

WIDENING THE CIRCLE OF CONCERN

Introduction to the Report
of the UUA Commission on
Institutional Change

APPOINTED BY THE UUA BOARD AND CHARGED WITH "SUPPORTING
LONG-TERM CULTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE THAT REDEEMS
THE ESSENTIAL PROMISE AND IDEALS OF UUISM"

3 YEARS

charged at 2017 General Assembly to "conduct an audit of the
power structures and analyze systemic racism and white
supremacy culture within the UUA"

committee presented final report at 2020 General Assembly

MEMBERS/STAFF

8

Rev. Leslie Takahashi

Mary Byron

Cir L'Bert Jr

Rev. Dr. Natalie Fenimore

Dr. Elias Ortega

Caitlin Breedlove

DeReau K. Farrar

Rev. Marcus Fogliano

1,100 PARTICIPANTS

resulting in 650 pages of transcript and 80 hours of audio/video
footage
data collected through:
testimonies, interviews, focus groups, outside audit, UU groups and
leaders, and surveys

10 CATEGORIES OF STUDY

36

117 PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

RECOMMENDATIONS

CALL TO ACTION FOR FIRST UU

"If we are committed to this work as central to our faith, we
will create the conditions in which all who are attracted to
the theological premises of our faith can thrive." (p. 135)

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THE COMMISSION WAS CREATED IN RESPONSE TO EVENTS IN SPRING 2017 AROUND THE HIRING DECISIONS MADE FOR THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL LEAD POSITION

Questions arose about the hiring practices of the UUA after another white man was hired to fill the Southern Lead position, despite qualified people of color also applying.

This hiring led several employees and religious professionals of color to share their experiences within Unitarian Universalism and highlighted the white supremacy culture inherently built into the UU structure, including power and economic advantages in this hiring specifically.

UUA EMPLOYEES

14% **84%**

of UUA employees with supervisory responsibilities were POC

of UUA employees in "service" positions were POC

5 **REGIONAL LEADS**

regional lead positions

people of color in regional lead positions

0%

20% of UUA Leadership Council are people of color

A FEW FINDINGS

- Basic practices of good governance were violated in this hiring process, leading to chaos
- Covenantal relationship with one another was not observed
- Assumptions grew out of 'colorblind racism,' ignorance of racial bias and white supremacy culture
- Clear and consistent systems of accountability were missing
- Truth must come before reconciliation and transformation, and truth telling is still dangerous for religious professionals of color

Read Appendix 1 for more details

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