

UAAA'S ACTING DIRECTOR POSITIONS: AN UPDATE FROM THE UAAA PERSONNEL WORKING GROUP

Dear Members & Friends of our UAAA Community,

As previewed in our March 2022 update, Personnel Working Group member Leigh Robertson has now completed an assessment process related to our community's two Acting Director positions, the Acting Director of Spiritual Growth and Development and the Acting Director of Music Ministries. The analysis of the feedback that our community provided is now complete, and this email contains a high-level summary of the qualitative data that was gathered. Based on this data, UAAA is now able to share how we will be proceeding with regards to these two positions. Finally, this message contains some additional reminders and updates that you might find helpful.

Spiritual Growth and Development (SGD):

We are delighted to share that effective May 1, 2022, Stella Anderson will shift in title and will be serving as UAAA's "Director of Spiritual Growth and Development." Our assessment process found that UAAA community members felt that Stella was an excellent fit for this position, citing her passion for Unitarian Universalism, love for our children, teens, and families, and the wisdom and insight that she has already been sharing with all of us through her Sunday morning presence. We are delighted to welcome Stella into the more permanent, ongoing position of Director of SGD. We hope that you will join us in congratulating Stella, and also in lending her the volunteer and moral support that she needs in order to help bring alive UAAA's vision for our SGD program.

A process summary of the assessment, written by Leigh Robertson, [can be accessed here](#).

Music Ministries:

We are delighted to share that Carter Smith will continue with UAAA through June 2023 as "Acting Director of Music Ministries." Carter feels that serving UAAA for a second year is a good fit for him as he prepares to enter a national search process for academic music education positions. Simultaneously, Carter's continuation in the Acting Director role for a second year gives UAAA time to prepare for a full and open search process, which we anticipate launching during the first half of 2023. As has been previously and publicly stated, Carter remains eligible for the permanent position. Should he choose to apply for the permanent position (and, at the present time he does not intend to), he would apply through the processes established by the search committee and would be given equal consideration alongside other applicants. (I.e., there would be no 'inside applicant' process or special consideration thereof.) We are truly grateful to Carter for sharing his skill, leadership, and warm teaching presence with us for a second transitional year; **it is beautiful serendipity that a second "Acting" year is of benefit to both Carter and UAAA.**

Our assessment process with UAAA's Music Ministries shed meaningful light on the transition we are navigating with our music program. There were three dominant groups of feedback that

emerged. The first grouping was related to ongoing and fairly deep grief that Glen Thomas Rideout is no longer a part of our staff team. Comments included wishes that UUAA might find another music director just like Glen Thomas, that UUAA might find ways to hold on to the gifts and/or programs that Glen Thomas brought to us, and/or that UUAA would prioritize filling this position with a BIPOC music leader. A second grouping of feedback included those who were pleased with, even thrilled by, Carter Smith's leadership, and hoped that UUAA might be able to retain him for the permanent position. Often cited were Carter's responsiveness, his genuine interest in feedback from and partnership with the laity, and his skillfulness as a music educator.

A third grouping of feedback, larger than these other two, noted that UUAA might not be ready to permanently fill this position yet. Community members noted that because of ongoing pandemic restrictions, it has not been possible to observe the full range of work that has been typically performed by UUAA's past Directors. Others wondered about, and expressed confusion over, the direction/aim of UUAA's Music Ministries: are we striving to have a good-to-very-good congregational music program, or are we seeking to have a world class program, one that is the flagship program of UUAA? (I.e., who are we, UUAA, striving to be as a music ministry?) How one answers this question might impact who is chosen to fill the job permanently as well as the depth of resources that are brought to bear in making that staffing decision.

Finally, what was amply clear, across the data, was that music at UUAA is viewed as a central and critical pathway for how UUAA's members/friends experience ethical-spiritual-human living; UUAA members/friends are highly invested in our music ministries. This also made clear an inevitable challenge that we will have to navigate together as a congregation: our community's hopes, dreams, and personal investment in our music ministries is so broad and deep, that it is unlikely that any one human being chosen to fill this role will 100% satisfy everyone in our community. In other words, no matter who UUAA eventually hires, and how skilled they are, it is likely that some members/friends will feel that the selected individual is not the leader that they would have personally chosen for, or wanted in, the permanent position. These are important insights that we, as a community, will need to hold as the discernment around permanent staffing for UUAA's Music Ministries continues.

A process summary of the assessment, written by Leigh Robertson, [can be accessed here](#).

Farewell for Don Hackney - Sunday, May 1st

As a reminder, UUAA will honor Don Hackney's service on the staff team on Sunday, May 1st, as his time of service at/with UUAA comes to an end. Please join us that Sunday, if you can. In particular, if you feel moved to tangibly express your gratitude to Don, our recommendation would be that cash or check donations might make the most helpful and positive impact. (Checks should be made out directly to "Don Hackney," and not to UUAA, please.)

Congregational Administrator Search Process

As our community looks toward Ed Lynn's transition out of his volunteer service as "Interim Administrator" this summer, a Congregational Administrator Search Committee has been formed, and consists of: Beth Hospadaruk, Jim Lee, Colleen Crawley, Vilma Mesa, Toni

Wander, and Manish Mishra-Marzetti. That committee has begun receiving inquiries and applications for the position, and looks forward to sharing updates with the community as its work deepens. UUAA hopes to have an ongoing, permanent Congregational Administrator in place by August 1, 2022 or thereabouts.

Contacting Us

Any questions, comments, or feedback for our team can be directed to Rev. Manish (manish@uuaa.org) who convenes and guides the work of UUAA's Personnel Working Group.

UUAA's Personnel Working Group consists of Vilma Mesa, Toni Wander, Leigh Robertson, Gregg Peterson, and Manish Mishra-Marzetti