

Ministerial Selection Framework

1st Phase: Reviewing Applications

The search committee will carefully review all applications (cover letters, resumes, videos of talks/classes given, seminary coursework) and identify candidates who are qualified for the position based on the Job Description (attached as Appendix A). The committee will reach out to qualified candidates and invite them to interview for the job.

2nd Phase: Conducting Interviews

- The committee will conduct interviews, asking a panel of predetermined questions that address the responsibilities and qualifications outlined in the Job Description. In-person interviews will be encouraged; but for candidates who cannot travel to Ann Arbor at their own expense, Skype interviews can be arranged.
- Search committee members will discreetly observe each qualified candidate giving a spiritual talk/lesson. If a candidate is not currently working with a spiritual community or is too far away to observe in person, a Skype talk/lesson is an acceptable alternative.
- Search committee members will contact the professional references.
- Each member of the committee will complete an assessment of each candidate using an ***Assessment Rubric*** (e.g, chart)*** that rates the candidate's experience and performance based on the qualifications and qualities outlined in the Job Description. The Rubric will also assess responses from professional references as well as each candidate's alignment with the Center's January Survey results and overall themes gathered from the Visioning events. Based upon all of this information, the committee will build consensus around which candidates advance as finalists (probably no more than three finalists).
- A criminal background check will be completed for each of the finalists.
- The committee will share its findings with the board, and dates will be set for weekend visits for each finalist.

******More about the Assessment Rubric.*** The membership surveys, completed by 80 of us, indicated that members want first and foremost an inspired, top-notch speaker who is socially skilled and ready to take the Center to the next level of growth. At Visioning events in March and April, participants invited Spirit's guidance to augment their thoughts and initiate the call for the highest and best outcome. Members of the MSC recorded information at the Visioning events and reviewed these notes as a group, letting this input inform the Job Description and process.

Third Phase: Candidating Weekends

- The MSC will host an informational community meeting on a Sunday to share blank copies of the assessment rubric and pertinent information about the finalists (resumes, references, etc.).
- Each visit will include:
 - A casual event with the committee, board, ministers, and a few members of the community.
 - Coffee with Delyth & Annie, and a 1-on-1 opportunity with Dave.
 - Saturday workshop on a topic of the finalist's choosing.
 - Sunday celebration service talk (these talks will be videotaped and available to members who miss out due to an unavoidable conflict).
- A Survey Monkey assessment rubric will be sent to ICSG members immediately after each finalist's visit.
- After all finalists have visited, a final Survey Monkey survey will ask members to rank the candidates in order of preference.

*****Note: At every phase throughout the process, our community will be encouraged to sign membership cards. In order to cast votes, Center attendees must become members before the first candidate weekend visit. Also, the Framework document will be available to members at all times.**

4th Phase: Gathering and Synthesizing the Feedback

- The committee will analyze the members' Survey Monkey results.
- The committee will meet separately with each minister to listen to their feedback about the finalists and discuss rubrics & preferences.
- The committee will have their own discussion of the candidates, rubrics, and preferences.
- The committee will analyze all of the findings and build consensus around the ranking of the finalists.

5th Phase: Decision Making

- The MSC will present its recommendations to the Board for approval and respond to any questions.
- At an official membership meeting, the Board and committee will announce the top finalist selected by the Board. The membership will vote "agreed" or "disagreed" by secret ballot. Majority rule will govern. There will be a provision for absentee ballot for members who are ill or incapacitated.
- The committee will tabulate the vote and announce the outcome. If the top finalist is not agreed to, the membership present will vote "agreed" or "disagreed" on the second ranked candidate. Again, majority rule will govern.

- Therefore, it is anticipated that the membership will make the final decision and that the Board will extend an offer (including contract terms and compensation) to the chosen finalist. Acceptance of that offer will be communicated to the membership.
- If the chosen finalist rejects the offer, for whatever reason, the Board and MSC will reconvene to assess options and determine what happens next.

Alternative “Fast Track” Decision Making Process

- There may arise the need to “Fast Track” assessment of a strong candidate whom the Center wishes to “hold on to” as a prospect for the job. We do not believe this is likely.
- However, if such a situation arises, the search committee will first consult with Dave, and then request permission from the board to Fast Track the application process for that candidate. If the Board agrees, the applicant will be invited for a weekend visit as soon as possible and without attempting to line up additional candidate weekends for comparison. The weekend visit will feature the activities outlined in ***Phase Three*** above (a Sunday Talk, visits with the ministers, informal gathering, etc.)
- Following the visit, **Phases Four and Five** will proceed as outlined above. The only difference is that feedback will be focused solely upon whether the visiting candidate is the right person for the position (instead of ranking multiple candidates). If the community, board, and search committee feel that the match is right, the candidate will be offered the position as outlined above.

Additional Provision for Starting Prior to June, 2017

If the timeline for the ideal candidate does not align with Dave’s targeted date for retirement (May 31, 2017), that date may be somewhat flexed. Dave’s primary desire is for the Center to continue, so he is willing to somewhat flex his retirement date should a different start date be deemed appropriate.

Appendix -- A Little Background to the Ministerial Selection Framework

The decision-making process has been an ongoing topic of contemplation by the Search Committee since we began meeting in the fall of 2015. We acknowledge and value the participatory nature of the ICSG community. It allows many treasured qualities to emerge as we co-create our celebratory spiritual experiences and shared culture. However, a few years back, ICSG embarked on the task of finding a replacement for Dave so that he could retire. That experience ultimately resulted in division, frustration, and eventually Dave staying on part-time and the Board hiring Delyth as administrator. It taught our community a lot. In short, we learned how the structure of the process could either inhibit or support our success.

In order to learn from our previous attempt to let Dave retire, and avoid recreating the divisiveness and standstill that occurred then, members of the Board gathered reports from the leaders of that first attempt and researched best practices in how to formulate a ministerial search. Based on the wisdom gleaned, we chose last fall to select a panel of search committee members. We aimed for a diverse group that included old timers, relative newcomers, young parents, retirees, and people in-between, men and women, and people from different faith and cultural backgrounds.

Craig Harvey, who was involved in our first attempt to let Dave retire, declined the invitation to serve on this Search Committee but ultimately agreed to take on a special assignment. He interviewed other spiritual leaders for advice about decision-making in hiring new ministers. These faith communities warned against creating a *“horse race” atmosphere by bringing in multiple candidates for the membership to decide between*. They warned that this is divisive and can easily bring out the worst in people, lending itself to politicking and lobbying against all expectations in a spiritual community. They advised having the search committee perform due diligence in researching and interviewing applicants, and then having the committee/board present its first choice for an up-or-down vote. The one church Craig interviewed that didn't follow this process has had a very high turnover in ministers, as well as many years with the senior minister role vacant, which seems to have limited their ability to grow. Theirs was a negative example.

Given the egalitarian, participatory nature of our ICSG community, and the feedback we have received from our own community in the last few months, the search committee was reluctant, in spite of the advice we received, to deny our membership the chance to evaluate more than one candidate for the position.

We wanted to follow the advice of the congregations Craig interviewed and remain cognizant of the lessons learned from the Center's first attempt to replace Dave. However, we also wanted a selection process that was egalitarian and participatory in keeping with the Center's culture. We had seemingly endless discussions about how to “make it work” — how to combine these disparate elements. It is our belief that the Framework outlined above braids together the best of all the information that we have at our disposal about undertaking such a large task as replacing our senior minister.

We are happy to present this document, the fruit of many minds and hours of hard work! We invite your feedback so we can continue to integrate it to the best of our ability.

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