

**Report to the UUA Board of Trustees
for its April 2007 Meeting
from the
UUA Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group**

**Office of the Director of MPL
Beth Miller, A'Llyn Ettien**

Overview

As March draws near its end, I look back on the first quarter of 2007 with awe and satisfaction. Awe at how much and how varied my work has been. What I offer here is only a brief sample. I also sit on the Leadership Council and oversee my staff group. In this quarter, that has meant annual performance evaluations and the 2009 budget in addition to ongoing projects and team building. I take satisfaction in how much I am learning and in feeling that I am becoming increasingly more useful to the UUA. Directors of the offices within MPL provide information on their projects below. Here are some highlights from my own work.

Travel

1/16 -18: Meadville Lombard Theological School to meet with the community ministries class, the President, and students.
1/25 – 27: Visited Ministerial Settlement Representatives and Compensation Consultants trainings in Nashville.
2/23 – 25: Attended TURNING TOWARD ONE ANOTHER II: UU SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY CONSULTATION in Denver sponsored by the Urban Disciples (Veatch Program on UU Urban Social Justice Ministry) and the UU Society for Community Ministries (SCM.).
2/26 – 3/2: Senior Ministers of Large UU Congregations (SMOLUUC) in Santa Barbara.
3/4: Alexandria, VA to preach at Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church.
3/13 – 15: Religious Education Credentialing Committee (RECC) in San Jose.
3/21 – 25: Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) in Chicago.

Connecting with Students

Since Fall I have visited and spent time with students at Starr King, Meadville Lombard, and Harvard Divinity School. The Harvard UU Ministerial Students (HUUMS) organization has requested a Seminars Day at the UUA which we will host on April 27th for seminarians in all of the area seminaries. The president and representatives from most of the staff groups will be present and present information. As the Panel on Theological Education (on which I sit) deliberates on its future direction, my experience and that of David Pettee as we connect with students may be of use. I plan to connect with UU students in non-UU theological schools as much as possible as well.

Religious Education Credentialing Committee (RECC)

The RECC saw two candidates at their recent meeting and have seven scheduled for the next meeting. They are continuing to refine their requirements. We have recently

coordinated their requirements for background checks with those of the MFC. There are several more points upon which I will help to coordinate the two credentialing bodies.

Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC)

I have worked closely with David Pettee and Jory Agate, MFC Chairperson, on revising MFC Rules and Policies. Jory has been consulting with the Board's working group and will present the most current draft at your April meeting. The MFC continues to function extremely well, due in large part to Jory's leadership and the excellence of its members.

Community Ministry Intern for MPL

I am negotiating with a HDS student to be ministerial intern working ¼ time for MPL and ¼ time for First UU Boston over the next two years, beginning in September '07. Her task will be to help me get a clear picture of what community ministers are doing and how they are doing it, collaborate with stakeholders around community ministry to assess needs, and help me create a clear proposal upon which to seek funding for staff to support community ministers. We have recognized this ministry since 1991, but still do not have resources in place to serve them, or the congregations who support them, in any meaningful ways. This situation is both unfair and potentially dangerous and needs attention.

Military Chaplaincy

One community ministry need is inviting, caring for, endorsing, and maintaining accountable relationship with UU military chaplains. There are only a few right now, but we have several in seminary and more inquiring all the time. My personal belief is that the military needs all the UU chaplains it can get. Lisa Presley, Interim DE in Heartland, took a topic relevant to this for a D.Min project and out of that, volunteered to help us get a handle on this. She put together a group of colleagues and we are working on the draft of their proposed program. It includes a care committee of colleagues who will help chaplains find their way through the military and our requirements and provide ongoing support. It includes ways to track people and to be more responsible as an endorser.

Professional Leaders Coordinating Council (PLCC)

The PLCC is a group made up of the leaders of the professional groups served by MPL, organized about three years ago by my predecessor, David Hubner. The next meeting is scheduled for March 30th in Boston. In addition to normal business, we will engage in addressing the following in a workshop format:

What has PLCC been?

What goals do we have for PLCC?

What next steps will we take toward these goals?

This seems foundational, and may have been explored in the past, but I sense a need for review. I hope it will be fruitful and lead to greater focus.

Diversity of Ministry Team (DOMT)

DOMT has been added to my portfolio as I have replaced Michelle Bentley on this team. John Weston and David Pettee from MPL are also on the team. MPL Directors have

been discussing how our staff group can best help the Ministers of Color initiative to succeed.

Service of the Living Tradition

The co-preachers are Barbara and Bill Hamilton-Holway, co-senior ministers of the UU Church of Berkeley in Kensington, CA. The music director is Keith Arnold of the Golden, CO congregation. The format will be significantly changed, most strikingly so in that recipients of credentialing will not walk across the stage and receive their certificates and hand-shakes. Instead, those being honored will be seated on the stage and rise as their name is called and remain standing. The camera will focus on each individual. At the end of each section, a litany of recognition will be said by the entire congregation. This is an experimental phases to see if we can make this service more worshipful and less like a graduation ceremony. I will welcome your honest feedback following GA.

Ministerial Credentialing

David Pettee, Christine May, Leslie Staples, Kim Wilson

Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy

The significant development with the Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy involves the Canada RSCC. In February, Kay Montgomery and Gini Courter met with representatives of the CUC to discuss, among other matters, the status of the Canada RSCC. I had gone to Canada in May 2006 to discuss concerns around the very low number of aspirants and high costs of interviews.

The negotiating teams discussed several options for sustaining a Canadian RSCC but were unable to find a structure that would provide quality experiences for committee members and potential ministers. At their March meeting, the MFC will be discussing the plan to close down the Canada RSCC, with the Committee on Committees to appoint at least one Canadian to the New England and the West RSCCs. There was hope that the RSCCs would consider meeting at a Canadian location on occasion, possibly in conjunction with a CUC Annual Meeting.

The other RSCC matter involves the retirement of the West RSCC Administrator, and the relocation of the position to the Mountain/Desert District, to be under the care of the District Office.

Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression and Multiculturalism

As a member of the Diversity of Ministry Team (DOMT) I worked with other members of DOMT to help with the development of the Ministers of Color plan presented by Bill Sinkford to the UUA Board at your January 2007 meeting. I continue to serve on the Board of the Religious Coalition for the Freedom to Marry. I have also been invited to serve on the Steering Committee of TRUUsT, 'Transgender Religious Professional Unitarian Universalists Together.'

On a personal note, I spent two week in February in Africa following in the footsteps of an ancestor who was active in the transatlantic slave trade. This has been a pilgrimage that is ongoing for me. I am trying to build bridges between a local filmmaker and the UUA around a film soon to be released that addresses the traces of the slave trade.

Internship Clearinghouse

Since January, Kim Wilson has seen a flurry of contacts with many prospective interns and some intern committee chairs. To date so far, 34 interns, including second year part-time interns, have been placed for the 2007-08 year. March 1st was the deadline by which congregational recipients of an Internship Stipend Matching Grant needed to have an intern hired for fall of '07. Three congregations were awarded grants for the 2007-2008 year.

Last year, the St. Lawrence Foundation awarded the Internship Clearinghouse funds for a community-based internship. The internship is working out well, and Kim is in the process of applying for a similar grant for the 2007-08 year. Kim continues to develop resources for internship supervisors. Working with the staff at our UU theological schools along with several experienced supervisors, Kim has developed a one-day training before Ministry Days. Kim will also be leading a workshop "Can I Be a UUA Internship Supervisor?" during Ministry Days.

Religious Education Credentialing **Beth Williams, Paula Welling**

Renaissance Module Training for Religious Educators

We continue to hold and book Renaissance module trainings, and to develop new resource boxes for the modules and a new way of developing leaders for the modules.

UU Musician's Network

I am working with the Leadership Development Board of the UUMN as they develop curricula, policies, and evaluate candidates for their certification process.

Religious Education Credentialing Program

We are happy to welcome our new RE Credentialing Assistant, Paula Welling, to our staff. Paula has a background as a sales manager for a small Episcopal publishing house and has fit right in to our staff group and our work. As an Episcopalian who is active in the leadership of her church, Paula's familiarity with congregational life is particularly valuable.

At forty-nine, the number of active participants in this program remains stable. This year there are more candidates returning from hold status than there are candidates leaving or de-activating from the program. The RECC awarded two credentials at its March 2007 meeting: one Credentialed Religious Educator award to Tryst Chagnon from Raleigh, NC, and one Credentialed Religious Educator – Masters Level award to Natalie Fenimore who serves the Oakton, VA congregation. We will be implementing program changes

from decisions made at the March 2007 RECC meeting and are in preparation for several meetings and workshops taking place during Professional Days and GA 2007.

The RECC recently conducted a survey and analysis of the outcomes so far of the RE Credentialing program. This analysis has been sent to the Veatch Fund and is appended to this report.

Unitarian Universalist Association Religious Education Credentialing Program
Assessment of Outcomes – February 2007

Credentialed Religious Educators and key leaders within their congregations/organizations were surveyed over the last eight months to quantify outcomes and assess the effectiveness of the credentialing program. This assessment will be ongoing. Newly credentialed religious educators will be surveyed a year after being credentialed. All credentialed religious educators will be surveyed every two to three years to provide ongoing longitudinal data. It is likely that there will be a tipping point within the UUA when the cumulative outcomes of the credentialing program will begin to have a systemic effect on the field of religious education, especially among mid-size and large churches. While we can't predetermine that point, we believe that an auspicious milestone will occur when 100 credentialed religious educators are active in the field.

The primary goal of the program is for a majority of religious educators working in positions that are half-time or greater to become credentialed. The desired outcomes and the assessment of those outcomes are as follows:

1. Increase in professionalism and sense of professionalism among credentialed Directors of Religious Education (DRE) as well as the further professionalization of the field of religious education.
 - This outcome is significant because religious educators have struggled with the issue of professionalism. If they are unable to validate this internally, they often will not experience external validation. The credentialing process is, in itself, a powerful external validation that is visible within congregations/organizations and among colleagues.
 - 96% of credentialed Religious Educator respondents reported a reinforced or increased sense of professionalism through their completion of the credentialing process.
 - 71% of congregational respondents indicated a strengthened sense of professionalism in the credentialed religious educator, while 53% indicating significant strengthening.
 - Anecdotally, credentialed religious educators have reported that the credentialing process strengthened their sense of professionalism through the process of organizing and assembling their portfolio. This required that they document all of their relevant education training, reflect on its impact on their work, and choose representative work products that flowed from both the training and the experience in their position. The compilation of the portfolio provided objective evidence to them of their competence.

2. Increase in the length of tenure by credentialed DREs in local congregations.
 - Religious education in many of our congregations is negatively impacted by turnover in the position of religious educator. While we do not have good data to quantify the tenure of religious educators, there is a considered opinion that the average tenure is five years or less. The decision to enter the credentialing process in and of itself favors increased tenure because of the time to complete the process as well as the commitment involved on the part of the religious educator and the congregation. We expect the tenure of credentialed religious educators to be longer, which the results of our survey confirm. Over time, we expect the average tenure of credentialed religious educators to increase.
 - The average length of tenure of a credentialed religious educator with a single congregation is 9.5 years.
 - 30% of credentialed religious educator respondents reported that their employment changed in some way after being credentialed, mostly in increased salary or increased hours.
 - 96% of respondents indicated that they were still working in the field of religious education after being credentialed.

3. Increase in the quality of (and then the enrollment in) RE programs in local congregations led by credentialed DREs (and growth in adult membership as churches become more vital).
 - Religious education is just one component in the growth in vitality of a congregation, but it is considered to be one of the more significant components. A recent analysis conducted by one member of the UUA RE Credentialing Committee focused on the most dynamic religious education programs in large UU churches. It revealed that the number of children and youth as a percentage of the entire congregation (children and adults combined) ranged from 30% to 38% in those congregations. In some large congregations the percentage was as low as 16.4%. While this is influenced by the demographics of the community on which a congregation draws, there is no doubt that strong RE programs impact the demographics within a congregation.
 - 39% of credentialed religious educator respondents believe that the credentialing process has positively influenced the way they operate their programs. 48% have initiated new programs or activities in their congregations as a result of learnings through the credentialing process. 22% believe that the increase in size in their program or congregation is directly related to the credentialing process.
 - 77% of congregational respondents indicated that their religious education programs have increased in quality, enrollment, or effective innovations since their religious educator was credentialed.

4. Increase in annual compensation of credentialed DREs.

- Recruitment and retention on religious educators will be positively influenced by increases in compensation, including structuring positions with sufficient hours to provide effective leadership.
 - 48% of credentialed religious educator respondents reported an increase in hours, compensation, or responsibilities, and that these increases were directly related to being credentialed.
 - 83% of congregational respondents indicated an increase of salary or hours once their religious educator was credentialed, or they used UUA Compensation guidelines in establishing their religious educator's salary.
5. The position of credentialed DRE becoming a valid, viable, and rewarding career choice as evidenced by an increase in the number of years worked in the field. This includes DREs seeking credentialing at one level first and then the next higher level, as well as serving several congregations during a career.
- The feedback from candidates going through the program indicates that it is transforming their attitude about religious education from that of a job in a specific church to that of a career with the possibility of career advancement “in place” through increased responsibilities, hours, and compensation as well as the very real possibility of advancement by taking a position at a larger congregation. While congregations may not require credentialing of prospective candidates, there is no question that a credentialed DRE seeking a new position would have a competitive advantage. The prospect of increased mobility will also encourage congregations with credentialed religious educators to take the issue of retention more seriously, which suggests that the congregation will also come to view the position as a career rather than just a job that can be easily filled with someone else.
 - 39% of credentialed religious educator respondents indicate that credentialing has influenced their career goals.
 - 44% have been credentialed at more than one level or are considering doing so.
 - 61% might apply for a position with higher compensation or better opportunities.
 - 30% have changed positions since becoming credentialed.
6. An increase in continuing education by credentialed DREs as they seek to further develop their knowledge base and skills.
- As the attitude of credentialed religious educators shifts from job to career, continuing education will become more relevant because these religious educators will be in the field of religious education, if not a specific position, for the long term. This means that there will be a greater return on their investment in continuing education.
 - 61% of credentialed religious educator respondents reported that the credentialing process had an impact in their involvement in continuing education.

7. Congregations increasingly requiring credentialing whether by limiting the search process to credentialed DREs or by requiring eventual credentialing as a condition of employment. This should also lead to acceleration in career advancement either within a congregation through increases in the hours for the position and compensation, and/or subsequent settlement in larger congregations.
 - Currently, the credentialing program is largely elective, which means that the motivation for participation in the program rests primarily with individual DREs. One consequence of achieving a tipping point will be a shift in which credentialing becomes either strongly encouraged or required.
 - 9% of credentialed religious educator respondents reported that their congregations have made a requirement of their position.
 - 24% of congregational respondents would either prefer to hire a credentialed religious educator as their next DRE, or would require that a new hire enter the program and become credentialed. An additional 15% would support a religious educator who wanted to pursue credentialing, but would not require it.

8. An increase in the development of quality RE resources and curricula as credentialed DREs create these materials for their own programs and then make them available to other DREs.
 - Excellence in religious education depends, in part, on the quality of the resources and curricula that are available. It seems clear that the UUA cannot meet the growing demand for resources and curricula. More and more program innovation and resource development is occurring by religious educators in the field. This will only increase, especially as the number of masters level credentialed religious educators grow. Further, credentialed religious educators will have the skills to better utilize existing resources and curricula. The combination of these suggests that the experience in RE programs and RE classrooms will be significantly enhanced. The professionalization of the religious educators is not the end; it is a means for transforming religious education and congregations.
 - 78% of credentialed religious educator respondents have developed new programs, resources, and curricula since becoming credentialed.
 - 44% of credentialed religious educator respondents reported that as a result of credentialing they have initiated or strengthened programs in Safe Congregations and anti-oppression/anti-racism.
 - 76% of congregational respondents indicated that their credentialed religious educator either implemented a Safe Congregation program, strengthened policies or procedures in an existing program, or communicated the need for such a program. 67% indicated that their credentialed religious educator provided leadership in anti-oppression/anti-racism efforts where previously there had not been extensive programming or communication efforts.

9. Acknowledgement by ministers and congregations of the benefits that accrue to both as a result of the credentialing of DREs.
 - The ability of credentialed religious educators to enrich and transform religious education in congregations has the potential to both synergistically enhance the life of the congregation and systemically influence the pursuit of excellence in other areas of congregational life. Additionally, vital religious education programs are routinely engines of growth within congregations, helping congregations to become “younger and larger, instead of older and smaller.”
 - The lack of growth in many congregations is a result of congregations being stuck on a size plateau. The inability to move off of the plateau is often a result of the status quo. To the extent that a transformed religious education program can be an engine of growth, it can help in shifting the overall congregational dynamics.
 - 57% of credentialed religious educator respondents report a more positive relationship with their ministers and congregations since becoming credentialed. 100% of respondents have encouraged other colleagues to seek credentialing.
 - 44% of congregational respondents indicated that having a credentialed religious educator has provided added value to their program. An additional 44% indicated that their religious educator already was providing added value before credentialing.

10. Increased support for the development of credentialing programs for other key positions within Unitarian Universalist congregations (e.g., administrators).
 - The vitality of congregations is highly dependent on the effectiveness of staff, which is a combination of aptitude, skills, and motivation, but also the breadth, depth, and effectiveness of staff development. A credentialing process must define the essential knowledge and skill-based competencies that are required for effective and inspired leadership in a staff position. One of the less recognized, but profound benefits of the credentialing process for religious educators has been the development and articulation of these competencies. As these benefits become obvious to congregations, there will be a growing demand for the development and articulation of competencies for other key staff positions, and for credentialing programs to support the development and assessment of these competencies.
 - 14% of congregational respondents either have a staff member involved in another UU certification process or are seriously considering it. 50% indicated that they would support credentialing of other staff, but would not make it a requirement. 29% indicated that they would provide professional expenses for continuing education so that other staff could become credentialed.

The Religious Education Credentialing Committee: Report from Liz Jones, Chair

The RECC completed its latest meeting the week of March 11-17 in San Jose, CA. This was the final meeting with our current Board Liaison, Rev. Pam Allen-Thompson. Pam's work on the committee, as well as the perspective she brought as a member of the Board, were wonderful additions to our work. We greatly appreciated her presence with us as the first Board Liaison to the Religious Education Credentialing Committee. We look forward to the Board's next Liaison to the RECC, whom we hope to greet at our October meeting in San Antonio, TX.

As part of our continuing commitment to broadening our awareness of Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression/ Multicultural issues within the association, our congregations, and in our society, we met with the Rev. Nancy Palmer-Jones, minister of the First Unitarian Church of San Jose. Rev. Palmer Jones led us through a process of reflecting on and sharing our own initial awareness of race and culture. We discussed some of the issues we have been addressing on the committee. She shared with us about the "Now is the Time" Conference from which she had just returned, and about the bilingual/multicultural history of the San Jose Congregation and where and how this ministry might grow and change. We were also given a tour of the church building.

The RECC also met with Beth Dana from the Youth Office who shared with us the results of the Conversation on Ministry to and with Youth as they stand at this time. We heard some of the major findings from the survey of youth, and some of the larger issues that arose from the conversations within congregations. The Committee participated in the "Stake Holder" segment of these on-going conversations through a process skillfully led by Beth Dana.

We are pleased to announce that we granted the status of Credentialed Religious Educator to one candidate, and the status of Credentialed Religious Educator – Masters Level to another candidate.

The work of the Committee continues as we strive to articulate as clearly as possible what the committee is expecting of individuals who are granted credentialing at each of the three levels. We believe this is critically important for committee members themselves both as we rotate members off and onto the committee, and to assist us in maintaining consistent standards. It is also important for the candidates as they assess themselves, and for their understanding of what the committee will be looking for in their competencies. It will also be important for congregations so that as they assess their needs, they will be able to understand what level of credentialed religious educator may suit their particular situation.

We also did further work on our Reading/Resource list. We are working to create a unified list for all three levels of credentialing with differing required books, and total of number of books to be read for each level. We are also working to more clearly align the reading list to the required competencies and to include books by authors from various racial and cultural perspectives throughout the list. In addition member of the committee reported back on research they had done to discern what options were available to

participants in the program for whom written material was problematic. Work on this list continues, but we hope to have finished this revision before we meet again in October.

Settlement

John Weston, Emily Schwab

The Current Condition of the Interim Ministry

Last spring's interim ministry placement process started in mid-April and never quit. In the current year 106 ministers are serving in interim positions—17 more than the year before and 39 more than the year before that! Of the 106, 42 are AIMs (Accredited Interim Ministers) and AIMITs (AIMs in Training). What the demand may be in the year to come is as yet a closed book.

View from the Mineshaft

Chirp #1—Not enough ministers in fellowship were available to serve in the 106 interim positions offered. The difference was made up by 4 UU ministers-to-be, not yet having attained preliminary fellowship.

Chirp #2—Close to ten AIMs will have retired within a three year period.

Chirp #3—A number of our larger congregations in search this year were greeted with surprisingly scant ministerial interest. Two such congregations are poised to spend an additional year in search.

Chirp #4—A majority of ministers-to-be appearing before the MFC testify to primary interest in community ministry. This phenomenon appears to be general across liberal Christian and Jewish denominations.

Chirp #5—In the past five years an annual average of two Ministers of Religious Education have received preliminary fellowship. That's right: two.

Will we, within the next five years, find ourselves seriously short of the number of parish-oriented ordained leaders we need?

Surprising Findings in Ministerial Longevity

Over the past fifteen years, the median duration of a ministry has increased from 6.8 to 7.4 years, while the average duration has decreased from 8.9 to 8.4 years. The greater excess of the mean over the median in years past is presumably due to a few very long ministries, the frequency of which has been declining for some time. Ministries of median or greater length are presumably to be honored (although questions are increasingly being asked about very long ministries), while ministries concluding within five years—"early endings"—would seem to indicate, in many but surely not all cases, the existence of problems deserving of attention.

Recently the UUMA CENTER Committee gathered seminary leaders and others to consider opportunities for improvement in ministers' continuing formation. The Transitions Office prepared the following study of early endings for that meeting. The study indicates the following:

The number of annual early endings has increased by about 50 percent over the past fifteen years, from 14 to 21;

The number of early endings brought about by negotiated resignation has remained constant (as have the number of negotiated resignations at any time in a ministry—the rate of the latter being about a dozen a year);

Thus the percentage of early endings brought about by negotiated resignation has dropped by about one-third.

Among ministers in their first five years of fellowship, the number of early endings in the past four years is even with their number ten to fifteen years ago. (Between 1996 and 2002 their number spiked by more than 50 percent.) Of special note, the number of early endings among such ministers brought about by negotiated resignation has *decreased by over 60 percent*, to an average of only one per year.

Among ministers in their later years in fellowship, the findings deserve attention:

The number of early endings annually among more experienced ministers has increased by a third over fifteen years;

The number of early endings brought about by negotiated resignation has increased by about 50%.

Professional Development

Michelle Bentley, Angela Merkert

Deceased Ministers

The Reverend Alfred Davenport Judd 1925 – 2007

The Reverend A. John Skeirik 1918 – 2007

The Reverend Frances West 1931 - 2007

Friends and colleagues are encouraged to share reflections on their ministry at this Memorial web site: <http://uuminmemorialpage.blogspot.com/>

UUMA CENTER Meeting & Summit

For the 20-year anniversary of the CENTER Committee of the UU Ministers Association, CENTER called a facilitated Summit gathering in Chicago March 2nd and 3rd. The theme of the Summit was “Mapping the Ministry Matrix: Collaborative Ministerial Formation for the 21st Century.” The following ministers were invited and came representing major stakeholders in the formation of ministers and ministerial students:

Jory Agate	Ministerial Fellowship Committee Chair
Lee Barker	Meadville Lombard Theological School President and CEO
David Sammons	Starr King School for the Ministry Acting President
John Weston	Ministry and Professional Leadership Transitions Director
Kenneth Sawyer	UU Ministers Association President
Clyde Grubbs	DRUUM (Diverse & Revolutionary UU Ministers) Rep.

Dudley Rose	Harvard Divinity School Assistant Dean
Nick Carter	Andover Newton Theological School President
Terasa Cooley	UUA District and Congregational Services District Exec
U.T. Saunders	Facilitator

CENTER Members:

Roberta Finkelstein	Co-Chair, parish minister Portsmouth, NH
Wayne Walder	Co-Chair, parish minister Toronto, Ontario
Jan Johnson	Treasurer, community minister Ithaca, NY
Ed Piper	Secretary, parish minister Port Republic, VA
Joan Van Becelaere	UUMA Liaison, community minister Denver, CO
Maddie Sifantus	Community minister Wayland, MA
Roy Reynolds	Parish minister Augusta, GA
Carol Huston	Parish minister White Plains, NY
Michelle Bentley	Professional Development Director, UUA staff liaison

Following the productive Summit, CENTER members reviewed the information gathered from colleagues and decided to collect ideas and develop major goals in three areas, which have immediate, developmental, and large scale effects: **Immediate goals** (publish the summit report, buddy up with colleagues gathered for summit, and write a grant); **Developmental Training** (Mentor Training and Develop an Arc of Professional Development/Formation- both ideas to be possible themes/tracks for Ministry GA '08); and **Large Scale Long-Term effect** (create strategic plan for a new CENTER, and as an antiracism /oppression. multiculturalism goal to work with UUMA's Convo team in a blessing/healing/gathering of all ritual).

The 2007 & 2008 CENTER Day Theme Speakers are: Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright "Growth and Vitality: A Paradigm Shift" and Dr. Walter Brueggemann, Old Testament Scholar.

MFC

Rule Compliance #15A: Associate Fellowship and Preliminary Renewal. At the March 2007 meeting, MFC members will vote to remove those ministers from fellowship who are out of compliance.

Follow up and continuous work from the December 2006 MFC meeting (from the Executive Committee, the Settlement Working Group, and Ministerial Renewal process).

Training Programs

- *Cancelled - Addictions' Ministry On-line Seminar.* Instead we will plan ahead for the 2007 Ministry Days workshop and also plan 2007-08 daylong programs for the East and West Coasts, which will allow people to meet face to face.
- *Finding Our Way Home* – We are nearing our goal of 50 ministers and ministerial candidates to gather April 12-15, 2007 at the Kellogg Conference Hotel at the Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. Program includes quality time with President Bill Sinkford, who will preach and discuss his plans for support and settlements of ministers of color/Latino/a. Dr. Reggie Wills, Family Physician/Therapist and Assistant Professor of Family Medicine at Howard University

- Hospital and Medical School will provide continuing education on accessing our own divine selves, the mind/body/spirit connection, and other matters of health and healing. We will also engage in viewing a presentation on the Sankofa Project Archives. This Seminar/Retreat is a co-sponsored event with the Professional Development Office and The Identity-Based-Ministries Staff Group.
- *First Year Ministers' Online Seminar*: Two new Deans – Mel Hoover and Michael Schuler join returning Dean Angela Merkert. 5/11 – 5/24/07. We also prepare for our time with our new ministerial colleagues at CENTER Days workshop.

Continuing Education & Career Counseling

Since the beginning of this fiscal year, July 1, 2006, \$30,000 has been allocated to approximately 70 ministers for continuing education grants. The average grant amount is \$400.

The Collegiality and Ethics Committee of UUMA (ACEC)

The purpose of the Committee, chaired by Susan Manker-Seale of the National Good Office, was to review and establish a middle way for right relationships amongst colleagues. See an excerpt from the below draft proposal for the UUMA Panel for Restorative Justice (sent to the UUMA Exec for their counsel and approval):

The purpose of the UUMA Panel for Restorative Justice is:

To strengthen our ministries and collegial bond;

To nurture the integrity of our ministerial calling;

To affirm a transformative theology of ministry;

To promote proactive education and training grounded in covenant and restorative justice;

To nurture the highest ethical and professional conduct among Unitarian Universalist ministers;

To provide a trustworthy vehicle, that is safe and confidential, for addressing concerns over actual or potential transgressions of the UUMA Guidelines and Code of Professional Practice;

To advise the UUMA Exec., the UUMA Guidelines Committee, and the UUMA membership of conditions that affect collegial integrity.

In addition we have also written statements on the Principles, Structure, Process, Reconciliation, Budget, and Reporting structure.

The Sankofa Project Archives

The www.uusankofa.org website is under construction – please visit us at www.uusankofa.org/tikiwiki. Please check out our new web site in April to see more than 40 photos, life narratives and more from ministers, ministerial students, and lay leaders of Sankofa (African, Caribbean, Native/American Indian, Asian and Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern/Arab, Latin/Hispanic, and Multicultural/Multiethnic Unitarian Universalists).

- A Wine & Cheese Open House was held during the January term at Meadville Lombard. Approximately 50 ministerial students and youth/young adults of color

steering committee who happened to be in town attended one of the two power point archive presentations. In addition, the Archive Museum was also on display. This is considered the first viewing.

- The second viewing (draft) of the power point presentation will be shown during the March 2007 MFC gathering. We look forward to your comments and suggestions.
- The third viewing (draft) will be shown during General Assembly. There will also be a booth and artifacts for sale.
- Because of the generous grant from the UU Fund for Unitarian Universalism, I have been able to pay ministerial students for their time and skill. The following students are major contributors to the work of the Archive: Joseph Santos-Lyons, Qiyamah Rahman, Erik Carlson, and the volunteer counsel of Archene Turner, Wendy Pantoja, Kate Lore, Revs. Leslie Takahashi Morris and Mark Morrison Reed.

Office of Church Staff Finances

Ralph Mero, Joyce Stewart, Tracy Withy-Browne, Jim Sargent

Fidelity, Darfur, and the UUA Retirement Plan

The UUA retirement plan is managed by the Fidelity Tax-Exempt Services Co, and for months we have been urging Fidelity to divest its holdings in Sinopec and PetroChina, two Chinese-owned firms doing business in the Sudan. It is alleged that through payments made to the government in Khartoum, these companies help subsidize the genocide in Darfur, that portion of western Sudan where perhaps 400,000 have been killed and more than one million forced into exile refugee camps in Chad or other parts of the Sudan.

We have not been successful in persuading Fidelity, and with my counterparts in the Reformed Church of America and the Presbyterian Church USA (both denominations are Fidelity clients), I do not believe Fidelity is likely to change its policy.

The Sudanese government has been at war with the Fur and other tribes in Darfur since at least 1971, and millions around the world have become outraged over the brutal treatment of African Muslims by other, largely Arab, Muslims, in an area where farmers and shepherds compete for a diminished supply of water and arable land. The African Union has 7,000 troops in Darfur but these have been largely ineffective at impeding the Sudanese military and the paramilitary marauders called *Janjawii* who have wrecked such havoc on local villages.

We have recommended that participants in our retirement plan consider exchanging their shares in the Fidelity Diversified International Fund – which owns stock in Sinopec - for shares in the Calvert International Equity Fund which is managed in a socially responsible manner.

UUA Health Insurance Plan

Progress continues on implementing the UUA health plan that became operational January 1, 2007. The first meeting of the elected Trustees of the Plan was held on March 20th. Present were Dan Brody and Tim Brennan – both ex-officio – Paul Bluestein MD, Kathleen Burek, Mindy Scharlin, David Tedesco, and Brent Wilkes. The health plan trustees were elected by the UUA trustees at their meeting last January.

With input from Jim Sargent, attorney Chip Kerby of the law firm of McDermott Will & Emery completed the documents for a UU Association Employee Benefits Trust and a UU Organizations Health Plan. These are available for review by UUA trustees and others by sending an email to healthinsurance@uua.org. As of March 15th, the plan had revenue on hand of \$752,693 with all claims paid as they had been received. More detailed information will be provided to the Finance Committee at their April meeting.

Seminary Debt and Winter Heating Grants

In February, \$100,000 was disbursed from the Living Tradition Fund to 62 ministers who applied for debt reduction grants to assist paying off their seminary loans. The Office of Church Staff Finances also disbursed \$9,900 to about 33 retired ministers or surviving family members to assist with the cost of their winter fuel bills. The financial circumstances of new ministers and some retired ministers continue to be a matter of great concern.