

Proposal to Appoint a Commission on Institutional Change

Proposed that the Board appoint a Commission on Institutional Change to work for a period of two years, in collaboration with a professional organization capable of conducting an external audit of white privilege and the structure of power within Unitarian Universalism, to analyze structural racism and white supremacy within the UUA. The scope of the Commission shall be broad and far-reaching, with the goal of long-term cultural and institutional change that redeems the essential promise and ideals of Unitarian Universalism.

Guided by the charge to the Interim Co-Presidents and the Racism Audit Motion, the Commission will:

1. Establish a “truth and reconciliation” process to create a climate of honesty, accountability, and disclosure essential to our learning and multicultural growth as an institution.
2. Examine and document critical events and practices at all levels of the association and its member congregations, which reveal areas for redress and truth-telling.
3. Set priorities for anti-oppressive practices (including hiring and personnel practices) and institutional change that will advance our progress towards building the Beloved Community.
4. Shape practices for recruitment and formation of religious leadership and the expectations placed on religious professionals of color in the transformation of our faith.
5. Report back to the Board and General Assembly its learning, recommendations, and guidance for ongoing work.

The Board appoints the following people to serve on the Commission on Institutional Change:

- Rev. Leslie Takahashi, Chair
- Caitlin Breedlove
- Mary Byron
- DeReau Farrar
- Rev. Natalie Fenimore
- Dr. Elias Ortega-Aponte

Bios:

The **Rev. Leslie Takahashi** serves as Lead Minister at the Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church in Walnut Creek, CA and as Affiliated Faculty with Meadville-Lombard Theological School. She served as the Convener of the Accountability Group for Justice General Assembly in 2012. She is the co-author, with Chip Roush and Leon Spencer, of *The Arc of The Universe is Long: Anti-racism and the Unitarian Universalist Association* (Skinner House 2008) and a contributor to a number of collections including

Voices From the Margin; Centering (Skinner House); and *Lifting Our Voices* and the Worship Web collections. Finding Unitarian Universalism in her twenties, she has served extensively at the congregational, District, and national levels both within the Unitarian Universalist Association and the UU Ministers Association. Her children, Garner and Liam, offer on-going inspiration.

Caitlin Breedlove joined Auburn Seminary in March 2017 as the vice president of movement leadership. Since 2003, Caitlin has been organizing and building movements in red states: working across race, class, culture, gender, sexuality, and faith. Caitlin is known across social justice movements as a leader, strategist, and writer. She is the former Campaign Director of Standing on the Side of Love at the Unitarian Universalist Association where she served as a bridge between grassroots social movements and the denomination. She is also the former Co-Director of Southerners On New Ground (SONG), where for almost a decade she co-led innovative intersectional movement building work in the LGBTQ sector. Under Caitlin's co-leadership, SONG led campaigns, trained hundreds of new LGBTQ organizers in the South, built a membership of over 3,000, and became the largest grassroots LGBTQ organization in the South. Caitlin began her work in the South doing popular education and organizer training at the historic Highlander Center in Tennessee. She is the host of the podcast 'Fortification,' which interviews movement leaders and organizers about their spiritual lives. She currently lives in Phoenix, AZ.

Mary Byron is retired from Goldman Sachs after a 25-year career, most recently as the global head of corporate technology including Finance, Risk, Operations, and Human Resources at Goldman Sachs. She served on the Technology Division Executive, Operating and Risk Committees. Prior to this role, Mary was based in Tokyo as CIO for Asia Pacific businesses and co-chair of the Asia Pacific Diversity Committee. She joined Goldman Sachs in 1989 and has held various roles within technology, including as CTO managing all technology infrastructure. Mary was named managing director in 1999 and partner in 2006. Now an active investor and advisor to start-ups, she focuses on companies making a positive impact in the world. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation, Room to Read and the Auburn Theological Seminary. She also serves on the Audit Committee for the UUA. Mary earned her bachelor's degree from Marquette University in 1986.

DeReau K. Farrar is director of music at First Unitarian Church of Portland, Oregon, and a member of the board and conference planning committee of the Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network. Before moving to Portland in 2016, he served UU congregations in Santa Monica and Los Angeles, CA, led an interfaith community gospel choir, and worked as a freelance music director, vocal contractor, consultant, and arranger. He worked on HBO's *All the Way* (2016) and Jordan Peele's *Get Out* (2017). He serves on both the Board and Conference Planning Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Musicians' Network, and was their Liaison to the Pacific South West District of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations until his move to Portland.

The **Rev. Natalie Maxwell Fenimore** is currently a member of the ministerial team at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock on Long Island, NY. She is Minister of Lifespan Religious Education. Previously, she served congregations in Maryland and Virginia as religious educator, Minister of Religious Education, and parish minister. Rev. Fenimore is a Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level and a past president of the Liberal Religious Educators Association. She is Tapestry of Faith curriculum author and contributor to UUA meditation manuals and publications. Natalie serves or has served in these UU volunteer positions: LREDA President, Vice President of the Board of Trustees Star King School for the Ministry, LREDA Diversity and Inclusion Team, UUMA Professional Guidelines Task Force, UUA Journey Towards Wholeness Transformation Team, UUA Council on Cross Cultural Engagement.

Dr. Elías Ortega-Aponte is Associate Professor of Sociology and Religious Ethics at Drew University Theological School. His areas of interest are Black and Brown Power Movements, Africana Theory, Criminology, and Emerging Pedagogies. He is the author of “Democratic Futures in the Shadow of Mass-Incarceration: Towards a Political Theology of Prison Abolition,” in Catherine Keller, Melanie Johnson-Debaufre, and Elías Ortega-Aponte (eds.), *Common Goods: Economy, Ecology, Political Theology* (Fordham University Press, 2015). He has been a member of the Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (MUUF) since 2011. At MUUF, he has served as one of the Senior High Advisors starting in 2014-2016 and also has contributed to Adult Religious Education co-leading a variety of learning opportunities. In 2016, he was selected to the *Justice Builders Innovators* programs of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee for his ongoing work with the Dismantling Racism Group of the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of New Jersey. Most recently, he served as a member of the Religious Educators Credentialing Committee of the UUA.