letter, reminding all of the need for appropriate confidentiality to ensure a fair election.

January 17, 2016

Because of continuing gossip about nominees and with the permission of the two candidates, the PSC presents our announcement earlier than planned. We present the Rev. Alison Miller (Senior Minister, Morristown Unitarian Fellowship, New Jersey) and the Rev. Sue Phillips (New England Regional Lead for UUA Field Staff) as our nominees for UUA President, a decision that was made unanimously and with enthusiasm by the PSC.

February 18, 2016

Rev. Sue Phillips notifies the PSC that she is formally withdrawing her candidacy for President, citing irreconcilable problems with campaigning and continuing in her role as UUA Staff. Shortly afterward, the Secretary of the UUA Board, Rob Eller-Isaacs, asks the PSC to nominate another candidate to run for the presidency. On February 19, on the PSC blog, we announce our intention to do so, and on February 24, we share that we will be issuing a statement on March 6 with that name.

March 6, 2016

The PSC submits the name of the Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray for President of the UUA, unanimously endorsing her candidacy equally to that of the Rev. Alison Miller.

*At this point, guided by UUA bylaws and current election practices, the PSC effectively goes on hiatus, turning over the process to the UUA Election Campaign Practices Committee.*

May 12, 2017

The PSC meets via Zoom to discuss future work to be done (our term runs through 2019).

June 23, 2017

The PSC meets in person at General Assembly to discuss a timeline and work needed for creating a final report of our process.

Fall 2017

The PSC conducts interviews of former candidates and other interested parties about the new search committee process used for the 2017 election. We also create a survey, disseminated through social media, our blog, and through UU organizations for anyone who wishes to give us feedback.

February 28-March 2, 2018

The PSC meets in person at Highlander Center in Tennessee to discuss the post-election surveys and interviews, and to draft our report.

## **APPENDIX : Documents and Forms**

### **Covenant**

- speak with one voice
- be clear
- laugh and have a good time
- confidentiality
  - around personal issues shared by members of the committee
  - around personnel issues (who we are considering)
- be mindful of differences
- be open to giving and receiving critique
  - practice self-critique
- remember to whom (and to what) we are accountable
- share what we learn
- stay in touch
- be gentle with ourselves when we “oops”
- value relationships and reconciliation within the committee
- be faithful; do this religious work as Unitarian Universalists for our entire faith movement

### **Letter to Stakeholders around Job Description of the President January 2014**

Dear XXX,

The UUA Presidential Search Committee, empaneled at GA2013, is beginning the process of designing a new nominating system for the position of President of our Association. Our first tasks are to develop a job description for the position of President as well as a transparent and accountable nominating process. We have identified key leaders, groups, and organizations whose input we believe will help us in these tasks.

We would be most appreciative if you could take some time to share your thoughts on the questions below with us. We hope that you will share your thoughts in writing with our committee. I am also happy to arrange a conversation with you to replace or augment your written responses. Please let me know whether or not you would like such a conversation, and, if so, the best way to contact you for it.

As you know, this process is a new one, and we're working on tight deadlines. We therefore need to wrap up this response process by April 18 in order for the committee to have adequate time to draft a job description and nominating process by General Assembly.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation with our search process.

Sincerely,

XXX

Questions about the job description:

1. Describe the role and position of the President of the Unitarian Universalist Association  
(This question would give us a sense of what weight people put on the aspects of the job.)
2. How do you see the relationship between the President and the Board?
3. How would you characterize the relationship between the President and the UUA Staff?
4. What is the relationship between the President and the General Assembly?
5. What is the relationship between the President and the congregations of our Association?
6. What can the President not delegate?
7. When have you seen the President being the most effective?
8. What are the key skills that you see the President of the UUA needing to possess?
9. What are the most memorable aspects in your mind of past presidents?
10. What would you like to see in the President of the UUA?

Questions about the selection process:

11. What are the values that are most important to you in the *process* used to select the nominees for UUA President?
12. What questions would you ask applicants to be nominated for UUA President?
13. What would a transparent search process be like?
14. What would an accountable search process be like?
15. How could we effectively engage congregations in the nomination process?

## **Job Description: UUA President**

Finalized 10/25/14 by the Presidential Search Committee

The President of the Unitarian Universalist Association is the primary public and spiritual leader of Unitarian Universalism and the executive leader of our Association.

The President:

- Serves as the Executive under Policy Governance, with responsibility for interpreting and implementing the Association's Ends as set by the Board.
  - Accountable to the Board, which is the designee of the General Assembly, in relationship to Executive Limitations policies.
  - Acts as head of the UUA Staff.
  - Effectively manages and deploys the resources of the Association in service of the Ends.
- Serves as *ex officio*, non-voting member of the UUA Board.

- Acts as the prophetic voice and the face of Unitarian Universalism.
  - Speaks to Unitarian Universalists and on our behalf.
  - Represents Unitarian Universalism in the public square and with other faith leaders.
- Extends and strengthens Unitarian Universalist institutions.
  - Inspires generosity rooted in Unitarian Universalist values.
  - Builds, nurtures, and sustains strategic relationships.
  - Plays a leadership role in UUA fundraising.
  - Provides a pastoral and ceremonial presence in support of beloved community.
- Provides leadership for the Association's Ends of transforming power, privilege and oppression.

Our ideal candidates will:

- Be able to authentically and accountably represent the whole of our movement and its diverse members.
  - Have a broad, intersectional cultural competence and a commitment to grow and develop it.
  - Seek out the wisdom and experience of those often unseen and unheard.
- In personal and professional relationships, conduct themselves ethically and with integrity, seek justice and right relations, and engage with others compassionately.
- Live a liberal religious spiritual life in word, deed, and personal practice.
- Be resilient with a strong sense of self and an established support network.
- Be capable of engaging with power, money, and people who hold them.
- Be passionate about Unitarian Universalism, its institutions and covenanted communities.
  - Have a vision for the growth of our movement.
- Be a faithful risk-taker in service to a compelling vision

Our ideal candidates will possess the following skills, knowledge and attributes:

- Excellent written and oral communication skills, including an understanding of the evolving landscape of communication technology and media.
- Impressive leadership skills, including especially the ability to manage a complex organization, delegate to others, and assess and plan for effective work.
- An understanding of systems theory and organizational development
  - Understands both the explicit and implicit ways the Association works
- Ability to inspire others, including (but not limited to) staff, donors, and leaders.
- Emotional and pastoral intelligence and good listening skills.
- Talented ordained or lay preacher.

Potential nominees must be:

- A member in good standing of a UUA member congregation (per UUA By-Laws).
- Able to travel extensively.
- Able to spend a significant amount of time in Boston.
- At least 18 years of age (per MA law).

## **Presidential Search Committee Selection Process**

*Finalized 10/25/14*

### **Applications and Suggestions**

On November 1, 2014, we will begin accepting applications from people who wish to be considered for our nomination. In addition, we will publicly solicit suggestions of people whom



we should invite to submit applications. In collecting these suggestions, we will ask for names and contact information of the potential applicants. All people suggested to us will be sent information on the application process.

We encourage those who suggest names to talk directly with the people they would like to run. Members of the committee will also directly encourage people to apply; all applications will be treated equally once they are submitted.

### **Application (Due July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015)**

We will ask for basic information in a web-based form. In addition, applicants will be required to do the following:

Submit a resume, with a cover letter describing why you are applying and why you believe you are qualified for the position. Please include contact information for three references who know you from a variety of settings. Please also submit a sermon you have given (both written *and* audio/video if possible).

In addition, please answer the following questions (four pages maximum, total):

- What do you see as the optimal relationship between Unitarian Universalist congregations/covenanted communities and our Association headquarters?
- How would you be a prophetic, public voice of Unitarian Universalism?
- What is your vision for achieving the Association's Ends concerning transforming power, privilege and oppression?
- Describe your personal spiritual practice and sources of resilience.

### **Guidelines for Applicants**

Applicants will be asked to agree to the following guidelines:

The Presidential Search Committee believes that our charge and process were part of an effort to create a different kind of democratic process and election for President of the UUA, one that is less expensive, more transparent, and more accessible than those in the past. Therefore, the Committee discourages candidates from public electioneering of any kind before release of our nominations on February 1, 2016, notwithstanding the current provisions of Rule G9.13.7. Failure to observe this expectation will be detrimental to one's application for nomination.

The Committee, per UUA By-Laws, is obligated to nominate at least two candidates for the 2017 UUA presidential election. Potential applicants should enter this process with the understanding that nominees will need to run a campaign for election.

The Committee will have opportunities for potential applicants to discuss with us their discernment regarding submitting an application, including at General Assembly 2015. Involvement in such opportunities will have no bearing (positively or negatively) on the consideration of one's application. Once applications are submitted, Committee members will not discuss applications outside of the formal process.

### **Interview Questions**

*We will give our finalists these questions ahead of time, and conduct video chat interviews that are recorded for all of the committee to look at.*

- Why do you want to be the President of the UUA?
- How would you deploy Association resources to best serve potential Unitarian Universalists and those who identify as UU but are not members of congregations or covenanted communities?
- Describe a time in which you had to inspire people to overcome a difficult situation.

- What would you say to a potential major donor to convince them to donate to the UUA?
- How would the diversity of our movement be reflected in your priorities as President?
- We're looking at the many ways in which the UUA President needs to relate to power—from advocacy to fundraising to ceremonial and positional power. Given that, how do you claim power for yourself? How do you engage with people who themselves hold a great deal of power?
- Describe a healthy organizational culture and something you've done to help create one.
- Have you engaged in personal or professional behavior that is in significant opposition to contemporary Unitarian Universalist ethical standards? If so, what does the Search Committee need to know?
- Understanding that the role of President makes you a public religious figure, is there anything in your past that you feel the Search Committee needs to know about?
- *Plus 1 or 2 others that will be individualized for the candidate*

#### **Timeline and Process for Making Our Decisions**

- Completed applications must be received by the committee on or before July 15, 2015. We will confirm receipt of applications when they are complete.
- Before our August, 2015 conference call, PSC members will rank their top 5 and bottom 5 applicants based on the rubric to be developed.
- At our August, 2015 conference call, we will decide which candidates to do initial reference checks on.
- Initial reference checks should be completed by our September, 2015 conference call.
- At our Fall 2015 meeting (October, 2015), we will choose people to interview. Interviews will be conducted by video chat that can be recorded so that all PSC members can watch all interviews. We will also do a deeper reference dive on interview finalists (contacting people not on their reference list).
- Finalists will be asked to submit to a comprehensive background check.
- January 2016: In-person meeting, possibly to include live interviews with several top finalists, in order to finalize nominations.
- We will attempt to reach a consensus among committee members on nominating each of the final candidates, using modified consensus process. If that process does not result in at least two nominees, we will vote yes or no on the remaining finalists and nominate any candidate with 5 of 7 yes votes. If we still do not have at least two nominees, we'll discuss.

## UUA Presidential Search Suggestions

This form is for you to suggest to the UUA Presidential Search Committee people you think should receive applications for nomination. We encourage you to contact people directly and let them know you'd like them to apply. Everyone suggested through this form will receive an application from the committee.

What is the name of the person you suggest?

Please provide us with their email address so that we may send them a link to the application.

What is your name?

What is your email address in case we have questions?

(Optional) If you'd like, briefly tell us why you're suggesting this person. Thanks!

## UUA Presidential Search Application

The following questions will provide us with basic information about your application to be nominated for UUA President by the UUA Presidential Search Committee.

In addition to the questions below, we ask that you send your application (see below or visit <http://uupresidentialsearch.wordpress.com> for required elements) to [pres\\_search@uua.org](mailto:pres_search@uua.org) by July 15, 2015. We will acknowledge receipt of your application once it is complete.

To apply:

Submit a resume, with a cover letter describing why you are applying and why you believe you are qualified for the position. Please include contact information for three references who know you from a variety of settings. Please also submit a sermon you have given (both written and audio/video if possible).

In addition, please answer the following questions (four pages maximum, total):

- What do you see as the optimal relationship between Unitarian Universalist congregations/covenanted communities and our Association headquarters?
- How would you be a prophetic, public voice of Unitarian Universalism?
- What is your vision for achieving the Association's Ends concerning transforming power, privilege and oppression?
- Describe your personal spiritual practice and sources of resilience.

Name:

Mailing Address:

E-mail:

Preferred Phone Number

City

State

Zip Code

What UUA member congregation are you a member of (name, city, and state)?

Please Verify the Following:

\_\_\_ I will be 18 years of age or older as of June 1, 2017.

\_\_\_ I am able to travel extensively and spend a significant amount of time in Boston if elected.

I agree to the following guidelines set by the Presidential Search Committee:

Please read and check all three boxes to signify your agreement.

\_\_\_ The Presidential Search Committee believes that our charge and process were part of an effort to create a different kind of democratic process and election for President of the UUA, one that is less expensive, more transparent, and more accessible than those in the past. Therefore, the Committee discourages candidates from public electioneering of any kind before release of our nominations on February 1, 2016, notwithstanding the current provisions of Rule G9.13.7. Failure to observe this expectation will be detrimental to one's application for nomination.

\_\_\_ The Committee, per UUA By-Laws, is obligated to nominate at least two candidates for the 2017 UUA presidential election. Potential applicants should enter this process with the understanding that nominees will need to run a campaign for election.

\_\_\_ The Committee will have opportunities for potential applicants to discuss with us their discernment regarding submitting an application, including at General Assembly 2015. Involvement in such opportunities will have no bearing (positively or negatively) on the consideration of one's application. Once applications are submitted, Committee members will not discuss applications outside of the formal process.

Thank you for your interest in being the next UUA President. Please remember to submit your application materials to [pres\\_search@uua.org](mailto:pres_search@uua.org) by July 15, 2015. We will acknowledge receipt of your application once it is complete.

All of this information is always available on our blog,  
<http://uupresidentialsearch.wordpress.com>.

As a reminder, to apply:

Submit a resume, with a cover letter describing why you are applying and why you believe you are qualified for the position. Please include contact information for three references who know you from a variety of settings. Please also submit a sermon you have given (both written and audio/video if possible).

In addition, please answer the following questions (four pages maximum, total):

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- Describe your personal spiritual practice and sources of resilience.

## UUA Presidential Search Committee Feedback

The UUA Presidential Search Committee seeks your feedback about our process. Thank you for your time!

1. The UUA Presidential Search Committee was tasked with nominating at least two people to run for the office. This was a new process. What did you expect the committee to do?
2. The committee sought input, created a job description, solicited nominations, interviewed nominees, and nominated persons. Were these the tasks you expected? How were they done? What, if anything, surprised you?
3. Because this process involved the potential current and future careers of the nominees, some parts of our process were very open and others were very closed. What thoughts do you have about the level of transparency in this process?
4. How well informed did you feel about our process?
5. You are/were . . .
  - A voting member of a Unitarian Universalist congregation
  - A UU minister
  - A religious professional
  - A delegate to the 2017 GA
  - An absentee voter for the 2017 UUA election
  - A UUA staff member
  - A member of DRUUM and/or BLUU Other:
6. Your age
7. What suggestions would you make for the next Presidential Search Committee in particular, or for the UUA Board / UUA General Assembly to consider?