

From the field

Erica Shadowsong

Consulting Director of Religious Education,
UU Church of Arlington, VA (as of 7/13)

“The interim training really opened my eyes by introducing me to systems thinking. It also gave me a strong foundation to look at conflict objectively and to help a congregation work through it constructively and optimistically. Most of all, it gave me confidence, increased my sense of worth as a religious professional, and opened doors of opportunity.”



Our current facilitator



Michele Townsend Grove

Michele's religious education career began in 1988. A Credentialed Religious Educator – Master Level, Michele has served as an Interim Director of Religious Education in 3 congregations since 2006, and has consulted with congregations of all sizes as Joseph Priestley District Adjunct Staff.

For more info

Jan Gartner

UUA Professional Development Associate
jgartner@uua.org
585.301.6782

www.uua.org/careers/re
(Go to **Interim DRE** on left sidebar)



Unitarian Universalist
Association of Congregations



Office of Professional Development

Interim Training for Program Professionals

Preparing professional leaders for
interim and consulting positions,
and for managing congregational change

**Grounds participants in the
developmental tasks of the interim period**

**Equips them in the essential areas of
staff relations and systems thinking**

**Provides practical tools and resources
for interim positions and change work**

Now offered online!

Interim Training

is designed for established UU professionals

- who are serving in interim or consulting positions
- who are considering interim/consulting work
- who plan to seek a new position
- who recognize the benefits of bringing a developmental lens to their current positions
- whose work is being impacted by congregational and/or cultural changes

(So, yes, that means pretty much everyone.)

in an online format

- that keeps it affordable
- that makes it possible to offer the training multiple times per year
- that bonds participants through a real-time opening session, regular interactive assignments, and a small group project
- that allows participants to absorb, discuss, and reflect on material with a group over a period of weeks (rather than a jam-packed weekend)

with the needs of congregations in mind.

- includes case studies
- focuses on application of knowledge and skills
- introduces helpful print and online resources

Why interim work?

The departure of a lead staff member can be a fruitful time for reflection, visioning, and change. An interim professional provides specialized skills and tools to help a congregation prepare for robust new leadership.

Interims are typically hired for 1-2 years and are generally not eligible to apply for the settled position. An intentional transition period has a shape and momentum that set it apart, the limited-time role helping ensure that the congregation stays focused on its developmental work. This "pre-fired" status also allows the professional to shine a light on uncomfortable truths and to work with the congregation to effect difficult changes that may be necessary for future health and success; such efforts would be easily compromised if the professional were meanwhile "auditioning" for the long-term position.

History of Interim Training for Staff

In 2005, the UUA began to offer an annual 2½-day Interim Religious Educator training, modeled after the interim training for ministers. In 2012, seeking to make the training more accessible and flexible, UUA Professional Development Associate Jan Gartner explored moving the training to an online format. Michele Grove, who had previously led the traditional onsite training, jumped at the chance to develop and lead an online version. Michele and Jan piloted the new format in the spring of 2012, and then fine-tuned it for two sessions offered in the summer of 2012. They invited not only interims, but others with an interest.

In the spring of 2013, two musicians were invited to participate in the training. The mixed-professionals approach proved powerful and enlightening for all and will continue – thus the shift in name to Interim Training for Program Professionals.

→