

Policy for Minister Searches

Background

This policy draft reflects the process used to select the most recent Minister Search committee (in 2015 - 2016). We sent out a call for nominations in February to be completed by March 10. The Board compiled all the nominations into a spreadsheet, then started contacting the ones named most often, keeping in mind the need for several kinds of balance among committee members. Our bylaws do not require an elected search committee; the step of a congregational vote to affirm the committee seemed like an important step for transparency and accountability.

UUFB Bylaws ARTICLE VII, Ministers

Section 2. Recruitment. The Board shall appoint a Ministerial Search Committee to lead the recruitment effort when it determines that calling a minister is appropriate. A minister shall be called upon the recommendation of the search committee and of the Board, and a 4/5 vote of Active Members of the Fellowship present at a duly organized Annual or Special Meeting. All provisions of Article IV shall apply to action on calling a minister, with these exceptions: a 4/5 vote is required as above, and the minimum notice of such a meeting shall be 21 days.

Policy

Because a Minister Search Committee needs to be deeply trusted and respected by the Fellowship, while also consisting of a balance of skills, interests, and backgrounds, the Board will constitute the committee primarily through nominations, supplemented by recruitment as necessary. The proposed slate of committee members will be affirmed by congregational vote.

The search committee will begin work in the summer a year before the expected starting date for the new minister, with major efforts needed in the fall to prepare information representing the Fellowship to potential candidates and in the spring to review applicants and plan and carry out pre-candidating and candidating visits. Committee members will be expected to attend every meeting and share equitably in the work to be done. This is no small time commitment, but serving on the search committee will be a major contribution to the well-being of the Fellowship for years to come. This work may also provide an in-depth understanding of the Fellowship as well as an opportunity for spiritual growth of its members.

I. Description of committee

- A. A Minister Search Committee will consist of seven members.
- B. The committee will be balanced by age, gender, interests, and tenure of UUFB membership to reflect the diversity of the congregation and to represent major areas such as religious education, social action, finance, music, etc.
- C. The committee will also be balanced by attributes or skills, such as organizational ability, broad theological awareness, writing, technology skills, etc.
- D. Members of the Search Committee will normally step aside from all other committee work (especially serving as chair) for the time the search is active.

II. Eligibility for Search Committee membership

Search committee members must be

- Members of the Fellowship, known and respected by others in the congregation
- Committed to acting for the good of the congregation as a whole rather than to any subgroup or their own individual priorities

- Pledged to conduct a search that is fair and nondiscriminatory with respect to race, color, disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin or other marginalized group
- Committed to maintaining strict confidentiality
- Committed to seeking consensus, capable of both self-assertion and compromise, and well suited to teamwork
- Not paid members of the church staff
- Not have served on either of the two previous search committees

III. Nominating process

- A. The process will begin by the Board inviting all members and friends of UUFB to nominate members to serve on the committee. There should be at least three weeks between the call for nominations and the deadline for submitting names to the designated Board officer(s). Self-nomination is not encouraged.
- B. Nominators must identify themselves on the nomination form or otherwise when making a nomination; however, they will be granted anonymity. Neither the nominee nor others in the Fellowship will know who nominates whom.
- C. It is possible and desirable that any potential committee member may be nominated by more than one person.
- D. The Board may specify the form of nomination, including what information is required, and will set a deadline for making nominations.
- E. Board members will then contact all nominees to determine their willingness to serve on the committee and to further explore the skills, backgrounds, and interests they bring to the work. These conversations will not state or imply that any individual will ultimately be appointed.
- F. The Board will then identify a slate of nominees who will comprise a balanced and effective committee. If, during this process, the Board identifies a gap—a skill, background, or interest not represented among the pool of nominees—Board members will recruit an individual or individuals to fill the gap. (For example, if there is no parent in the group, the Board will recruit one. Or if the group includes only “big picture” thinkers but no one who is attentive to detail, such a member would be recruited.)
- G. Individuals identified will be contacted to confirm their service on the committee and the Board will choose among them to arrive at a balanced group that will work together effectively.
- H. The Board will identify one person to serve as chair and may do so before forming the complete committee.

IV. Announcement and start-up

- A. Committee members will agree to a covenant regarding their work on the committee. (The UUA sets out a covenant that congregations in search must agree to, which would be the basis for our specific covenant.)
- B. The slate of Search Committee members and identified chair will be announced to the congregation.
- C. The slate will be affirmed by membership vote at a duly constituted Fellowship meeting, no later than June 1 of the year in which work will begin.

V. Minister’s Compensation

A Compensation Consultant is available from the UUA to help identify the compensation package to be offered. A special Compensation Task Force will be composed of one Board member, one member of the Committee on Ministry, and one member of the Search Committee; this group will develop a package of compensation (including benefits) and other terms of employment to be approved by the Board before our opening is publicized through the UUA Transitions Office. The package should include a high and low dollar figure to define a range.

VI. No match

In the event that the Search process does not, for whatever reason, result in a decision to call a settled minister, Board leadership should work with the UUA Transitions Office to identify options. In some cases, “no match” might actually be the result of a successful and honest search, in which case the same committee may be asked to continue the process. In other cases, a new search committee may be identified.

Approved, UUFB Board of Directors

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Minor amendment approved by email vote March 25, 2022

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