

Religious Professionals Discussion Guide, February 2, 2022

Opening Words

Out of the Flames
By Sara Eileen LaWall

Out of the flames of fear
We rise with courage of our deepest convictions
to stand for justice, inclusion and peace

Out of the flames of hate
We rise with the force of love
Love that celebrates our shared humanity

Out of the flames of doubt
We rise to embrace the mystery, wonder and
awe

of all there is and all that is yet to be

Out of the flames of scrutiny
We rise to proclaim our faith
With hope to heal a fractured and hurting world

Out of the flames we rise

Is someone willing to take notes?

Check In 10 mins How are you thinking about Widening the Circle since we last met?

Review of Interim Ministerial Search Process 5 mins (Andrea)

From the UUA website about Settled Minister Search 2 mins (Treva)

Discussion 40 mins

USG specific:

Did you recognize any of the issues raised by the avatar? Have you seen these things? Done these things? Felt these things?

What can we learn from our experiences thus far?

What can we learn from this chapter to guide us as we look to welcoming at least two new ministers in the next three years?

What might we need to do to increase the likelihood of successful ministries for our interim and settled ministers?

How can we prepare for possible conflicts? How can we ensure a work environment that is supportive?

COIC Report Recommendations

Reduce the barriers to entry for those who seek to serve as religious professionals. This is true for all people, but these barriers are especially damaging for Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, and other marginalized people, who tend to have fewer financial resources due to historic and continuing patterns of discrimination.

Improve the quality of livelihood for religious professionals who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color should be an ongoing goal, recognizing the particular demands of serving a predominantly white Association and its congregations and communities.

Lifelong learning is the standard for all religious professionals, and this learning should address generational and multicultural awareness.

USG Goals and Actions already proposed with new additions (5 mins) Lisa
bold and asterisk means the group prioritized it, teal/italics are new additions

T3 Goal: Continuing education in anti-oppression for all lay leaders (includes Board, MET, Committee chairs, Worship Associates) *We should add Staff to this goal.*

***T3.1 Action:** Each lay leader commits to attend at least one workshop/course/program focused on anti-oppression per year. *(at least every two years?)*

***T3.2 Action:** Encourage all congregants to attend at least one workshop/course/program focused on anti-oppression per year. Offer financial support if needed, consider creating a fund. (This could include the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop in preparation for new ministry.)

NEW: T3.4 Action: Create a budget line item for anti-oppression trainings and allocate sufficient funds each year.

L1 Goal: Promote education for those who would accompany and co-journey with Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities and their leaders and groups to ensure more competency in this area.

L 1.1 Action: Encourage everyone at USG to engage with at least one of the many USG groups doing anti oppression work including but not limited to: Widening the Circle (either working group or Q&As), White Anti Racist Discussion, Ending Racism Committee, Racism Book Study, Standing in Solidarity Vigil, New SJ Book Discussion, Beloved Conversations (from Meadville Lombard), Trans Inclusion.

It's budget time, do we add a line item for a GA fund? 5 mins (Andrea)

G2 Goal: Increase access, equity, diversity and inclusion for USG GA attendees and delegates

***G2.1 Action:** Make funding available for people who want to go to GA (whether they are delegates or not) who would be unable to attend without financial support.

Additional Possible USG Goals/Actions 5 mins (Lisa)

Possible USG Action: Ensure we have an established fair compensation practice for staff including intern and professional staff per UUA guidelines.

Accountability Process

Current leadership thinking is that we'll finish our examination of the report by the May meeting and then turn our focus to moving our proposed goals and actions forward.

Check Out (10 mins) What we do you want to make sure we cover at the next meeting? Are we ready for the next chapter?

Closing Words

- Religious professionals of diverse backgrounds and identities are essential to a more equitable, inclusive, and diverse Unitarian Universalism.
- In this time of unprecedented change, lifelong learning for religious professionals should be the standard and consistent with the continuing education requirements for most professions.
- We need to engender an atmosphere of continued learning and growth as the dialogue is ever evolving as those who have been silenced find their voices louder and stronger.

~ From the Religious Professionals chapter Take Aways