


First Unitarian Universalist Church Columbus, Ohio		
Chapter: II. Congregational Responsibilities		Source:
Title: Ministerial Candidate Sponsorship		
Approved by: Board of Trustees		Date Approved: 10/25/93
Effective Date:		Date of Last Review:

This policy guides the process by which candidates for the Unitarian Universalist ministry gain “Sponsorship” by the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbus, Ohio.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR CONGREGATIONAL SPONSORSHIP:

In order to be considered for Sponsorship by the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbus, a ministerial candidate must:

1. Be accepted into “Pre-Candidate Status” by the Unitarian Universalist Association.
2. Be active in the congregation of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbus for a period of at least one year in a manner that demonstrates potential for the ministry. Potential for the ministry may be demonstrated through at least two of the following:
 - a. Delivery of sermons or leading worship services.
 - b. Service as chair of a committee relevant to the ministry such as religious education, worship, or congregational support and care.
 - c. Service as a teacher or leader of religious education for children, youth, or adults.
 - d. Service in a social concern or service project endorsed by First Church.
 - e. Service in pastoral care for the congregation.
3. Be involved in the UU denomination beyond First Church.
4. Submit a letter to the Minister or Chair of the Board of Trustees addressed to the congregation stating one’s intentions and requesting the sponsorship of First Church.
5. Seek counsel from a minister of this church regarding pursuit of the ministry.

SPONSORSHIP COMMITTEE:

The Board of Trustees, in consultation with the candidate and the minister(s), will select a Sponsorship Committee upon receipt of a letter from a candidate stating his/her intention and requesting sponsorship. This committee should consist of five to seven members and be representative of the diversity of the congregation. The Sponsorship Committee is responsible for initiating and administering sponsorship deliberations consistent with the rights and responsibilities of both the candidate and the congregation. All parties will respect and maintain confidentiality throughout this process.

SPONSORSHIP DELIBERATION PROCESS:

The candidate sponsorship deliberations will include the following:

1. Adequate notice to both the candidate and the congregation outlining the steps in the process.
2. An opportunity for the candidate to make known to the congregation his/her intention to seek sponsorship.

3. Reasonable opportunity for members of the congregation to provide confidential feedback to the Sponsorship Committee regarding the candidate's potential to become a Unitarian Universalist minister.
4. The Sponsorship Committee will provide written feedback to the candidate summarizing the important themes and substance of the comments submitted by members of the congregation, including those of the minister.
5. The candidate will have an opportunity to respond to the Committee and, if appropriate, to the congregation.
6. Within three weeks of the completion of any candidate response to the Committee or the congregation, or receipt of a written waiver of the opportunity to respond, the Sponsorship Committee should assess input from members of the congregation members and other available information and recommend whether or not to proceed with a congregational ballot vote for sponsorship. The Committee must provide written feedback to the candidate and the minister regarding the basis of its recommendation.

If the Sponsorship Committee believes, after considering the feedback received and making their own assessment, that the candidate is not ready, they should counsel the candidate regarding the prospects of achieving sponsorship and the actions that might enhance the chances of receiving sponsorship. The committee may suggest the candidate complete the Career Assessment process approved by the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

THE SPONSORSHIP VOTE:

The Board of Trustees will decide, after considering the recommendation of the Sponsorship Committee, whether or not to recommend sponsorship and proceed with a vote of the congregation. If a vote is to be taken, written ballots will be mailed to all members of the congregation in good standing. The Board of Trustees will resolve any and all questions about the eligibility of individual members to vote. The ballots must contain a deadline by which responses must be either postmarked or received in the Church office to be considered.

The number of votes to sponsor must equal at least two thirds of the ballots returned for a candidate to receive the sponsorship of the Congregation. Candidates not receiving sponsorship for any reason may reapply one year after the most recent date of notice of intent to seek sponsorship.