Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) Process

OVERALL GUIDELINES

★ The search committee should represent the entire congregation.
★ The search committee should be trusted by the congregation.
★ The search committee should be in touch with the changing nature of the congregation.
★ The search committee should be responsible for developing a good process for itself, the congregation, and Unitarian Universalism.

Selecting a search committee is the work of both the leadership and the entire congregation. Ministers are more likely to be interested in serving a congregation where the search committee is representative, trusted, in touch, and responsible to the entire Congregation.

After a high salary, the most attractive quality a congregation can have is self-awareness – awareness of strengths and weaknesses, what the congregation is like at its best and at its worst, as well as on an average day.

The UUFD Board has adapted the following selection process from recommendations based on years of trial by interim ministers and UUA staff members and volunteers who support ministerial searches. The process described below can be time intensive. However, experience has
shown that it produces good results and a high degree of respect and trust for both the new search committee and the board.

THE SEARCH PROCESS

1. The Transition Team will send out e-announcements to the congregation with questions to consider when choosing candidates to serve on the MSC.

- Who can represent and serve the whole congregation well (including looking out for the needs of children) and not just a piece or "faction" of the congregation?
- Who would have no "ax" to grind?
- Who knows (or can learn) the history and culture of the congregation, whether a member of long standing or relatively new?
- Who can use this history proactively instead of reactively on behalf of the congregation?
- Who has been and/or is active in the congregation and has demonstrated both responsible participation and responsible leadership?
- Who would be able to know and relate information about the congregation to potential candidates?
- Who would you trust to serve on the search committee on behalf of the congregation?

2. The Board will delegate to the Transition Team (TT) the task of calling every UUA member individually to solicit three nominees from each member. **Only members of the Fellowship are eligible to be nominated.**

3. The TT members will record the nominees offered and enter them into a spreadsheet, noting how many times each nominee has been named.

4. The TT will create a short list of the 10-15 most nominated members, the exact number depending on where natural breaks in the number of nominees occur.

5. A TT member will call each nominee on this short list to see if they are interested in being a member of the MSC. If they are Board or TT members, they would need to agree to give up that position if chosen for the search committee. Potential candidates should also take into consideration other responsibilities, both inside and outside church as well as check on their availability and commitment in the fall and winter (survey/cottage meetings through pre-candidating) of the search cycle. All MSC members should be available for all pre-candidating weekends, which most likely will occur in other churches in the region. A list of designated responsibilities for the MSC members will be shared with each of the short list candidates. [Helpful links for thinking about what is involved if chosen: 2024 search timeline: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RK-hCpwo1FEyrG9Whn14pX7pvyZMwC27/view?usp=share_link
Search Committee Time Commitment from p 38-9 of Settlement Handbook:]

6. Willing nominees will fill out an information sheet and/or prepare a short biographical statement that includes information about why they are interested in serving on the search committee. The TT will submit to the Board the names of all nominees from the short list who indicate interest in participating in the work of the MSC.

7. The board will select a slate of potential MSC members from the short list of nominees that were the top choices as determined by the Congregation and who are willing to serve on the MSC. The board will carefully choose a diverse team from this list who will work well together. The selection of the slate of MSC members by the Board is important. This part of the process improves the odds of diversity on the MSC. The broader the demographic the better, especially with regard to age, gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation. A slate of up to seven MSC members may be selected by the Board.

8. There will be a Special Congregational meeting held where the slate of potential MSC members selected by the Board will be voted on for approval by the congregation. The proposed MSC members will be presented as a body for approval to the congregation at a congregational meeting with the names listed alphabetically. Neither self-nomination nor nominations from the floor will be considered.

9. Alternate MSC members are not allowed. Should an MSC member be unable to continue after being elected, unless very early in the process, the MSC should not look to find a replacement. If the member who is unable to continue departs the search committee in the first few months, the MSC should check in with the Transitions Office or Transitions Program Manager for options. Search committees should remember that any work that isn't deemed confidential may be done by someone from the congregation who is not on the search committee.