



December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Update from Presidential Search

Dear Starr King Community,

The search for the next president of Starr King School for the Ministry is well under way! Here is where we currently stand since the search went 'live' November 15, 2013:

We put forth an extensive outreach effort announcing the presidential search:

- Mass e-mail to Starr King community - opened by over 1,300 people
- Facebook post – viewed by 5,000 people
- Banner ad on uuworld.org - average 6,000 views per month
- Weekly e-mail newsletter of uuworld.org for two weeks - sent to 7,000 subscribers
- Chronicle of Higher Education - online and in weekly printing, paid circulation over 85,000, estimated readership of over 350,000
- Broad sharing via Word of Mouth by search team and search consultant

Our Search consultant, Cheryl Hyatt, has reported to the search committee the following on the first three weeks the search has been live: as of December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

She has conducted several phone call with nominees (some nominated by search committee members, others nominated by those in the broader Starr King community). She has several more scheduled. Some applications have already come in, many more are expected; many applicants understandably want to speak with the consultant on the phone before submitting their applicant.

I have been asked why Starr King decided to retain a professional search firm. We choose to utilize the services of a search firm because this search is too important to not do right. This is the first time, to my knowledge, in Starr King's 110 year history that a professional search firm has been employed for a Presidential search. Utilizing the services of a search consultant insures objectivity and proficiency, as well as greater responsiveness to the candidates.

The school's situational realities suggested that smaller search firms with expertise in academic searches that would not rely on a pre-existing bullpen of candidates would best be able to understand Starr King's culture, and meet our current needs. After reviewing several executive search firm proposals the search team selected Hyatt Fennell, LLC, as our partner in this work.

Hyatt Fennell's <http://www.hyatt-fennell.com/> focus is to find the best President for the organizational 'fit', and the firm mostly works with smaller, private faith based schools and non-profits. Our main consultant is one of the partners of the firm, **Cheryl Hyatt**, who has over twenty years of experience in executive search. Hyatt-Fennell wanted to work with Starr King because, as they state, "we are very impressed by the School and appreciate its mission and vision." Hyatt Fennell's commitment is to assist strong, faith-based institutions in every way. They came with glowing references.

And those references were well founded! We have immensely enjoyed getting to know

Cheryl Hyatt, during meet and greets with students, faculty and staff, and the board of trustees, as well as during the October Presidential Search Committee retreat. She has truly gone the extra effort to understand Starr King's distinctive culture. It is reassuring to the committee to have someone in the room with decades of experience doing this work, who has seen it all before and can recommend best practices each step of the process.

I have also received quite a few questions about the search process itself, often stemming from the fact that a **search for an academic institution is different than a Unitarian Universalist congregational search for a called minister**. Allow me to outline some of the similarities and some of the differences.

### Similarities

**Broad Transparency of Process, Strict Confidentiality of Content** – The 'process' is the schedule to be followed, clearly articulating what the requirements of the position. The 'content' is discussions concerning the candidates. For Starr King's presidential search, all of the process information has been posted to the website since November 15, 2013 and is publicly available to everyone.

**Importance of Confidentiality** – breaking confidentiality have the potential to cause great harm to individuals and to institutions. The classic example is a candidate for a position is currently serving an institution in the middle of a capital campaign. Word of their candidacy to another institution's leadership position is leaked, and donors of the current institution are hesitant to contribute, creating ill will and lack of trust all around.

### Differences

**Use of Interim Leadership** – In UU congregations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is a standard best practice in the vast majority of ministerial transition to have a two year interim ministry. Interim or acting administrators certainly happen in academic institutions, but it is more the exception to the rule, and certainly not a standard practice.

**Use of Professional Executive Search Consultants** – Academic Institutions often utilize professional search firms, especially for the Presidential position. UU congregational search committees are composed of members of the congregation with support from the district field staff and the Transitions office of the UUA.

**Final Decision & Number of Finalists** - Congregational Polity in Unitarian Universalist congregations dictates that the minister is called and removed by the members of the congregations. The bylaws of Starr King School for the Ministry stipulate that the President is appointed and removed by the Board of Trustees.

In UU congregations, it is best practice for the search committee to present one candidate to the congregation for the position of called minister. In academic searches, it is more frequent that two to three candidates are presented for a campus visit, feedback is solicited from all stakeholders, and then a final decision is made by the board of trustees. With that said, this presidential search committee has the authority in its charge from the board of trustees to present one or more candidates.

If you have not already offered your thoughts/recommendations/nominations to the committee, please feel free to send us your input via [SKSM@hyatt-fennell.com](mailto:SKSM@hyatt-fennell.com), and help us recruit potential candidates by sharing the Presidential Search [www.sksm.edu/search](http://www.sksm.edu/search) webpage. **The anticipated announcement of a finalist or finalists can be expected by mid-March, 2014, with the final decision of the board of trustees announced in early April, 2014.**

I strongly encourage you to peruse [www.sksm.edu/search](http://www.sksm.edu/search) for the most up to date information as well as a plethora of useful information. The **search team profiles** contain the

background of each search committee member, as well as pretty headshots and a line about their passion for the well being of Starr King School. The in depth **opportunity profile** (12 pages), details the challenges and gifts for the next President to lead the school will face. The **charge to the search committee** from the Board of Trustees details clearly and transparently what exactly we are expected to do, and the anticipated **search schedule** lays out where we have come and what to expect over the next four months of the search process.

Transitions in leadership are tender times in the lives of institutions and the people who care for them. One of the most important functions of the Board of Trustees is to hire a President to lead the institution in fulfilling its mission of educating people for Unitarian Universalist ministry and for progressive religious leadership in society. We are taking this responsibility seriously and are honored to serve. We are deeply grateful of your long-term support of this mighty, little school.

In Grace & Gratitude,  
**Rev. Glenn Coleman Farley, Chair**  
Starr King School for the Ministry Presidential Search Committee