

Candidate Liaison Report  
March 2019

The process of going in front of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) is, anxiety producing. Years of seminary, deep formational work, and preparation lead to the meeting room at UUA Headquarters, which you may or may not have ever even seen. The process is often shrouded in mystery, and like most important life experiences, it is surrounded by legends—many of which are horror stories. I hope I can dispel some of the myths for you and demystify the experience a bit, now that I have seen life on the other side of the meeting table.

A great deal of intention went into setting up the room. Would we meet in a circle or around a table? The group chose to hold the sermon piece at one side of the room and then move to a table where we could create a more conversational and inclusive space for candidates. And then, we turned our attention to discussing packets and creating questions that would serve not as “gotcha” tests, but formational guides so that whatever the outcome of the interview was, we could provide meaningful formational guidance for the candidate. Ministerial formation is life-long and we are not a “learned tradition,” but a “learning tradition.”

If you are preparing for the MFC or preparing to return to the MFC, let me share some suggestions to consider that are grounded in my learning from this special time serving as a Candidate Liaison:

- 1) You are being held in care by the MFC through this entire process.
- 2) Be prepared for your interview-Have a completed packet, and know yourself, your edges and have a fully developed UU identity.
- 3) Reschedule your interview if you are not ready.
- 4) Whatever number you leave with, take the advice of the MFC seriously, and act on it. The recommendations come from a thoughtful and loving place.
- 5) Do a packet review with David Pettee as part of your preparation process.
- 6) If you have the opportunity to serve as a liaison, say yes!

Lastly, the MFC is doing deep work on anti-racism and anti-oppression. Like most of our denomination, there is much work to do. However, I had conversations at this meeting that were deep, direct and meaningful in a way that I have not been able to do in other UU spaces. Good work is being done, here to center the margins. The MFC, like ministers, is in formation and doing the work of ongoing learning.